

**Dismantled Spaces, Dislocated Nationalities:  
Transcending Memory**

With special reference to select **Partition Literature** of **India** and **Pakistan**

**THESIS**

submitted to

**GOA UNIVERSITY**

for the award of

**Doctor of Philosophy Degree**

**in English**

By

**Mrs. P. S. Deepa**

Guiding Teacher:

**Dr. (Mrs.) Kiran J. Budkuley,**

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GOA UNIVERSITY,  
TALEIGAO PLATEAU, GOA.

INDIA 403 521

**FEBRUARY 2018**

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## DECLARATION

As required under the University Ordinance OA-19.3 (V), I hereby declare that the thesis entitled, **Dismantled Spaces, Dislocated Nationalities: Transcending Memory** With special reference to select **Partition Literature of India and Pakistan**, is the outcome of my own research undertaken under the guidance of **Dr. (Mrs.) Kiran J. Budkuley**, Professor of English (retd.), Department of English, Goa University. All the sources used in the course of this work have been duly acknowledged in the thesis. This work has not previously formed the basis of any award of Degree, Diploma, Associateship, Fellowship or other similar titles to me, by this or any other University.

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Date:

## **CERTIFICATE**

In fulfillment of the provision of the Goa University Ordinance OB 19 A ( ), I hereby certify that the Thesis titled ‘**Dismantled Spaces, Dislocated Nationalities: Transcending Memory** With special reference to select **Partition Literature** of **India** and **Pakistan**’ submitted by Mrs. Deepa Prajith for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy is the record of her own work done under my guidance and further that it has not formed the basis of any award of Degree, Diploma, Associateship, Fellowship or other similar titles to her.

Dr. (Mrs.) Kiran J. Budkuley, Professor of English (Retd.), Research Guide

Date:

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 PARTITION AND ITS LITERARY REPRESENTATION: AN INTRODUCTION

The struggle for independence from British colonialism is a hoary chapter in Indian history. That the British arrived on Indian shores in search of trade and commerce on the wings of a Euro-centric imperialistic expansion is also a given. From the moment they stepped onto the Indian soil to their departure in August 1947, the shuffle and coil of colonial intent and political action has been catalogued chapter and verse. The self-aggrandizing edict that *the sun will never set on its (British) empire* hit a major rumble in the so called Indian Sepoy Mutiny of 1857. Neither was it a pan-Indian phenomenon nor a highly organized one, it was ruthlessly crushed. What the then British administration failed to recognize was that the fire of freedom that had taken hold of its subjects would serve as the impetus for the soon to be mobilized struggle for independence.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century was also the phase of Hindu reformist and revivalist movements consolidating a Hindu identity and character. The Arya Samaj and the Hindu Mahasabha had their roles to play in creating the dye and typecasting this new found identity along religious exclusivist lines; whereas the situation of the Muslims was that of intra-religious factionalism “[...] along its regional and local diversities” (4). Despite the internal refashioning, the two communities continued to coexist harmoniously. The birth of the Indian National Congress in 1885 was inclusive of membership representing both communities who by and large shared the *united nation* theory and espoused the cause of a *secular vision*.

The revivalist sentiments sounded alarm bells at the overt anti-Muslim stance in the wake of the process of *othering*. The participation in elections to the Provinces stratified by classification and reservation along majoritarian lines first threw up the separatist fissures between the two communities. The

Muslim League remained on the fringes as an inside outsider: in support or opposing the Congress policies. The Pakistan idea, first mooted by Rehmat Ali in Cambridge in 1933<sup>1</sup>, was disdainfully dismissed by the League itself as preposterous. The pacts and alliances with the League and other provincial satraps played out according to the political exigencies of the times. In this breach was born the tropes of majoritarian Hindu and minority Muslim diarchic antagonistic framework that sowed fear and reaped deep seated distrust.

With Congress ascendance in arbitering concessions to—along the path to freedom, Muslim distrust festered into support for the League, necessitating the notion of the protection of Muslim interests. It was in the decade preceding independence that the two nation theory found justification and credibility. The Non-Cooperation movement gave way to the Quit India movement; but it is Britain's pre-occupation with war and the 1946 elections that are largely viewed as the two elements that turned a paper tiger into its brutish realization. Partition was favored as the price extracted for freedom as against the *likelihood* of continued imperial presence or even violent civil war.

While history was recording the freedom struggle and the consequent independence, creative writers used their pen to give utterance to the price of freedom and articulated the anguish at the carnage that both preceded independence and continued even after independence. The broad contours as also the unassailable interstices of the insanity that overtook the marauding hordes and the bloodbath that followed are rendered in a bald, no holds barred literary recap of what was seen, heard and experienced. After the initial shocked silence, fiction writers took it upon themselves to record and reveal the chilling reality of Partition. As Jalal and Bose rue in *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, Political Economy*, “The colossal human tragedy of the Partition and its continuing aftermath has been better conveyed by the more sensitive creative writers and artists—for example in Sadat Hasan Manto's short stories and Ritwik Ghatak's films—than by historians” (164).

The long silence in the immediate aftermath is a telling signpost of the immense shock in witnessing the unfolding of unforeseen and unimaginable

events and the paralysis that struck the hand of creativity in rendering a post mortem report. It is no wonder that the fictional representations are underpinned by the cataclysmic violence of the time. Early writing of the time was in Hindi and Urdu, followed by works in Punjabi and Bengali (perhaps, this is the *causus belli* that contained the exploration of Partition Studies) and used a new idiom to portray the vivisection of the land and its people. The festering hatred that in reality oozed blood and gore is depicted in terms of a pandemic of dementia afflicted instigation to violence. Although the writers labour hard to refrain from betraying their prejudice, it sometimes slips in by way of castigating either one of the community for inciting the retributive violence that betrayed the land and its culture. That much of the literary outpouring on Partition was in the vernacular rimmed it from the larger reading public.

The Indian English novel made its appearance in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and limped its way into the 20<sup>th</sup> century with sporadic publications. Critics widely concur that the Indian English novel came into its own in the 1930s and was preoccupied with consolidating the notion of a composite, syncretic nation. Partition novels emerged with Kushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* (1956) and several others have followed. From initially being a recounting of Partition to grappling with the violence and lately an assessment of the event, Partition still continues to haunt the sub-continent.

In the colossal work available under Partition Studies, there emerges a tilt in favour of the events in Punjab and Bengal's experience is marginalized. The escalation of violence in the Punjab—today is evaluated in terms of 'pogrom', 'genocide' and 'holocaust'—prompted the Nehru Government to tackle the Punjab crisis on a war footing; whereas the Bengali crisis, having been perceived as reversible, was neglected. This is evidenced even in the literary representation. Both languages have created a vast body of Partition Literature: while the Punjabi experience has been easier to access, the Bengali literature was not as easily available.

What is understood as access refers to the English translations of the vernacular literary works was either available or yet to be. In this regard, these

works in English translation seized power in projecting the tragedy in Punjab over the Bengal tragedy. Translation work picked up around the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of independence, but again Punjabi works came to the fore as opposed to the Bengali ones. It is only with Amitav Ghosh's English novels on the Bengali experience of Partition that translation has picked up to foreground the tragedy of Bengal. So also, new works researching the Bengali experience of Partition evocatively ushers in new idioms to unspool the strands of the anguish of Partition.

## **1.2 WHY PARTITION STUDIES?**

The Partition of India is an area of study that encompasses the colonial yoking and its shrugging off. In the interim lies the story of a sub-continent annexed under a central sway. This hegemonic power and its tentacles bound a vast swathe of land; this central administration necessitated a re-aligned allegiance—from feudal overlords to imperial masters. The McCauley Minutes (1835) to mint brown sahibs—essentially western educated English speaking functionaries—to oversee and monitor the administrative machinery exposed Indians to western education and thought. The Minutes clarify the outcome of this enterprise in these words, 'We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions we govern,—a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and intellect.'<sup>2</sup>

The cultural confrontation secured by imperial notions entrenched new hierarchical structures of the superiority of the occident over the orient. Denying the difference as another legitimate and equitable existence, the difference was sought to classify the other as inherently heathen in need of urgent rescue. Macaulay, earlier in his Minutes submits, 'History furnishes several analogous cases, and they all teach the same lesson. There are, in modern times, to go no further, two memorable instances of a great impulse given to the mind of a whole society, of prejudices overthrown, of knowledge diffused, of taste purified, of arts and sciences planted in countries which had recently been ignorant and barbarous.' No doubt he is referring to England's renaissance and Russia's recent transformation, but by implication, Macaulay

alludes to India's primitiveness.<sup>3</sup> The religious scaffolding of the colonial enterprise is laid bare therein.

However, the spread of English education also ushered in the notions of nationality, freedom and democracy. The very tool to keep the natives subservient became the tool for empowerment. Slowly but surely, the English speaking elite began to question their second class status in their own land. Although the British were unwilling to make any concessions, the political organization of the intelligentsia under the banner of the Indian National Congress made inroads on two levels—being the only political party initially, they represented the multitude while simultaneously holding meetings in different locations of the country to popularize the ideas of freedom and nationality and to galvanize the masses.

The religious revivalism, the divide and rule policy, the systemic bias polarized the country on religious and communal lines. Given Britain's war experience, its erstwhile colonies demanding freedom beleaguered it further. The colonial politics tempered with regional politicking brought the country to the brink of a likely civil war. The climaxing crescendo in the demand for freedom coupled with the incendiary two-nation theory exploded with the delivery of the promised freedom by sundering the country, thereby casting the two newly minted nations into permanent instability experienced as vertigo by Salim in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981).

The complete breakdown of law and order, the insensate violence and the annihilation of humanity in the attendant fratricide—all were symptomatic of a civil war. The failure to keep the country whole stoked the embers of fear and hatred. The official silence was an ominous and an officious refusal to acknowledge the magnitude of the catastrophe. Officialdom pedantically attempted to deal with the physicality of the event providing medical supplies, food and shelter, even battalions of soldiers to ward off further attacks. The psychological attrition ran deep and personal histories, literary representations, artistic depictions as also oral histories need to be catalogued to even begin to put the pieces together. The further away in time the event moves, it takes

away from the immeasurability of the Partition experience thereby, further heightening the chances of collective amnesia.

### **1.3 ABOUT THE RESEARCH WORK**

The above introduction to the background to the present study, calls for a brief delineation of the proposed plan of the work that has been undertaken in the course of this research. The basic literature survey and background study generated the following aim and objectives for this work to explore, understand and interpret the chosen domain of research:

#### **1.3.1 Aim and Objectives**

➤ The main aim of the present study has been to gauge the spatio-temporal axis in history as memory as evident in the creative out-pouring of Partition responses in the selected texts of this study and critically engage with the question of representation of the event itself.

**Allied to this aim, are the following objectives:**

➤ To explore and elucidate space as central to conflict: from territory or physical space to the mental, emotional, cultural and gendered spaces.

➤ To study the violence and its impact on physical and psychological spaces.

➤ To delve into trauma recalled and remembered as memory and examine its role as healing nostalgia or superseding palliative.

➤ To place in perspective the depiction of violence, its causes and consequent effects and undertake to find answers to probing questions such as: What must have been it for the perpetrator and victim alike to resort to and be a victim of this violence? In the event of the dehumanization exposed in the depiction of violence, was there any remorse on the part of the perpetrators? And moreover, what must have been the impact of violence on the citizens?

#### **1.3.2 Methodology**

The present study has sought to undertake a minute reading of the selected texts as well as of historical works, along with a wide ranging study of available critical interpretations of primary texts and events. Furthermore, the study will utilize specific critical approaches to the selected texts to arrive at a nuanced reading of dislocation vis-à-vis contested spaces, conflicting identities and its impact on memory. The chief theories sought to be employed are:

- New Historicism
- Subaltern Studies
- Trauma Studies

Historical, political and sociological sources will be used to buttress the argument that the event should be opened up for study in the mainstream and be an integral part of the state narrative of India's freedom struggle and its independence. This additional sourcing from other areas of study will yield rich resources and provide thick description to the inter-disciplinary nature of this study.

### **1.3.3 HYPOTHESIS**

The idea that history need not reside within the pages of history but can be revisited via literary narratives that fictionalize history is the thread that has been previously explored in several studies. The present research will examine/reinforce the significance of and the necessity for such a reading that seeks to provide deeper insights into the impact of history on ordinary lives. It intends to subsume the overarching nationalistic grand narrative to the voices of the marginalized as represented in the select texts, to explore the agency of the local in either supporting or opposing the chain of events that led to the Partition, to establish that the territorial dispute is central to the event including the violence and trauma that followed. This study purports to make literary representations a party to the exploration of Partition history to create a path to alternative re-reading of history that will further broaden the scope of re-thinking the event. The creative enterprise that Partition fiction is also what turns them into political statements/ indictments. Objectivity is juxtaposed with the individual subjective response, the neutral voice is resisted in favour

of a polemical stance: this is done with a view to reflectively reconstruct the event to engage the readers to question whether this is a mere retelling of history using an imaginative framework or is there a larger objective-viz. the interrogation of what are the known factors of the event in order to rethink the event to arrive at an alternative rereading. The people's voice is given full scope and their experiences centralized; the leaders' ideas and leadership are revealed through the eyes of the people and their reactions.

#### **1.4 DELIMITATIONS**

The present study is limited to the first partition of the-then undivided India in 1947 only and will not venture into the partition of Pakistan in 1971 and the Bangladesh war of independence. Again, the primary texts chosen for the study are restricted to the novels that come in the immediate vicinity of Partition right up to 1988; novels that recount the Partition events as recollected reality. The novels preceding Partition are viewed as source material in appreciating the causes alluded to as the *causis belli* of Partition. Partition has formed the core of Indian English as well as *bhasha* novels even in recent times. What is different is not so much the theme as its treatment. The initial novels were written to record the horror and its sheer bewilderment of Partition; the later novels are more to do with an exploration, an attempt to explain the implications, an exposition of sorts.

Since, the choice of primary texts is not merely related to Indian novels in English, but is inclusive of novels in translation from Urdu, Punjabi and Hindi, the short-comings of translation may have been inherent in this study. This inclusion is sought to conduct a comparative study into the responses of the writers in different languages tackling the immediacy of Partition from both sides of the border. This could throw up some amount of contradictions in viewpoints, treatment of the topic and responses to the event in accordance with the writers' agenda-both expressed and latent

##### **1.4.1 Scheme of Chapters**

The proposed chapterization of the work undertaken is outlined below:

Chapter One: Introduction

Chapter Two: Through the Prisms of History: Contextualizing the Nation, Contending with Partition

Chapter Three: Territory and Nationhood: A Glimpse at Spatial Dislocation and Rupture

Chapter Four: Violence and Trauma: Revisiting Experiences to Transcend Memory

Chapter Five: Conclusion

Chapter One will present the background to the study, provide details about the aims, objectives and methodology to be used, summarise the selected tests, briefly describe the literature survey while chalking out both the scope and delimitations of the study. The notions of territory, nationality, trauma and memory have been mobilized to demarcate the specificity of the study, represented by the primary texts and substantiated by the secondary sources along with available critiques in books, journals and e-resources. This Chapter has also established the frames of reference within which the discussion has been grounded.

Chapter Two employs the New Historicist approach to analyze Qurratulain Hyder's *River of Fire* and Yashpal's *This Is Not That Dawn* as the two texts that puncture the statist nationalistic narrative. *River of Fire* does this by foregrounding two thousand five hundred years of history in a fluid compelling read through the thick of historical facts and personal asides to establish that history has its own rhythm and gait. Furthering this thread, *This Is Not that Dawn* delves into the people's experience of history and proves that the heroic nature of the people triumphs over the adverse circumstances. This Chapter also uncovers how both *River of Fire* and *This Is Not That Dawn*, each in its own way, offers an insightful critique of Partition: while *River of Fire* puts it within the perspective of the fluidity of historical time, *This Is Not That Dawn* casts it within the frames of the real politick of competing ideologies and identities of the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League.

Chapter Three has investigated the idea of nationhood, the coalescing of princely states under the British rule, to begin the struggle for self-realization as one nation only to settle for the bifurcation of the sub-continent with violent reprisal—unleashed by the citizens upon the citizens when the dream of one nation was queered. The Chapter has also delineated the ways and means by which the ordinary people of the land became either perpetrators or victims of the violence, how this violence punctured the continuum of daily life as experienced by the sense of permanence that pervaded their social relationships, what shook this sense of ‘foreverness’ and in what manner this tragedy was resisted. It has also examined to what extent they were successful in reconciling to the new reality that redrew their notions of home and homeland, that identified them as belonging to a specific religious community and the sense of loss and alienation that haunted them.

Chapter Four has investigated the main tropes of the roles of violence and trauma associated with the emotions invested in the land and how memory of the rupture implodes lives. The theories of trauma and memory as also the illustrations from the select texts have been used to propound a cogent argument in determining the verisimilitude of the hypothesis. The kinds of violence that Partition engendered and how the women’s body became the site for underscoring the territorial dispute form the core themes. Situating the texts within the contextual milieu, this Chapter has also discussed the place of trauma in Partition Literature, the coping mechanisms used to deal with traumatic memory and whether these memories are transcended.

Chapter Five is the concluding chapter. It has undertaken to compare the observations in the select texts in the light of theoretical analyses to arrive at certain findings to support the hypothesis or belie it. The contested ideas and the conclusions will together serve to tie the strands explored in this study. This chapter expects to highlight the instrumentality of Partition narratives in establishing the multivocalistic approach that is prerequisite to not just understand the Partition but also subject the history of the time to multiple voices to intercede on behalf of the personal experience of tragedy as against the nationalistic narrative that is imposed.

## 1.5 PRIMARY TEXTS

The study utilizes four texts each from India and Pakistan to study the Partition from both sides.

**1.5.1 *Train to Pakistan-Kushwant Singh*** (published in 1956) is set in a nondescript village, Mano Majra, in the time period just before the Partition and localizes the politics of the time. The harmonious syncretic living is a fact of the village. The thugs and officialdom interact on the outskirts of this bond. It is only with the appearance of the 'ghost train' that the villagers and officialdom chance upon each other. With the mass cremation of the bodies that the train had borne, the village is buffeted by the searing and uneasy winds of Partition.

Jugga is surreptitiously indulging in his love for Nooran. The Muslims are evacuated to a nearby refugee camp. Nooran confesses her pregnancy to Jugga's mother, who at first berates her and then promises to tell Jugga. A group of youth from nowhere venture into the premises of the gurudwara and stoke the fires of hatred and vengeance. Malli, still smarting from Jugga's public thrashing, is the first to volunteer to derail the train and engage in mass killing. He knew about Jugga's love for Nooran and the thought of ensuring her death sweetens the deal. Jugga, having heard the rumors of the plan, climbs the bridge to cut through the thick rope tied across the steel span. He eventually manages to do so just before he is shot down and his body is laid across the tracks. The train goes over him safely across to Pakistan.

From being an every village to falling prey to the senseless violence of the times, Singh puts Partition in the socio-cultural context of the times. The frightening violence is made believable and blame is shared by all. Singh makes a strong suit for the knowledge of the grisly happenings by posing moral questions of right v/s wrong in times of confusion and justifies that the consciousness of the bad is a necessary prerequisite to the prevention of the bad repeating itself.

**1.5.2 *Pinjar-Amrita Pritam*** (published in 1950) is a Punjabi novel and is Amrita Pritam's debut novel. She is appreciated for her poetry and *Pinjar* was the first novel she had penned. Pooro hailed from a respectable family who had faced penury. Rather than face further disgrace, her father and uncle had

gone to Thailand and turned around the family's fortunes. Once this was achieved and the roof over their heads was secured, her parents got her engaged to the son of a well-to-do family from a neighbouring village; and, as was customary, her twelve year old brother was betrothed to her fiancé's sister who was still a young child. Amrita Pritam's novel is about the gruesome violence centered on women. It is the story of Pooro, a Hindu girl kidnapped by Rashida, a Muslim youth, to settle an old festering family feud. When she gets an opportunity to escape, she runs back home only to have her family turn her away for fear of vengeance—physical and social—that might be unleashed upon them for taking her back. Rashida seeks her out, forces her to convert, marry him and has her Muslim identity tattooed on her forearm.

The birth of her son brings her round to her fate and she then makes it her mission to befriend, assist and/or rescue women in unfortunate circumstances viz. Kammo, Taro, the 'mad' woman and the girl who hides in their sugarcane field. Soon the country side is torn apart by the conflagration owing to the rumoured Partition. Hamida is tormented by the stories of what each community did to the women of the other community. Her marital village fell into Pakistan. She witnesses horrors in her village and hears of the brutal fate that met the Hindu families attempting to flee. The story ends with Ram Chand's family migrating to India and Pooro helping them recover Lajo. Though she is beseeched by her brother to go over the border, she chooses to stay on in Pakistan. *Pinjar* is a powerful portrayal of women's helplessness and a telling commentary of her lack of status and agency.

**1.5.3. *Tamas-Bhisham Singh Sahni*** (published in 1974) is set in the backdrop of the 1947 riots and is largely episodic in nature. The story deals with several families and characters that are good, bad and opportunistic. From the incident of Nathu killing a pig to it being found on the steps of the village mosque when all hell breaks out, *Tamas* is a chilling story about the four days of violent massacres and retaliatory counter-attacks. *Tamas* by Bhisham Singh Sahni brings to center stage the desecration of the sacred in the episode of the discovery of the carcass of a pig in front of the mosque that elevates tensions already running rife into an incendiary cauldron. A small nondescript town is sought to be brought into the fold of nationalistic fervor by the Congress and

League loyalists. It is during the Prabhat Pheri that the carcass is discovered and they immediately make arrangements for its disposal. This alienates the communities and each community—be it Hindu, Sikh or Muslim—stealthily stockpiles all kinds of arms, from the humble stone and stick to spears and pistols.

The Hindus and Sikhs join hands and pledge support to each other; while a delegation approaches Richard, the Deputy Commissioner stationed to oversee the regional administration, with a petition requesting urgent government intervention to contain the imminent explosion. Richard, though an Indophile, practices the British policy of disengagement. He denies having any power to intervene and instead blames the nationalists for making the British a scapegoat for matters that either involve the British or inter-community discord. The plea to have army pickets or curfew imposed fall on deaf ears and instead the idea of a peace rally is born. The hostility is palpable in the still silence that engulfs the village; each community fears to venture into areas that are inhabited by the other community; where once there existed interdependence and camaraderie, there reposed only suspicion and distrust. The extremists on both sides pushed for acquiring weapons and skilling themselves in their use; while the people studiously kept to themselves. Ever so slowly the stifling stillness frightened the people and they began to look for means of escape.

All around them villages are burning. In the melee, it was a free for all. Looting and arson were gleefully indulged in. The entire place burned for two days, attempts at mediation failed and the direct attacks spurred the women to commit mass suicide by jumping into the well. In this charged atmosphere, the British administration sent an aeroplane for an aerial survey and its mere drone put paid to the fighting. Soldiers swarmed the villages, relief operations began, the Deputy Commissioner personally ventured to visit the riot stricken, issued orders and made arrangements for relief work. A Committee was formed to take stock of the situation and list both survivors and the dead. In the refugee camps, the people repeatedly recounted the horrors they faced but officialdom was deaf to their pain; they were merely interested in statistics. The villages slowly limped back to life and the book closes with a bus taking all the

representatives of the warring factions on a Peace Mission with Murad Ali sitting next to the driver.

**1.5.4 *Jhootha Sach-Yashpal*** (published in two volumes: Volume I is titled “Vatan aur Desh”-1958 and Volume II is titled “Desh ka Bhavishya”-1960) wherein the first volume describes the pre-partition events leading to independence and Partition; the second volume narrates the post-partition riots and the task of nation building up until the first general elections. The story unfolds from the point of view and involvement of the brother-sister duo: Jaidev Puri and Tara. Puri’s credentials as patriot are suspect whereas Tara is a woman of principle.

“**Vatan aur Desh**”, is concentrated in a narrow bye lane, Bhola Pandhe’s Gali, in Lahore. The families live cheek by jowl and are connected as not only neighbours but also as friends. The first volume follows the fervor and tumult of the freedom movement and then the disbelief and dross of the politicking to separate the populations on majoritarian lines to carve a new Muslim country. The isolated and random incidents of violence give way to intense and targeted episodes of violence. Newspapers report the incidents of violence and editorials create havoc. Youth unions persist in marching and rallying support for the unity of the subcontinent. In the end, no one is spared: their individual lives collapse and they are either witnesses to/victims of the violence. Puri’s intrepid journey as a reporter is cut short for he refuses to toe the editorial line and the love of his life, Kanak, fights to marry him. Tara is married against her wishes and her attempt to escape her fate lands her in the frying pan. She is raped, preached at to convert her and is abandoned to the mercy of thugs. She is rescued by a recovery team and is transported to India. Puri and Tara lose their homeland, Lahore, to Partition and end up separated.

“**Desh ka Bhavishya**” chalks out the tale where Jaidev encashes his freedom fighter days whereas Tara is rescued from a holding and clears her Civil Service Exams with the noble intention of assisting in nation-building. Jaidev makes himself indispensable to Sood and benefits from it as he is given a press to supervise. Fate in the form of an unfortunate incident deals him a trump card whereby ownership is transferred to him. Kanak finds him in the arms of Urmila and overlooks it to marry her love. She looks after the press as Puri’s

involvement in politics goes beyond assisting Sood and he himself takes a more active role by standing for elections. The physical and psychological assault and trauma that Tara underwent makes her extremely wary and alert. She is helped by people who feel better about helping hapless individuals. Tara uses all the opportunities that come her way to reach a position of office whereby she can assist the victims of Partition. It is a trenchant critique of the transformation of nationalists and patriots from self-sacrificing fighters of freedom to corrupt, selfish individuals who seek offices of profit.

**1.5.5 *River of Fire-Qurratulain Hyder*** (published 1959) is a captivating engagement with two thousand years of Indian history from the points of view of four recurring characters viz. Gautam, Champa, Kamal and Cyril. From pre-colonial history to post-colonial critique of the nation state, *River of Fire* exhumes history and provides fascinating cohesion to her Partition narrative. Divided into four Epochs—the Hindu-Buddhist, Turco-Iranian, Mughal-Colonial and Colonial-postcolonial—the protagonists assume the form and characteristics of each age and pulsate with the rich culture of that age. The Hindu-Buddhist age illustrates the frequent wars between kings aspiring to establish empires and the weak, small kingdoms falling prey to that ambition. This story is juxtaposed with the Buddhist phase where individuals search for the meaning of life and nirvana. The Turco-Iranian age describes the illustrious Muslim phase of history, where individuals of talent travelled to be at the epicenter of culture. Wars were constantly waged while kings commissioned cities and centres of learning. The ascetic culture is represented by the Sufis.

The Mughal-colonial phase begins with the tales of the great wealth and culture of the Muslims, but presents the decline of the Mughal rule. The British are just arriving on the shores of India and view India as the path to getting rich quick. As the British establish and extend their rule, the old worldly charm of the royal courts is strangulated. One heroic attempt to overthrow them is the 1857 Uprising, but they are beaten back and the English rule is unchallenged. The Colonial-postcolonial phase sees the fervor of the freedom movement and the Partition of the Country. The book ends on the note of the pain of divided loyalties.

**1.5.6 *Toba Tek Singh-Saadat Hasan Manto*** (published in 1955) is set in and follows the inmates of a Lahore asylum. It was felt two years after Partition that India and Pakistan should exchange these inmates in accordance with Partition norms along the same lines as the exchange of prisoners. The asylum inmates included the insane and the murderers, whose families bribed their way to escape the hangman's noose; but neither of the two categories of inmates, had any clue of this new turn of events. The dilemma is clearly wrung out when Manto states, 'If they were in India, where on earth was Pakistan? And if they were in Pakistan, then how come that until only the other day it was India' (72). From here on the inmates lose what little semblance of reality that they had lived with and the bizarre responses ironically signal a dystopian world. The story centers around Bishen Singh, a once prosperous landlord hailing from the village of Toba Tek Singh who had lost his grip on reality. He was only concerned with the fate of his village and pestered the other inmates as to the location of Toba Tek Singh. It remained his last tenuous link to his roots.

The official paperwork proceeded with great efficiency and the day of the exchange dawns. The Hindu and Sikh inmates were taken by bus to Wagha, the place where the exchange was to transpire. No sooner did the papers change hands than all hell broke loose. Inmates responded with plain refusal, running in several directions at once, singing, abusing or weeping. Some even tore at their garments and ran naked. Fights broke out. On learning that Toba Tek Singh lay in Pakistan, Bishen Singh first tried to run; on being caught, he refused to budge. The day turned to night and then to dawn, a scream rent the air of official head-counting and propelled the officials to the scene. Bishen Singh collapsed and breathed his last in that little strip of land that was neither India nor Pakistan. This short fiction is a powerful satire on Partition in which the insanity of the inmates is more humane than the sanity of the officials of both countries.

**1.5.7 *Ice Candy Man-Bapsi Sidhwa*** (published in 1988) unfolds through the child narrator, Lenny and her Ayah. Lenny, who is lame and helpless, observes the goings on where the Ayah is much desired by several including the Ice Candy Man. Ayah unabashedly decides who may or may not be called

on to bestow her favors. Lenny's circumscribed world lies between home and Godmother's house. Ayah is Lenny's passport to a free-wheeling education of people, places and experiences that would have been out of her reach had she been a normal kid. The goings on in the household and the occasional bursting in of the subaltern voices in terms of the servants, itinerant hawkers and their inter-play liven up the proceedings. The Parsee preoccupation to decide the future course of action under the possibility of changed dispensations is another problem that seems to shake their sanguinary disposition.

Imam Din's fear that the goings on in the city will impact the villages becomes the worst nightmare. Ranna's village faces the brunt of Partition violence and the village, as they knew it, no longer exists. Mother is involved in some hush-hush matters that Lenny discovers to be the rescue and rehabilitation of women victims of violence. Lenny's inadvertent moment of truth discloses Ayah's whereabouts. Partition reverses the tale where the Ice Candy Man is instrumental in Ayah's abduction and rape. She is now in a brothel with the Ice Candy Man as her so called husband. Lenny and Cousin see Ayah all decked up in a taxi and takes this startling piece of news to Godmother. Ascertaining her wish to escape, Lenny's godmother arranges for her rescue and rehabilitation. Last heard, she was sent across the border to her hometown, Amritsar, with the Ice Candy Man following in hot pursuit.

**1.5.8 *Sunlight on a Broken Column*-Attia Hussain** (published in 1961) where the central character, Laila, observes the socio-political events emerging through its impact on her life. An orphan under the conservative guardianship of her grandfather, she nonetheless accesses western education. On her grandfather's death, it is the autocratic Uncle Hamid who does profess liberal ideas, yet denies her personal freedom. Allowed to attend college, she is enmeshed in the political turmoil but is unable to take sides on account of her circumscribed existence. Ashiana is home to Laila, Zahra, Asad, Zahid, Kemal and Saleem—all cousins. Aunt Saira, Kemal's and Saleem's mother—desperately tries to marry her sons to Laila, both of them reject the proposition outright and they remain on good terms all their life. She revolts and marries Ameer, a poor relative thus staking a claim for her freedom only to have her husband die young as a man seeking fortune in the army.

The moment of freedom tears the family apart. Kemal marries a Parsee and chooses to remain in India; while Saleem marries Nadira and moves to Pakistan. Zahid takes the train to Pakistan on the eve of independence but is slaughtered with the rest of the passengers. Asad works assiduously to shore up the under-privileged and usher them to the benefits of freedom. The assurance of the power and pelf that they grew up with declines as freedom brings changes in the old holding patterns that affect their ownership. As strangers reside in Ashiana, Laila reminisces the past and shivers at the fall from grace. Her pragmatism pushes her up and she prefers to look to the future than bank upon the past. Her acceptance of cousin Asad is indicative of her confusion with the secular credentials that she grew up with.

**1.5.9 Primary Resources:** will remain the texts chosen for study.

**1.5.10 Secondary Resources:** refer to the available critical analyses through scholarly journals and books. Since the study includes political, sociological and psychological points of reference, journals and books both in print as also e-resources available in the relevant fields of study will inform the basic premise. These will also include books written in the aftermath of the event. Later and recent works in this regard will be used as secondary resources if required to emphasize points made earlier or to provide access to areas hitherto ignored. Also first person narratives, poems, autobiography, epistles and the like will be referred to and used to strengthen or demolish arguments made.

## **1.6 LITERATURE REVIEW**

The present study has explored Partition Literature through a reading of the narrative fiction of the period. The study relates to three focal points viz. firstly, territory and belongingness both in physical and emotional terms; secondly, nationality as understood in political, psychological and social terms; and finally, memory that is both deeply personal and simultaneously collective in form.

These threads are woven together in the Partition Literature of India and Pakistan where Partition brought to an abrupt end 'a long and communally

shared history and cultural heritage.’ Contested spaces owing to religious affiliation, traumatized by forced displacement and its attendant communal violence, effectively divide time between before Partition and after Partition thereby cleaving identity, belonging and memory.

**1.6.1** To explore the spatio-temporal axis in history as memory is evidenced in the creative outpouring of Partition responses.

- Rituparna Roy in her book *South Asian Partition Fiction in English: From Kushwant Singh to Amitav Ghosh* emphasizes the inextricability of Indian independence from Partition and delineates its pervasive influence and impact on contemporary life. While reviewing the various theories on the whys and hows of Partition, Roy does deal with the official stance on this historical juncture and quotes Aitzaz Ahsan’s ‘The Indus Saga and the Making of Pakistan’ that conforms and confirms this view- “[...] the inevitable crystallization of the desire of the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent to remain a distinct community, separate from the Hindu population around them” (13).
- Neeti Nair in her book, *Changing Homelands: Hindu Politics and the Partition of India* debunks the ‘inevitability’ of Partition. She instead forces attention on the demographic strength of the different religious denominations in Punjab for the period 1907 to the summer of 1947 and attention is drawn to the negotiations for power sharing between these denominations. She squarely blames the breakdown of negotiations for the ensuing communal violence and views with astonishment the response of disbelief that Partition happened as is assayed in all initial narratives.
- In her paper titled “Hinduism and Modern Literature”, Clarisa Calzado situates Indian writing in the cocooning wraps of mythology and folklore traditions. The major influence of the British Raj lay in the renewed interest and later dominance of the prose forms of literature. This tryst with British modernity led to the buildup of a shibboleth-that of a ‘homogenized, idealized Hinduism’-the first surge of an anti-colonial response. In Partition narratives Calzado sees modernist themes becoming central to literature and mythology and folklore the tropes of narration.

- Rosemary Marangoly George in her paper titled “(Extra)Ordinary Violence: National Literatures, Diasporic Aesthetics and the Politics of Gender in South Asian Partition Fiction” argues in favour of treating Partition Literature under Diasporic Literatures for it describes themes of migration, loss, pain of remembrance and the challenges of adjustments. “I am arguing, instead, that the two are intimately intertwined and that it would be productive to bring the diasporic privileging of mobility, travel, memory, split affiliations, and so on, to bear on the hallowed ground of national discourses because it reveals the scaffolding on which the nationalistic is raised.”
- “Remembering Partition: Women, Oral Histories and the Partition of 1947” by Pippa Virdee enquires into the recent shifts in Partition historiography which makes it possible to utilize oral testimonies of ordinary people who experienced Partition to provide a more realistic (as opposed to the nationalistic approach) for a more nuanced reading. These narratives provide alternative narratives to the dominant histories. Women’s perspectives thus add a new dimension of women’s agency—of playing multiple roles than that of the ‘victim’ only—to recover women from history and through circumvention to carve out spaces for women’s histories.

**1.6.2** Space as central to conflict: from territory, to physical, mental, intellectual, emotional, cultural and gendered spaces.

- Akisato Suzuki in his paper titled “Partition and Conflict Transformation in India-Pakistan and Cyprus” views Partition as a ‘conflict settlement approach’ that gets ‘diluted’ on the following grounds:
  - Partition offers neither peace nor security; all it does is take an intra-state conflict to the newly created inter-state conflict at the international level.
  - Partition as a compromise than a solution.
  - Partition as generating a larger security dilemma, “more difficult to manage because of the anarchic nature of international politics”.
  - Partition works only under limited conditions.
- Mushirul Hasan in his paper titled “Partition Narratives”, divulges the explosion of traditional, state sponsored histories to the prevalent trends of not just revisiting the sites of Partition history but also restructuring it,

rethinking it and inventing a new language to express these ideas. He mainly tries to recover the voice of Gandhi from the diminishing value attached to it in the wake of violence and his inability to assist in controlling it. From being the only catalyst in brokering any agreement between the Hindus and Muslims to feeling the erosion of power, Hasan senses Gandhi's demise before his actual assassination.

- S. S. Tabraz and D. Sambandhan in their paper titled "A Tale of Two Partitions" critically read the Indo-Pak situation vis à vis the Israeli-Palestinian experience to express the fact that the first generation experience of Partition is based on selective memory whereas the second generation narratives rigorously question the process of selection and mediation indulged in by their predecessors. The impact of Partition narratives lies in the demonizing of the 'other' and such a position is untenable in that it is neither true nor desirable.
- David Gilmartin in his paper titled "Partition, Pakistan, and South Asian History: In Search of a Narrative" juxtaposes the "high politics" of Partition with the "history from below" where he finds the disconnect between the decisions leading to Partition having evolved in the rarefied air of high politics to it being experienced as a consequence by ordinary citizens as the single most powerful and repetitive response in Partition narratives. "The contours of a narrative of the memory of Partition [...]" are defined by the singular individual experiences coloured by the nationalistic appropriation of the narrative to "restore a Patriarchal moral order."
- Ayesha Jalal in her paper titled "Partition, Subalterns and the Stigma of 'Communalism': Partition Historiography Revisited" questions the nationalistic emphasis of even the scholarly historiography of Partition. Jalal opines that the historical certitudes of received wisdom on Partition face a fresh onslaught in the wake of new readings; yet there seems no end in sight of the bitterness that colours this event which looks at Partition not as "the promised new dawn but the moment of painful separation". The scholarship in this area treads new ground and, while providing new insights about nationalistic readings, they do not break new ground away from the nationalistic framework.

- Anjali Bhardwaj Dutta in her paper titled “Gendering Oral History of Pakistan: Interrogating Patriarchy”, delves beyond the victimization of women during Partition to look into the events following Partition where, along with the state’s role as care giver, women are pushed into circumstances that destroy hallowed patriarchal notions of women’s identity and place in social structures to enabling them to create/take on new roles thereby redefining their identities. From victimhood to refugee status to finally picking up the pieces as women proceeded to own their agency and take charge of moving on is the subject of this paper.
- Mushirul Hasan in his paper titled “Memories of a Fragmented Nation: Rewriting the Histories of India’s Partition”, finds the long standing debates on the two nation theory or British imperialistic approaches as brushes to paint respectability to an otherwise flawed narrative as the fictional output in this regard upholds a mirror to show the inadequacy of dominant Partition narratives to explain individual experience within its paradigms. In fact Hasan strongly feels that Partition fiction makes a compelling case for alternative narratives to come to terms with Partition.
- Dooleka Sarhadi Raj in her paper titled “Ignorance, Forgetting, and Family Nostalgia: Partition, the Nation State and Refugees in Delhi”, explores “Partition as the flip side of Indian independence, and regrettable event that allowed the nation its freedom”. Raj sees this thought residing in the “fringe(s) of national collective memory”. Reminiscence/ nostalgia are evoked to access the intertwining “narratives of partition and independence”. “The family narratives reveal that the different ways refugee families remember partition reconfigures the interplay of memory, forgetting and ignorance through the generations. Forgetting in one generation turns into a family ignorance which develops an overtly political register as the nation collectively remembers.”
- Jasbir Jain in her paper titled “Daughters of India in Search of a Nation: Women’s Narratives about the Nation” recasts the old metaphor of ‘Mother India’ with whom women have no relational status. Women’s belonging has not been defined in nationalistic terms. Partition narratives,

more specifically women's narratives, are sieved to explore women's perspectives on nation and nationhood.

- Kamran Rastegar in her paper titled "Trauma and Maturation in Women's War Narratives: The Eye of the Mirror and Cracking India", study the Lebanese Civil War in comparison with Partition, using the 'naïveté' of its female protagonists on the verge of womanhood within the patriarchal framework; by associating it with the political division of recasting nations. This is achieved by erasing the distinction between creative writing and critical social history.
- Kavita Daiya in her paper titled "'Honourable Resolutions': Gendered Violence, Ethnicity and the Nation' works to create a link between official testimony and lived individual experience. Rastegar endeavors to portray that the silence surrounding much of the violence is in response to the collective responsibility of all the major players and hence dismissed as a moment of "insanity". This palliative narrative was enforced to cement internal order thereby pouring water on enflamed passions. All Partition fiction is not only the retelling of the struggle against colonialism and for independence; it also always is a segueing into the idea of the nation state with the 'history and memory of Partition' as its attendant themes.

### **1.6.3 Violence and its impact on physical and psychological spaces.**

- Veena Das in her paper titled "Violence, Gender and Subjectivity" refers to sexual violence during Partition as "[...] mark(ing) the women of other groups as "spoiled", and violence, actual and fantasized, treated women's bodies as a means of humiliating the men of the other community." This was possible because of the existence of the notion of *social death*: "One implication of social death is that a woman who has been abducted and raped becomes dishonoured and either chooses death or is rejected by the family."
- Gyanendra Pandey in his paper titled "Community and Violence: Recalling Partition" reflects that Partition is remembered through the 'violence done to them' and not in the multi-dimensional definition of violence "[...] as victims, aggressors and on lookers." The primary response to violence is an

externalization into a realm 'out there'. Pandey brings home a striking point when he states that there are 'marked borders' in the relation between community and violence wherein what occurs within the community does not constitute violence and that violence can occur only at or beyond this point.

Pandey cites the juxtaposition of 'our martyrdom' and 'their violence' or 'their attacks' and 'our revenge'. He further evolves a theory to show the coping strategies adopted and exhibited by the 'victims' viz.

- A conscious/unconscious displacement of guilt and shame
- Denial of knowledge/participation in acts of violence
- Normalizing abduction-recovery by extolling the treatment meted out to them
- Wishing away the violence by glossing over the reality and their role in it.

**1.6.4** Trauma recalled and remembered as memory and its role as healing nostalgia or a superseding palliative.

- Anna Bernard in her paper titled "Forms of Memory: Partition as a Literary Paradigm" is of the opinion that all twentieth century Partition narratives are tales that commit to the cause of social justice and not merely the ostensible reason of 'security concerns'. She then ventures to propose a methodology to arrive at an ease of comparing Partition works within the traditional notions of kinds of fiction e.g. Romance, Bildungsroman and Fragmented Narrative.

- Urvashi Butalia in her paper titled "Community, State and Gender: On Women's Agency during Partition" asks why Partition history was such a state secret; there being a mere trickle of actual reports of the violence of the times. Butalia seeks to understand memory as a subjective process of 'selection and mediation'. Partition violence is seen as engineered by men and women had to bear the brunt of it. The sheer manic violence is linked by Butalia to patriarchal ideas of violence and viewed as solely relating to men. "And so communalized have such notions become, that we only see violence as only relating to the 'other', the 'aggressor'."

**1.6.5** Depiction of violence, its causes and consequent effects.

- Naresh Garg in his paper titled “Theme of Partition and Independence in Indian Literature in English” discovers writers ascribing significance to Partition not only as a ‘political occurrence’ but as ‘treachery’ for the (in)human cost paid in ‘lives lost, raped and orphaned.’ Partition narratives are then the creative representation of “the brutality, inhumanity and genocide”. Garg points out to the laying bare of the victims’ plight and categorically states, “[...] politics as responsible for this human carnage.” The writers, Garg further elucidates “[...] expose human nature and its capability of carrying out cruelty and barbarism on its own creed”.

- Jisha Menon in her paper titled “Rehearsing the Partition: Gendered Violence in *Aur Kitne Tukde*” speaks of the unspeakably sexual nature of political violence of the Partition in evoking colonial and nationalist identities by carving women’s bodies into vehicles of cultural transmission. Menon depicts the violent objectification of commodified bodies that attain subjecthood through their experience of sexual violence to become communiqués ‘[...] to other men who will encounter their bodies’.

**1.6.6 Literature Overview** This overview ticks the categories that define this study viz. nation, nationality, territory, identity, violence, memory, gender and refugee. The nation/nationality question problematises the category of spatiality/territory. Nation appropriates territorial rights traditionally associated with the community that has been exercised for generations; thus legitimizing its *raison d’être* to that space to be notionally its place of being. It also presumes a level of homogeneity of language, culture, costume, cuisine, ethnic and religious predilections that deny the diversity and plurality of the syncreneity that was a way of life prior to nationhood. The British administrative intercession that classified populations affiliated along religious identities and therein granting them political representation became the turning point that emphasized their religious identity over and above their composite identity.

Territory, identity and collective memory are tropes of large-scale conflict. Territory gains centrality through its ability to be at once a tangible resource crucial to the survival of the people; and the affective, intangible mooring of

emotive ties that bring to bear upon the conflict it's not insubstantial weight. Territorial disputes polarize communities into legitimate heirs and usurpers; heteronormativity becomes the litmus test to define the onus of ownership as against settler rights. Such a tussle for the power to remain and retain, continue and dominate alienates the people/communities and forces migration. The irony of the situation is lost because migrants are also refugees and occupy the liminal space that keep them oscillating between 'was' and 'is' thereby denying them the space to just be. The refugee status is precarious and dependent on the goodwill of the natives for their basic survival. Any change in their political, social and economic clout is cause enough to disturb the tenuous peace, leading to assaults and violations that put them in their place.

The migration and refugee problem is subject to violence that operates from the personal to the state levels. The violence experienced is an intentional and affective baggage that burdens their existence through disruptions of a way of life, the alienation from their community relations and the resultant disorientation festers in their individual and collective remembrances. Partition forced a physical dislocation that reviewed their personal histories and rewired their social relationality. Those affected remember their personal histories or social relations and narrate these stories in a historically linear context with the diachronic timeframe of before and after thrown in. The past is never over nor done with: it is either deliberately invoked in narration or sneaks in when memory interrupts the everyday reality.

Memory's individual status is closely intertwined with its social context thereby subjecting it to mediation and intercession that takes the individual remembering and gives it a collective hue in case of trauma. Trauma of displacement goes hand in hand with the enacted violence that attempts to cleanse through a bloodbath the apparent desacralization of population. The past as history and the past as a remembered past are equally important for these moor the present to the routes that delineate the beginning, the creation and engenders the legitimacy of their rights or otherwise relegate them to the margins of that history. The past not only influences the present but also casts long shadows to even influence the future of the people. Hence, the present study undertakes to read the selected texts for territory and belonging in its

physical and affective forms; nation/nationality in its politically, psychologically and socially loaded terms; and memory as recalled nostalgia and nightmare that make it a personal and simultaneously collective form of re-recovery.

The explorations of Partition Studies are an investigation into the whys, the wherefores, and the hows of the Partition and its impact. From the rhetoric of freedom to the enactment of Partition lie the linguistic practices that evoked emotion, incited action, re-directed and re-oriented the politics of nationalism into the politics of schism. The reading in Partition Studies is a reflexive re-viewing of all that has been said and written during the freedom struggle and beyond. The subtle shifts in the linguistic thrusts propelled a tectonic shift in the freedom movement that led to the split between religious majoritarian and minority status as the ensemble characters who worked for the cause of freedom wanted independence from each other.

The rubric of speeches, treaties, negotiations, movements, and writings—all gave wing to the separatist fervor that led to the Partition. The pedigree of the Indian freedom struggle lies in its non-violent progression; yet the Partition violence rips the mask of its apparent eschewing of violence. From being a movement initiated and fuelled by lofty ideals to its reduction in status to a bitter family dispute is the narrative discourse that traverses the terrain between *azadi* and *batwara*. The revolutionaries whose ardent passion translated into violent acts are marginalized in favor of this non-violent discourse; the ethicality of the non-violent struggle was favored over the revolutionary owing to the discomfiture of moral dilemmas associated with violence. Was the non-violent movement a counter-movement or coterminous? Partition Literature comes forward as the lens with which to read the simultaneity of the events and its precipitous unfolding.

Partition Literature then is not merely a reading of frozen frames to authenticate events but an engagement to retrieve the narrative discourses that structure meaning. The Partition is a highly contested event with vested interests seeking to re-imagine and re-tell to the equally strong antithetical attempt to subvert its recovery. The political transformation from the

colonized subject to the independent nationalist is a terrain strewn with rhetorical constellations that first coalesce and then withdraw. When the revolutionaries talk sacrifice, they are willing to undergo any suffering to the extent of laying down their lives for their country; when the non-violent protestors talk sacrifice, they speak in terms of self-inflicted suffering that provokes the colonial representatives to re-think their position, re-assess their strategy and re-draw their intent.

While for the revolutionaries, violence is central to achieve their stated objective of freedom, they speak the language of the rulers; the non-violent stratagems only baffled the rulers. Inherent in the rhetoric of each party to the struggle was the question of justice and its deliverance. Yet, Partition betrayed this ideal of justice and became the very reason for seeking justice outside its realm of social mooring. Reading Partition is problematic as the reading is channeled by availability of resources and the need for corroboration. The episteme necessitates a defiance of conventional archive to leverage space for alternate readings, be it oral or visual.

### **1.7 SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

The theme of Partition is being increasingly studied. That doesn't translate into the exhaustion of topics for research in this area. Partition related poetry, films, paintings, drama are yet to be explored in greater depth. The themes already explored may be fodder for yet other studies using the post-modern interpretative theories to discover still new layers of meaning into the same works. Inter-disciplinary works add yet another dimension to this fascinating area of study. Translation studies could prove a fecund resource of works to be explored. The scope for reading into the transformative power of the ideas of the time as reflected in the writings of the day is yet to be explored.

### **1.8 CONCLUSION**

Received history merely objectifies the Partition as an event that was an unavoidable tragedy. The issue of whether the selected authors conform to the facts delineated in received history or whether, in their focus on the Partition and its impact on ordinary citizens, the authors offer an alternative approach to received history has been a significant point of investigation.

The narrative discourses on Partition seem to be built on shifting sands—caught between the native, the colonial and the modern—that defy an easy categorization of its meaning in terms of whether they are allayed in favor of or against the European standard. The making of the two nations needs a native position of credibility and mien accessible to the earlier scholars and yet speaking the native cause in the native idiom.

The study tries to balance narratives from both sides of the border in order to better interrogate the questions of affiliations—identity, memory- trauma, and nation-nationality. This approach is deliberately sought to avoid a hagiographic, jingoistic outlook and utilize the multiplicity of voices to engender a pluralistic perspective, not a final verdict, on Partition.

**CHAPTER II**  
**THROUGH THE PRISMS OF HISTORY:**  
**CONTEXTUALIZING THE NATION,**  
**CONTENDING WITH PARTITION**

**2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The title of this Chapter alludes to history as the focal point of Partition Literature. Unlike the generally accepted notion of history as a set of dates and events in a chronological order, writers of Partition Literature chose to filter history through the prisms of social and personal memory and, through this narration of the smallest unit of community i.e. ‘home’, these writers efficaciously imagine the imagined community i.e. ‘nation’. The narrations posit the notion of history not as a generalization of events on rational and objective criteria; but envisage history as ‘lived experience’ of contemporary events. Thus the received notion of history is challenged by endeavouring to dismantle the façade of a fluid history to communicate the rupture and trauma in social and personal terms. Early historic accounts of India’s freedom struggle are heraldic in nature and approach the tonal quality of epic writing. Partition literature inverts these characteristics, viz. from the general to the particular, from events and leaders to firsthand experience and impact on the people’s lives, from fluid outpouring to circulating rupture. Partition Literature is episodic and often has overtones of witness accounts, especially of trauma.

Partition Literature discards the illusive image of the continuum of the past to provide safety and security in the present. In its enclosed world, the centre falls apart: the meta-narrative of the freedom struggle is undermined by the fear-fuelled rage and the hate-stoked fury. There is an active distrust against the larger political history playing out to weave the disparate threads into some semblance of order and to yoke it to the notion of a ‘unified country’. This acknowledges the seamless boundaries of an a priori existence and social structures to the modern exemplar of nation with a largely homogenous population in terms of language, religion, race, history and society within an externally fixed and bound land mass. This Chapter chiefly interrogates the historicity of the Partition narrative and deems it appropriate to employ the practices of New Historicism to explore the ‘historicity’ of Partition as represented through select fictive narratives. Partition Literature is often viewed as a reaction, as against a response, to the politics and history of schism.

A New Historicist approach in such a context would mean a re-examination of history from the representation of the marginalized in its annals. This is achieved through first hand witness accounts, personal experiences, and the cornucopia of tragedy that surround Partition viz. in the main—agony, anxiety, resistance, disruption, suffering and finally, an attempt to reconcile and reconstruct lives under inverted structures. Louis Montrose’s now famous dictum of the ‘historicity of the text and the textuality of history’ can be trusted to expose the osmotic porosity of the text and context. Partition Literature as a variant of historiography is fast gaining ground for, in its pages are recorded, the events leading to and the impact of Partition are re-presented consciously and with fidelity. The statist narratives with their overtly accentuating emphasis on the leaders and ideas seek to direct this historiography at an idealistic plane over and above the experiential level. The glossing over of the people’s experience in statist historiography is the very fulcrum upon which the fictive narratives perform history as lived experience.

Firstly, a brief exegesis of New Historicism and its main thrust has been outlined to plank the approach to the texts chosen for this analysis. The two texts selected for analysis are Qurratulain Hyder’s *River of Fire* and Yashpal’s *This Is Not That Dawn*. The two works are about history and concerned with Partition; the same area of history is treated differently here, thereby essentially rendering it strange and unfamiliar, remote and immediate. A revisiting of Partition through fiction then is an intervention of multiple personal voices to the one grand national narrative of history. This statist historical juggernaut is a top-down communiqué but Partition fiction subverts this shibboleth and provides an alternative history—that of the man on the street, a lived reality as against ideological discourses cloaked in the divisive us v/s them narratives that seek to normalize violence for a greater cause: Freedom.

### **2.2.1 HISTORY AND FICTION**

Fiction that elects to situate itself in an overtly political canopy is often termed ‘historical fiction’. Historical fiction is problematic: while ‘historical’ is perceived as an objective representation of facts; fiction is allied with imagination, and therefore is judged to be unreliable. Such fiction is more often than not classified as ‘romantic history’. This disdain arises with history performing the act of context or a prop upon which to hinge the tale. Stephen Paul Bortolotti exhumes its etymology when he elaborates,

Etymologically speaking, both the words *history* and *story* derive from the same word *historia*, and originally both words were defined as an account of either imaginary events as well as events supposed to be true. The two words have since evolved separately so that *history* has come to mean an account of past real events and *story* refers to less formal accounts of past events and accounts of fictional events. As a result, this etymological evolution has allowed some contemporary novelists on the one hand to regard history as unreliable, and on the other hand to regard fiction as another way of writing history. (117)

Therefore, the foremost consideration herein is the question as to whether ‘history’ is a protagonist alongside its human dramatis personae. This is quintessential to weighing judgement vis a vis ‘how true’ a narrative it seeks to be. Human drama in fiction can be narrowed to a domestic tale or become larger than life when propped by social unrest, political tumult or cultural conflict. Wedging a story within a larger canvas permits the author to recreate a period, draw out the tension of a significant moment and engage the reader to re-live the past by re-telling/re-casting the past as to resonate in the present. Much of the disrepute/ignominy in which the historical novel is embroiled in owes to the craft of researching a period and embedding a story within its confines. But, as in the case of Partition writers, when the authors themselves have lived out these experiences and witnessed much, the stories become part auto-narratives, part testimonial accounts swimming in the quagmire of personal histories to moor these narratives within the larger sequence of events. In Bartolotti’s view, ‘It is the closest one can get to experience the past without having been there. We finish a history book and we get a sense of what *happened*. We finish reading a work of historical fiction and we get a sense of what it was *like*.’ (*ibid*, 115)

Historical fiction in Partition fiction is a construct: the author builds the spatio-temporal sphere in real time and manipulates the characters to trace the original event in its labyrinthine evolution to becoming the significant moment—where the present is not a continuation of the past; rather, it is a breaking off with the past with serious alarming consequences for the present and grave far-reaching repercussions for the future. As the characters wind their way through the narrative, their motivations are marked both by the personal and the circumstantial. They and their world are circumscribed by the historical time period and setting in which they are slotted to excavate the machinations of motives. It is a vehicle to promote inverse time-travel, to

re-visit the past so as to reclaim it from oblivion. The author justifies his narrative to effectively work to affect the reader, to involve this reader in the narration not as a passive witness, but as an agent whose action of re-counting the tale will assist in delaying the event from being interred into history's ashes. By drawing the reader into the structure of the narrative, the reader comes away with an impression of truth and the reader's own interpretation, sieving fact from fable.

The marriage of history and fiction seem oxymoronic: while one deals entirely with dates and facts, the latter draws out an imaginative narration. The objective as against the subjective contradiction would likely lead to an acrimonious divorce. But as Prafulla Kar observes in 'New Historicism and the Interpretation of the Text', "Through their filial acts of mutual constitution, history and literature seem to have finally come together in an inextricable way" (75). While previously upheld notions of the separation of history and literature are collapsed, the hierarchical and definitive status of the text vis à vis the reader is reconstituted to reflect the historically constituted positioning of both. That fiction does not automatically spring from some deep imaginative reserve within the author but is firmly cast from the material base of history is now accepted. Writers and readers are both constituted by history and their 'self-fashioning' is directed by the cultural practices embedded in the history of the space and time occupied by the two.

### **2.3 NEW HISTORICISM AND COUNTER-HISTORY**

New Historicism was a fight against the straight jacketing of American New Criticism practices. Not that New Historicists knew what they wanted exactly; but they did have a clear idea of what they didn't want to get into. So, like-minded professionals from different disciplinary backgrounds met and had dialogues that wrought the theory that today is designated as New Historicism. Ideas came from within and without-but the most influential were Clifford Geertz, Raymond Williams and Michel Foucault. From Geertz, they borrowed the idea of the anecdote intersecting the received notion to create a perforation that would unspool another strand that at once takes away and adds to the mainstream episteme. Raymond Williams' perceived 'limitations of ideology' propelled him to explore the interstices between hegemony and lived experience. Foucault delivered the value of archive to the process of critical investigation in which there exists a plenitude of anecdotes; but only those anecdotes serve that are in direct conflict with power and resists it, the struggle that permits the affect of epiphany even today. Thus, these marginalities are saved from obscurity and instead used as a ploy to

elucidate a crevice hitherto hidden from the public space. The anecdote then becomes a point of rupture that creates dissonance in the accepted notionality of linear history to recover from it new interpretations that resonate in the present. These strands coalesced into what came to be known as ‘counter history’ or ‘alternate history’.

New Historicists were immensely gratified that Geertz visualized literary criticism as most suited to perform the task of using the anecdote: literature is not divine inspiration but indeed tied to its temporal context—its history, sociology, politics and culture. Literature hence affords best the anecdote that ruptures the singularity of historical narration. In literature there are remnants of the period under study that offer an opportunity to listen in to the echoes of lived reality which counter the received notion of the history of the time. In *Practicing New Historicism*, Gallagher elucidates this New Historicist practice:

New Historicists deliberately departed from the literary-historical practice of creating embrasures for holding texts inside of established accounts of change and continuity; we used anecdotes instead to chip away at the familiar edifices and make plastered-over cracks appear. However, because we also hoped to learn something about the past, the cracks themselves were taken to be recovered matter. Or, adjusting our metaphor slightly, the anecdote could be conceived as a tool with which to rub literary texts against the grain of received notions about their determinants, revealing the fingerprints of the accidental, suppressed, defeated, uncanny, abjected or exotic- in short the non-surviving—even if only fleetingly. New Historicist anecdotes might, [...] provoke new explanations, but these were not taken to be exclusive, uniform or inevitable. The histories one wanted to pursue through the anecdote might, therefore, be called “counterhistories,” which it would be all the more exhilarating to launch if their destinations were as yet undetermined and their trajectories lay athwart the best travelled routes. (31)

Partition Studies is a form of counter history. It affects historiography, sociology, political history and literature—the event is no longer distanced from the present and is merely a blip in the struggle for independence. In the ‘Preface’ to *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India’s Partition*, Ritu Menon and Kamala Bhasin pertinently think aloud:

*How effortlessly does history sometimes manage to conceal our past from us. Growing up in independent India, glorying in a freedom gained through non-*

*violence, our gift to liberation struggles everywhere, everything that happened pre-1947 was safely between the covers of our history books. Comfortably distant, undeniably laid to rest. Swiftly we drew the outlines of our maps—India, West Pakistan, East Pakistan, the Himalayas, Kashmir (...), Nepal So too the litany of historic events and dates, the rise and fall of dynasties and destinies, culture, civilization, heroes and villains, martyrs and traitors. The rich tapestry unfurled to end at our tryst with destiny. (pg x-xi)*

The very same feeling of ‘it is someone else’s story of a time past’ and holds no relevance to us is the general truth of Partition for the vast majority of the Indian populace who don’t belong to those families directly impacted by Partition. Urvashi Butalia tells of her own initial research into Partition where she had access to reams of material about the Partition but found herself becoming agitated by these sources. Putting faith in their reliability was akin to coming to believe,

[T]he Partition of India was something that happened in August 1947. A series of events preceded it: these included the growing divide between Jinnah and Gandhi, Nehru, Patel, and a host of other developments on the ‘political’ front. And a series of events accompanied and followed it: violence, mass migration, refugeeism, rehabilitation. But the ‘history’ of Partition seemed to lie only in the political developments that had led up to it. These other aspects – what had happened to the millions of people who had to live through this time, what we might call the ‘human dimensions’ of this history – somehow seemed to have a ‘lesser’ status in it.

The excruciating detail of the political parlays and the personages associated with these negotiations usurp much space in the narration of the historiography and the sense of what happened and what the people had undergone is lost in this predictive telling. Butalia’s anguish and annoyance are not misplaced; most readers who desire to learn more about this event come up against this blockade that in no way opens to a reading that will satisfy the sensitive reader with an intent to appropriate the ‘whole truth’ between what was intended and what actually transpired. Butalia offers an explanation for this dissonant overtone when she opines, ‘Perhaps this was because they had to do with difficult things: loss and sharing, friendship and enmity, grief and joy, with a painful regret and nostalgia for loss of home, country and friends, and with an equally strong determination to create them afresh. These were difficult things to capture

‘factually’. Yet, could it really be that they had no place in the history of Partition?”  
(pg 6-7)

If the authors of both these books are to be believed, several points come to the fore: that the history of India’s freedom movement is largely a political history; that this history apparently happened to someone else at a point in the past; that this rendition makes one believe that it is a closed event, hence has no relevance to the present; that this history was written to highlight the progress of the leaders’ of the movement and how their differences created that history; and, that this event had consequences. What this history fails to tell is the ‘human dimension’ of these consequences and the fact that their lived experience of Partition still resonates in individual and collective memory as family histories.

This is the juncture in which literature of Partition comes to one’s aid: this literature punctures this straight forward history with anecdotes of violence, the uneasy calm before the storm, and that storm was no storm in a teacup but a tornado of humungous proportions that uprooted both people and places and left everything in shambles. The only difference was that this was no incident of nature’s fury but a man-made one; and, the consequences were no less severe. While nature’s fury unites survivors to put their lives back together; these ruptures created by a human tornado have divided a people and a place. These authors admit that the safe positioning of Partition in history was rent apart by the 1984 Sikh riots and witnessing it firsthand brought home the magnitude of Partition violence.

For an opportunity to understand the roots of the distrust, it is imperative that Partition be studied. Partition historiography approaching the thin line that demarcates it from hagiography needs to be interrogated vigorously to assault its vaulted stories. Qurratulain Hyder’s *River of Fire* is a novel where history is the hero. The author, through her four characters--Gautam, Champak, Kamal and Cyril—takes us through the tumultuous history of the sub-continent. Of course, the novel does not easily fit into the parameters of postcolonial novel and hence is all too often ignored. The grasp of history and thought is refined and provides the reader with a feeling of an observer of events unfolding to gain an idea of what the sub-continent is all about.

Hyder is careful not use the term secular as it lost its credibility in the wake of Partition. What began as a joint effort was sundered by the inability of the leadership to preserve the secular one-nation theory. *River of Fire* is a recounting of the psychological trauma of Partition in order to understand the event. Trauma narration is

a prerequisite to generate empathy. If one does not understand one's own tragedies, how can one be empathic to the trauma of others? This larger than life re-telling of the trauma of Partition is to relate it within the collective cultural memory. In the telling and retelling of trauma lies the possibility of working one's way through and coming to terms with the trauma. It also extends the possibility of healing and closure. Unless the elephant in this shared history is not acknowledged, Hyder seems to suggest, it will continue to beleaguer the present and handicap the future by reemerging in more virulent forms. What all the authors do is to take off on a different plane in that they neither validate the creation of Pakistan nor celebrate the independence of India; they either mourn the loss or wax nostalgic about the composite culture of harmony that existed before the arrival of the westerners.

### **2.3 RIVER OF FIRE**

The fluidity of history over vast spans of time engulfs within its folds the episodes that catalyze change and thence become transformational in nature. The changes adopted and adapted to dominate the mainstream; emanating from the centre to the periphery constitutes, in large parts, the sway of history. One such novel is Qurratulain Hyder's *River of Fire*: action is precipitated in the Hindu kshatriya valor and the Buddhist monasteries that absorb the inevitable renunciation of maya and peaks over the Iranian influx, followed by the Mughal invasion rounded by the colonial experience only to reverse the tide back to the two thousand five hundredth anniversary of the Buddha. The Hindu strain continues to flow despite other threads being introduced. The novel encompasses four time spans of history to make a compelling case for the syncretic composition of 'Indian' culture that permitted Hindu-Muslim bonding that yielded many of its heritage structures and values. Hyder, through her narration of history from the perspectives of characters that reincarnate in each age, notes the comingling of cultures and finds the rending of the woof and weft of this composite culture both tragic as well as myopic.

*River of Fire*, as already pointed out, traverses through four eras of the sub-continent's history. Each era is unique and espouses the dominant thought precepts of the day; a perusal of the four eras makes it eminently clear that each of the eras share commonalities that cement the flux of history. Again, in portraying the rulers and their whimsicalities, Hyder humanizes the flat protagonists of history. This she does by curating epistles, edicts, arcane tidbits, journalistic reportage, superstitions, philosophies and the like with the abandon of the thrill of discovery; the narrative is

interspersed with gems of erudition that make *River of Fire* an archive of sub-continental history. The protagonists are bahurupiyas, playing different characters from the different eras diffusing the defining quintessence of the culture of each of the eras. Here on, the Chapter explores the different eras in some depth to deliver its perception of the progress of history.

Qurratulain Hyder's *River of Fire* is a brave challenge mounted against this epic notion of history. Hyder compresses almost 2500 years of history in this compact novel of 428 pages. She sets the narration a 150 years after the death of the Buddha and ends it with the Buddha Jayanti celebrating 2500 years of the Buddha's preaching. From heir apparent Prince Hari Shankar who relinquishes his claim to the throne and his betrothed, requesting assistance from Gautam Nilambar to the reincarnated Gautam seeking the answers to questions that cause him deep despair and disturbance, Hyder rounds up her characters back to where it had all begun. Gautam revisits the same shrine where the opening scene is enacted and is thinking, 'He wanted to be perfectly devoid of all thinking. For the first time in his life, it occurred to him—if only Nirvana were possible. Fear, the sense of being alone, grief, defeat despair, hatred, anger, the wish to escape, the concept of space and relativity—Nirvana, which is beyond life, death, sleep and wakefulness, love, compassion, dispassion, and yet is the ultimate reality...' (pg 424) This echoes a similar sentiment inserted at the very beginning: '...Sakyamuni, the Buddha, had said: Victory breeds hatred because the vanquished sleep in sorrow, and only that person is peaceful who is above victory and defeat and happiness.' (42)

### **2.3.1 HINDU-BUDDHIST EPOCH**

Contrast this to the opening scene where Gautam Nilambar is returning to the gurukul and glimpses two unknown women in the bathing ghat. He is taken up with Champak and taking refuge for the night in the aforementioned shrine, meets Prince Hari Shankar who has been absconding from his duties and instead pursuing his love of learning, only to take on the ochre robes of a bhikshu, thus enacting the Buddha's own story. The Jetvan Vihara housed the monks then and continues to be the hub of Buddhism till date. Hyder gives the impression of the Vihara as one of peace, quiet and solitude; yet subtly counters this with the gossip about the particular inmates circulating at that time. This clearly points to a contradiction—history can only be erased through effacing the self. Hyder plunges headlong from Gautam's detachment brought on by the ironic meeting with Lady Champak after years of agonizing search

for her—first as a beggar and then as an actor. The sight of Champak in the audience generates this response—

“Champak seated in the front row, dressed in purple silk, loaded with gold ornaments. She was accompanied by a little boy and her maid. She had come to attend the famous actor’s first performance in the metropolis.... The woman he had been searching for all these years—there she sat on the floor, cross-legged, with a child beside her. A prosperous housewife and mother. No longer an ideal or a vision, just a smug matron with a double chin and a middle-age spread.” (47)

Champak’s story is the story of a woman who is treated as a prize. After the war, she was part of the captured spoils, ripe for the taking. She is another face in the harem of an old minister. ‘For she had undergone her own transformation: she had done what a mere woman was required to do—she had accepted her “fate”.’ (48) Princess Nirmala became a Buddhist nun, and her brother, Prince Hari Shankar alias the Buddhist monk, Hari Ananda, had passed on. Gautam leaves the troupe post-performance and becomes a wandering mendicant. He desires to meet Princess Nirmala and this brings him back to the banks of the Saryu, which is swollen and in spate. He ignores the well-meaning advice of a village girl and jumps in to swim across; but, is pulled by the current.

### **2.3.2 TURCO-IRANIAN ERA**

The anecdote that the reader latches on to is the one about Chandragupta Maurya, who rose to become, ‘[...] the first Samrat, emperor, of the chaturant state of Bharat.’ (42) His rise to power is astonishing when one considers that ‘...He was not one of those “descended from the sun or the moon” because his mother was an untouchable.’ (42) During his rule, travelers from as far as Iran had come seeking their livelihood in Hind. Chapter 10 titled “The Marvels and Strange Tales of Hindustan” heralds the Muslim rule in India. From here on the tale is told by Kamal, who hailed from Persia. He is writing a book with the eponymous title and recording his adventurous journey. He begins his journey as a student in Iraq where he meets some Spaniards heading towards Mecca for their pilgrimage. The Muslim origins of Spain are hinted at and the imminent threat of Christianity replacing it too is stated. Kamal is hence advised to avoid Spain and its political turmoil and instead proceed to India where the Turkish had held sway for over three centuries. India had become the trading hub of the orient and it held the hope and promise of the future. The Spanish pilgrims have the last word when they tell him, “Do you know, Brother Kamal, a qazi of Toledo once wrote that the Indians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs and Iranians had cultivated knowledge while the

people of northern Europe were uncouth barbarians. A time may soon come when those barbarians may rule the world.” (58)

Kamal's travels are a learning experience. He learns that the Hindus do not travel abroad as it would cause them to lose caste. He finds this strange as this does not correspond to the previous known fact that both Hindus and Buddhists travelled everywhere with their knowledge. The reader learns much Persian history and the Mongol invasion sees the Zoroastrians and Sufis escape to India. The names of many places have Arabic roots and the land of Hind is specked with history. A ruin that attracted Kamal's attention is the spot where Razia Sultan met her end. Two concepts are highlighted viz. jeevan lila or mystic life and the law of karma. The cowherd who tells him this and Kamal's Punjabi friend further narrate the story of her murder which was politically motivated. The cowherd gifts Kamal a coin he had found in the fields thereabouts which is embossed with Razia Sultan's name on one side and goddess Lakshmi on the other. Thus, it becomes apparent that the two religions coexisted peaceably and that the people accepted this 'two sides of the same coin' aspect of this relationship.

From here on then is the counter history of the times of Hindu-Muslim harmony. The story is one of the histories of Muslim rulers of India from Delhi to Bengal and the siege and counter attacks for the throne of Delhi. The history of the wars is skimmed in favour of the machinations that led to these particular wars. It is also choc a bloc with incidents strewn about the Rajput kings who owed allegiance to these Kings and the loyalties that bound them. What is striking in this section of the narration is that the wars are relegated to mere incident and more space is given to the narration of the public works and administration of these kings. For instance, Kamal is made aware of the Sufi influence of rulers in the network of 'hospices, schools and free-kitchens' from the time of Sultan Firoze Tughlaq which had only multiplied since then. Kamal is persuaded to go to Jaunpur by his old acquaintance who is a Persian dervish. Jaunpur was founded by Malik Sarwar, 'a former slave and a provincial governor, who took advantage of Timur's sack of Delhi and became independent.' (63)

The kings often had a musical bent of mind and were content to enrich their realms with grand structures, public works and network of serais (traveler's inns). This included separate living quarters and kitchens for the Hindus. Hussain Shah, the ruling Sultan, is a musician king who has composed several melodies which are called the khayals. His title, Sultan Hussain Nayak suggests that he is a 'performing artiste'. In

fact, his supreme expertise in Hindustani classical music makes him worthy of this title and encourages musical talent. Hussain Shah is an antiquarian and insists that Kamal learn Sanskrit and render the Sanskrit works into Persian. The narration here takes on the tone of an admiring eloquence and is descriptive of both the architectural marvels as also the freedom of thought and life accessible to both men and women under Hussain Shah's dispensation. The Sultan entrusts him with a mission, "I have just been informed that some pundits in Ayodhya are in possession of a very ancient treatise on classical music. Go there at once and find out all about those manuscripts. Seek the pandits' help in deciphering the texts. Off you go." (74)

Kamal is fascinated with India and finds it 'fabulous'—'Al-Hind is rife with myths, legends, folklore and old wives' tales' (75). The strangeness is accepted by taking comfort in 'As Amir Khusro said—every country hath its own customs' (75). Here, Kamal is enamored with Champavati, the young pandit's sister. Unfortunately, Kamal has to leave to report to his overlord who is 'too busy waging wars.' Champavati is neither impressed nor interested. Their conversation when he is taking leave of her emphasizes their difference of custom and thought but underscores their intimacy of feeling. The conversation is part amour, part argument: while Champavati aligns with fate, Kamal is pro freedom of choice. The parlay of different philosophies engendering different attitudes to life is explored; their simultaneous existence underscored; the harmonious co-existence emphasized; and most significantly, the ease with which one could choose and articulate the guiding philosophy that grounded one's life.

Kamal reenacts the tossing of the silver coin in the clear waters of the Saryu and sees it sparkling; while she is still against the backdrop of blossoming magnolia trees recalling Gautam and Champak and the sculpture he made to immortalize her. Kamal proceeds to return to Jaunpur—on the wayside he decides to spend the night in an old ruin, and his sleep is filled with nightmare which reinforces the title of this chapter—'The Cavalcade'—for it compresses the Sanskrit and Hindu history through the spirits of Kings and Heroines, only to find a Shaivite sadhu warning him cryptically of impending gloomy news. Kamal, shaken and annoyed, reaches a serai; only to have the sadhu's prediction affirmed by a friend who gives him the news of the defeat of Hussain Shah. When he meets Hussain Shah, the royal is keen to know whether Kamal has been able to learn enough Sanskrit to decode the Ayodhya text than in the nitty-gritty of the war. The wars continued and its dissonance forced Kamal to consider

remaining as a non-combatant in a military society or enter a Sufi retreat because he knew no other home than Hind, going back to Nishapur was no option.

Hussain Shah's wars to capture the throne of Delhi continued—first, with Bahlol Lodhi, then with Sikander Lodhi. Kamal leaves the battlefield when Sikander vanquishes Hussain Shah and reduces the beautiful city of Jaunpur to rubble while developing Agra. Sikander, a poet king, promoted education. His sacking of Jaunpur is deeply mourned as the passing away of a civilization. For Hyder, civilizations reach their pinnacle in the nurturing ambience of liberalism and went to seed in the constricting stranglehold of orthodoxy. Kamal views the contradictions in Sikander. The Rajputs had sworn allegiance to Hussain Shah and refused to pay him homage. He learnt of this rebellion when playing a polo game.

‘He threw away his polo stick and ordered his generals to prepare for war.

“We are marching down to Jaunpur. Right away.”

“Sire, you haven't had your breakfast.”

“I'll have my breakfast in Jaunpur,” he roared. They reached Jaunpur in record-time, ten days.’ (88)

Sikander wanted to capture Joga, the chieftain spearheading the revolt. Joga sped off to Bihar where Hussain Shah was in residence leading Sikander on a chase. Sikander sent a letter to Hussain Shah peremptorily asking,

*‘Sir,*

*Kindly hand over this Joga character to me and oblige.*

*Thanking you,*

*Yours truly,*

*Sikander R.*

*Camp, Somewhere in Bihar.*

Hussain Shah wrote back:

*Please note that Joga is my servant, just as your late-lamented Abba was my servant. But he was a soldier, albeit a commoner, so I deigned to cross swords with him. You are a silly child, I will not use my sabre, I will beat you with my shoes.*

Sultan Sikander Lodhi could not believe his eyes when he read this reply. “When a person is heading for total ruination he takes leave of his senses,” he remarked ruefully. (88)

Such anecdotes stud the entire narrative. Wars are not mere dates and administrative prose but poetically evoked by Hyder. There is humour, rumour, palpable vibrancy in the mischievous telling of the tale. The story evolves to contain the enormity of the telling through such devices as anecdotes in dialogue, epistles, poems and songs,

dreams and nightmare. Within the compact book lies a wealth of information engagingly narrated. Kamal gets aboard a ship bound for Kashi. Once aboard, he observes the plenitude of lifestyles represented there. He is accosted by a bairagi-former spy in the Lodhi army. Enroute, Kamal learns that Champavati having pined for him, lost hope and joined the Vaishnava sanyasins. He finds a Sufi retreat and spends time there serving and reading when he is advised to meet Kabir Das. He goes to Benares and spends time there. Then, he went to Bengal to meet the Suhrovady Sufis and 'is transformed into a man of peace' (99). This part of the narration is a eulogy to the great syncretic outlook of the day. There were murmurings by the Hindu and Muslim clerics labeling them as heretics. Kamal became a householder, married a Sudra girl, Sujata Debi, who became Amina Bibi after her marriage. He had two sons; both of them became architects, one died in the war between the Afghan and Mughals; and, the other deserts to go over to join the Mughals. Soldiers come to his humble abode and arrest him, an old man, who stumbled on the threshold of his house and called to God as he passed on.

### **2.3.3 MUGHAL AND COLONIAL AEON**

The third phase of history is entered upon here where the Mughal rule is at its acme. Gilded tales of the wonders of their court have reached European realms,

“The name is creating wonder in the shoddy courts of Europe. Commerce and industry are flourishing in the Mughal regime, the nations of Christendom are vying with one another to trade with the country of the “Great Mongor”. For lack of stirrups, the Rajputs had been overcome by successive waves of horsemen from across the Khyber Pass; now, for lack of battleships, the Mughals have let the firangis slip in from the sea.’ (102-103)

Enter Cyril Ashley: being ferried by Maulvi Ahmed Mansur Kamaluddin, now a boatman to feed his hunger. Cyril, a newly anointed lawyer, had heard about India as the land of golden opportunity rather fortuitously and had met Peter Jackson who exhorts him to go to India and eschew his dream of seeking fortune in America. He accepts Jackson's advice and prospers.

What Hyder does is evoke an immanent essence of the greatness of the age and have her characters revel in the age while also critiquing the age. The historiographic genealogies are spelt out and its destruction too is foregrounded. Hyder's erudition comes to her with ease and her narration neither lacks pace nor excitement. The inherent ideas that raise a civilization to its pinnacle only to have it crashing resoundingly, is evoked with confidence and an eye for exquisite detail. What Hyder

achieves in *River of Fire* is an abridged history of the subcontinent. Through numerous ages and rulers, the landmass extends or shrinks with no great impact on the people. If the king is just and liberal, the people enjoy stability and freedom; whereas, with every king that is puritanical, liberties are curbed. India as a concept is not defined by boundaries but by the sixty four systems of thought that flourished in her terrain. Political factionalism and a scheming clergy were part of the milieu but India persisted. The wave of Persian invasion was absorbed within the folds of these thought systems. Persian dervishes and Sufi saints found kindred souls in the mystic cults of the sanyasis. Buddhism ebbed and flowed in the peripheral spaces for it sought a withdrawal from society. Destiny and fate are counter-balanced with the belief in freedom of choice. Monotheism is inter-twined with polytheism; faith in the idea of God and in idolatry existed simultaneously.

Hyder's historical representation of the subcontinent emphasizes the enmeshing of plural, often contradictory, belief systems. This is the richness of the subcontinent and it didn't diminish or exclude any system of thought as either superior or inferior. First the Hindu kings and then the Muslim overlords established systems of administration, trade and commerce, education and arts. This environment produced and attracted talent and led to its efflorescence in every sphere. Even warfare was an art. Beauty of thought, word and spaces was pursued diligently and passionately, wars were merely incidental—is the thrust of *River of Fire*. Allegiances were brokered and broken for convenience; but the loyalties were strongly pitched. The elaborate discourses on the main royal personages and their contribution to syncretise cultural differences is emphasized by Hyder to describe the general sense of well being that pervaded the subcontinent; even in the face of the uncertainties of war. The process of assimilation persisted and triumphed to engender a culture that was both unique and osmotic. Wealth did not only imply material cornucopia but also reflected in the profusion of arts and philosophy too. All this was secured by the shrewd and strong patronage of the reigning monarch.

This syncretic liberalism came a cropper under the colonial onslaught. The refinement and the social mores of centuries of a way of living were designated as inferior. The patronizing condescension of the colonizers ruptured the harmonious co-existence that prefaced their arrival. The notion of power as a weapon to extract maximum advantage is introduced in this section of the narration. After Cyril Ashley had forestalled the imminent Sati of Sujata Debi, her father, Bakshi Radhey Charan comes to meet Cyril

with offerings of gratitude in the form of Prince Dara Shikoh's Persian translation of the *Upanishads* and his *Majma-ul-Bahrain*. The conversation between Cyril Ashley and Radhey Charan Mazumdar is a sample of this deterioration where Cyril lambast and ridicules the Indian princely satraps for aligning with the British against their own people while Mazumdar speaks of British treachery.

Another instance is that of Gautam Nilambar Dutt who Cyril thought of as, 'Like all good baboos this one was also fond of speaking pompously correct English. He would go far.' (127) and again, a little further along the narration when Gautam is sent to Lucknow on an assignment, he is ill at ease in this social milieu. Along with English education, he has imbibed their taste and distinguishes himself from the natives. He finds the opulence, the exaggerated speech patterns and refined civility at odds with his rational temperament. Hyder is at great pains to ensure her readers appreciate the cosmopolitan culture of Lucknow and the foreigners assimilated with the locals; yet, in Gautam's discomfiture lies Hyder's indictment of feeling ashamed of one's own skin. His self-consciousness is eased by his snobbish superiority as he has internalized the native inferiority by association with the British. His Sanskrit schooling is erased in favour of his infatuation with all things English. Here is the coconut saheb: brown on the outside and white on the inside; but his stay in Lucknow mellows him and he learns to appreciate the exquisite civility and gaiety of their life.

The next meeting between Nawab Kamman and Gautam is in Calcutta where the Nawab brings Gautam up to speed regarding the events that occurred after Gautam left the fair city of Lucknow. The British forced many decisions on Oudh and this led to its annexure. This raised a stink in England where the Parliament condemned the annexation as illegal. The so called Sepoy Mutiny, in the British historical narrative, broke out and the British administration in India faced its fiercest test to its authority. Hyder presents the story of the Mutiny and the valour of those who fought for their rights in the manner of a rapturous story. Queen Hazrat Mahal's presents counter arguments to Queen Victoria's Proclamation: in the main, sanctioning the plunder of India and declaring Christianity as the only true religion. Hazrat Mahal raked up the litany of broken treaties and the grabbing of vast swathes of land and wondered 'What has the administration of justice to do with the truth or falsehood of a religion?' (163) She calls their bluff when employment assured meant building new roads and canals which would translate into progress of goods out of the country to England. Rani Laxmibai and Hazrat Mahal with their faithful alliances whip the British forces.

Incidents are narrated with relish and Trieste for the foregone conclusion. The British raked up a storm back home with news of atrocities committed by the native forces and sourced reinforcements that led to the brutal killing of the leaders and exile and banishment for those who survived. That the British spread canards about the natives, is admitted when Nawab Kamman states, “Truth is the first victim.” The British brutality is hardly evinced in the historiography of the Mutiny.

This point is given credence when the story unfolds thus,

Gautam was well-acquainted with the version of the Mutiny which the English press of India had published. The Siege of the Lucknow Residency had become a literary legend in England and Anglo-India. The heroism of the British generals and soldiers, the bravery of European students of Lucknow’s La Martiniere’s College, the massacre of English families all over north India, the treacherous drowning of boats carrying English women and children in the Ganges off Cawnpore—all of which was true too. (167)

After portraying the war in its enriching details and presenting the horrors experienced by the English, Hyder juxtaposes the overtly political oeuvre of the Urdu poets and the press. Hyder ironically points out Lord Byron valorizing the Greek fight for independence; but the same English denounce the native uprising as a mutiny. Instances pepper the narrative in the form of newspaper clippings from the Urdu press that report the native bravery. Of course, post the mutiny, censorship of the vernacular press became the norm. The natives who had sworn allegiance to the British saw the war as an attempt to retain their power; but, for the people, these deposed royals ‘symbolized independence’ and became the leaders of what is today rechristened as the First War of Independence, where both the Hindus and Muslims fought as one. As Hyder narrates,

The populace could not hate the firangis enough—they were arrogant and insulting. And they had tried to subvert their faith by greasing the sepoy’s cartridges with cow’s fat and pig’s lard. The sepoy were ordered to cut these with their teeth. That, of course, was what ignited the uprising but there were other reasons as well. Economic exploitation, high taxation, dethroning kings and chieftains which made for general unemployment, the missionaries’ insensitive verbal attacks on the religions of the people...The resentment had been building up over the years. (167)

This incident is paired a little later with,

Some of the stories of native brutality against Englishwomen and children *later proved to be false or vastly exaggerated, but the savagery of the English revenge was mind-boggling.* Even as an Anglophile Gautam couldn’t justify what the English did during those terrible days. They indiscriminately

executed whomever they could even before the natives began slaying them; now the British authorities were saying that the Muslims went to the gallows with pride and derision and the Hindus looked indifferent, as though they were going on a long journey. (emphasis added, 171)

In an aside to this exposition, the British attitude to the natives comes under attack when the English call the Lucknow King a rake, Nawab Kamman defends him as pious and Gautam responds,

These were sensitive matters involving one's faith and intense personal loyalties. Then he said haltingly, "Nawab Saheb, our customs of polygamy and harems seem odd to westerners."

"They are hypocrites! Over there they have mistresses and bastard children. Here, even a *dasi-putra* has a certain right to inheritance." (165) This finds echoes again when Nawab Kamman declares, "...And I must tell you something—the English are a fine people in their own country, they become a different species as soon as they cross the Suez." (170)

### **2.3.4 COLONIAL AND POST-COLONIAL AGE**

*River of Fire*, by propping its historical perambulations, presents the reader a ringside view of the evolution of the consciousness of being Indian. The reincarnation of her central characters and their complete immersion in each era only to delineate its demise by grappling with questions of identity, dogma and change, unites the text and asserts the ideal of a common heritage. The complete rout and depredation of Lucknow lay in the reversal of fortune of Champa Jan, the then reigning courtesan is reduced to the status of a beggar who seeks a few pice for her daily dose of opium. The city of the nawabs and the culture of *tehzeeb* lay in ruins and from its ashes had sprung a new city that had lost its decadence and the glory days were mourned silently by the elderly: aristocracy and the commoners alike. This point is the beginning of the last section of the story. Gautam's grandchildren Hari Shankar, Lajwati and Nirmala carry the narration forward along with Kamal, Tehmina and Talat. The friends have an easy camaraderie and a more than comfortable life, what Champa privately tags as Quality Street. Their quotidian life makes for pleasant reading from which one gleans hidden gems like, 'Before school began the girls assembled in a big room in the gatehouse and sang Iqbal's *Sare jahan se achha Hindustan hamara*' (202).

Hyder painstakingly creates the cosmopolitan culture of Lucknow. The author notes that the winds of change demanding freedom were blowing and writes,

There was yet another aspect of the new nationalist movement that was making its presence felt—some people had openly begun talking of Ancient Hindu Culture and the Glory-that-was-Islam. How was Indian culture

to be defined? Was a ruse for Hindus to enslave the Muslims? Could 'real' Indians only be Hindus? Were Muslims unholy intruders who should be treated as such?

...The ancient Hindu-Buddhist-Jain, the intermediary Turco-Mughal-Iranian and the latter-day British features of Indian civilization were so intermingled that it was impossible to separate the warp and woof of the rich fabric. The jingoistic attempts of the chauvinists to 'purify' the culture were creating bad blood and confusion. In Lucknow, however, communal harmony was taken for granted—it could not have been otherwise. (202-203)

It is circa 1939. If Lucknow represented the Indo-British culture, then Benares was the center for Hindu revivalism. From Champa's father's interest in Muslim League politics it becomes obvious that '[...] Amir Ahmed Khan, the Raja of Mahmudabad, [...] was financing the new Pakistan Movement.' (206) In these vignettes, Hyder has the matrix of the fervor of nationalist aspirations: the access as also the assessment. The common enemy of the Mutiny has sown the seeds of divisiveness between the two communities and Partition was the bitter harvest that was reaped.

Hyder's epic narration is a 3D montage of the spectrum of ideas of the nation that jockeyed for pole position—from the composite culture that she as a writer advocates to the extremist voices gaining momentum. For Hyder, the history of India is the history of the plurality and diversity of its culture. India's long tradition of appreciation of difference in thought, religion, food, clothing, language, and customs held the very real possibility of an open and liberal culture that allows the coalescence of difference into a rich composite culture. Since the nation is yet to be, these variant strains of nationalism can be equated to infatuation in love which is more an admiration of one's image of what it constitutes; the several versions of nationalisms fighting to get a foothold in the people's imagination is equivalent to a narcissistic tendency.

The climax was not the dream script of freedom but more the nightmare of Partition. The villains went off scot free and the people paid a heavy price for that coveted dream of freedom. A history of acceptance and relative harmony was exchanged for the dubious notion of free nations. Hyder's resurrection of two and a half thousand years of history undermines the separatist views gaining ground. The past is indeed a necessary corollary to build the present; as Edward Said asserts in *Culture and Imperialism*, "[...] appeals to the past are among the commonest strategies in the interpretation of the present." Rather than allowing the Hindu extremist stance of a pure past or the Muslims' fears of being swallowed by the majority to gain centre

stage, Hyder's epic narration advocates the middle path i.e. the rich composite culture that epitomizes the unique inheritance of the subcontinent's antiquity. This commingling is the silver lining that held the vast stretch of the subcontinent and propelled its efflorescence.

While early historians rode a euphoric wave and constructed a history that valorized its leaders, litterateurs' played the devil's advocate. They eviscerated Partition and their unrelenting realism checked the heroic note of historiography from deteriorating into hagiography. The entire oeuvre of Partition Literature revisits the event and centralizes the Partition, putting into context the people's experience. Political history is not mere backdrop; it is deconstructed in terms of experiential reality. This re-envisioning of history had a bracing effect and, today, historians are revising the earlier cast of the historiography of the period. One comes away from *River of Fire* with the impression that religions in themselves practiced discrimination and were inequitable while professing the sanctity of the soul. Here, the body was decried as profane, while the soul was sacred. This materiality of the body was perceived as depraved, not merely because of its temporariness, but also on account of its urges and impulses. Hence if sixty four systems of thought flourished at that time, it was because it was the mind that was privileged.

The mind was conquered by the propagation of English language and thought. The Gautam of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Lucknow represents the break from his society and culture in his adoption of the western way of life. 'Gautam had been a devotee of Reason all his life. Trained by Englishmen he came to believe that in order to survive and win, you must be strong. Look at all the East—wallowing in tears and sentimentality' (176) This is a mature Gautam returning to Lucknow where his son and family have settled; but even on his first visit to Lucknow, Gautam hid behind the brusqueness of English rather than communicate in his Sanskrit learning. The Bengali Reformist zeal owed a debt of gratitude to English language and thought. The refined elegance of Urdu that spoke in chivalric euphemisms muddle him and Champa explicates the poetic tangents of the language. 'Champa was enjoying this encounter with the attractive, limpid-eyed barbarian' (136) —is a reference to Gautam's gauche responses. As he gets to know Lucknow and meets people, 'He is surprised to hear the King speaking fluent English—not Gautam's idea of an opium-eating Oriental despot.' (136) Gautam's form of dress-both clothes and language-imitates the British. 'He looked the kind of person Britons sneeringly referred to as a WOG—a Westernized Oriental Gentleman.' (157)

He is thus labeled when Nawab Kamman and he meet again in Calcutta forty five years later. Gautam has internalized the British version of India and Indianness. Nowhere is this clearly indicated as in the Nawab's personal narration of the Mutiny. At the end of his narration, Gautam has an epiphany: he realizes that the British have lampooned India and Indians and judged them rather harshly. 'For the first time Gautam felt he understood the native rebels' feelings, and the point of view and trauma of people like Nawab Kamaluddin Ali Reza Bahadur of Neelampur.' (171)

In Gautam, Hyder embodies the selling out of the Indian culture. If the people turn their back on their own culture and refuse to own it, can it survive? Gautam and others like him have used English to escape the 'subject race' appellation by joining hands with the 'master race'. That generation is no more and the grandchildren have been tutored in elite English medium schools and have absorbed the English essence within their Indian context. Champa, hailing from genteel poverty, has managed to get admitted, on the basis of merit, to the elite college where Tehmina, Nirmala and Talat are studying. Her social background is no match to the others but her educated and cultivated mind is equal to theirs. She is welcomed into their families but is put under the category of 'interloper' after Amir Reza chooses her over Tehmina and she pursues his interest. This is both an instance of insensitivity and one upmanship: Champa '[...] had embarked upon a career of spinning yarns in order to keep up with the Joneses' (217) She glossed over personal details, even fabricated a 'background' to maintain a level playing field.

The young educated children now join the freedom movement, radio and journalism. They are at the centre of action; their domestic help--Hindu and Muslim families--forms another layer to the narrative, becoming the counterpoint of the old culture. Being illiterate, they accept all that happens as fate; while the protagonists try to think and work out what had happened and how, but still remain clueless. Kamal is suffused with patriotic fervor and has joined the students' movement. He is fighting for his ideal, 'Like everybody else he also had his personal India. It was made up of so many things. The picturesque village Neelampur, the vast, ancient family graveyard surrounded by banyan trees.' (225) On his journey to assist in famine relief, he has visions of his India, full of contradictions and striding many time phases, of superstitions and poetry, history and mythical allusions. He wonders, 'The Indo-Muslim life-style is made up of the Persian-Turki-Mughal and regional Rajput Hindu

cultures. So, what is this Indianness which the Muslim League has started questioning? Could there be an alternate India? Why?’ (229)

There is an absorbing account of League and Congress politics interspersed with nuggets of information that personalize the history of that time. For example, ‘And the long-forgotten Umar Sobhani, the Cotton King of Bombay, who financed the Indian National Congress. As punishment, the British government brought down the price of Lancashire cotton and made him a pauper overnight. He died in 1926.’ This and many such anecdotes of little known gems of the saga of the freedom movement find their way into Kamal’s notion of India. The close blending of cultures is again emphasized when another anecdote is narrated,

There was this Ustad they say, who, through his rendering of certain ragas, could cure any ailment, and another who could conjure the psychic forms of ragas and raginis through his singing. When a Maharashtrian pandit of Shastriya Sangeet sings and an Ustad gives a concert, do they belong to two different civilizations? Now this new business of Culture is being re-defined as ‘pure Hindu’ or ‘pure Muslim’ by the Mahasabha and the Muslim League. (232)

This is followed by the description of the revival of the All India Muslim League in the same vein,

‘Begum Shahnawaz wore a silk sari and her long ear-rings flashed as she spoke in front of the microphone in Qaiser Bagh. The All India Muslim League was revived at that session by M.A. Jinnah, and Amir Mohammed Khan, the youthful Raja of Mahmudabad.

He is young, and he is an idealist, said Kamal’s father. The Raja is financing the new Pakistan Movement. Mr. Jinnah had been a Congressman, once called the Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim Unity.’ (232)

Here again the emphasis of Muslim contribution to the creation of the Indian identity is striking, ‘The Muslim thread was present in every pattern of Indian tapestry—was all this going to be erased by the demand for Pakistan? The thought disturbed old nationalists like Asad Mamoo. Young people had dreams of their own of a socialist India.’ (233) Yet again there is a statement in support of Hindu-Muslim unity, ‘No Hindu-Muslim rift in the princely states—the problem is characteristic of post-1857 British India’ (233). What happens next is the resignation of the Congress government of Lucknow in 1939 and the League has got its foothold. Kamal’s father’s comment foretells the rest of the story, “‘The Muslims have had a foretaste of majority rule. A little common sense and the Congress need not have alienated them. You mark my words, Asad Mian, the League movement is now going to snowball’” (233) The train

journey is momentarily interrupted by the scene of a dead body of an old man who had died of starvation. Life of the young collegiate characters is spent in debating their loyalties and their nationalist leanings. Prof. Banerjee, their teacher had blamed the Mutiny for the British policy of divide and rule that had sown the seeds of separatism. The end result was Partition. The impact of Partition is immediately given voice by Hyder thus, 'Professor Banerjee's youngest daughter got married a few days after Partition. It was a subdued affair. The Professor belonged to Dacca and his relatives could not come because of the riots. They had also decided to stay back in Dacca as Pakistanis. Things were happening too fast and much too violently, and the world seemed to have gone quite mad.' (263) Champa who was trying to become a wall flower so as to avoid her antagonistic old friends, is accosted by a stranger thus, "Hellow, there! How is Mr. Jinnah? How is it that he has gone away to Karachi and left you behind?" (ibid)

Though the young man is rebuked, Champa is bewildered. 'Who was this stranger? How had he guessed that she was a Muslim? Was it written on her face? Was this how Muslims were going to be sneered at in the future?' (ibid) Kamal accosts Champa with, "Champa Baji, congratulations! Your Pakistan has come into being, after all" (264) The inmates of Gulfishan debate about staying back and assist in the re-building efforts of the nation or to take the opportunity of going to England for higher studies and career opportunities. Champa follows them as she too had a scholarship. The Indians replicate their cliques back home and England has a rich colonial-influenced cultural scene. It is in Kamal's return to India that the reality of the nation sinks in. Kamal's return to Lucknow is akin to waking from a pleasant dream only to slide into nightmare. The epicenter of high culture '...had become a derelict and shabby city.' (pg 369) He is struck by the fact that '...his own parents didn't realize that they had unwittingly lost a country.' (pg 370) The poverty they experience owes to—in his father's bitter statement, "They abolished zamindari first in U.P. because most of the land owners were Muslim." (ibid) Kamal goes job hunting and finds no takers for his scientific skill. He ignores everyone's well-meaning advice to move to Pakistan which would snatch a man of his skills. He cannot imagine a different home. Then the family reels under the declaration of their home as evacuee property and fight the case only to lose it. Disheartened, they are forced to make the painful choice of being in an eternal state of flux or to move to Pakistan and begin the heart wrenching task of reconstructing their lives. In the following chapter titled 'Letter From Karachi', the

epistolary method is put to use to muse about the seeds of the division and the Truth is hung between two schools of thought viz. the practitioners of rationality who believed in free will and those that held on to pre-destined course of life. Whatever may the cause be, “It is foolish to think that India Divided can be reunited again. The map of the world changes after every world war.” (pg 378) This realization of Kamal is the Truth and the narrative is nostalgic of the past but refuses to mire itself in sentimentality; rather it takes stock of the situation as is and moves on.

Cyril Ashley the great grandson of the Nabob Cyril Ashley is in India to look into trouble brewing in his tea gardens. Kamal is in India to ratify property deeds to claim compensation in Karachi. The two meet and it's like the good old times in London; but not for long, Kamal is tormented and agonizes traumatically, “Exile, exile... Oh my god, why did you let me become an exile [...]?” (pg 389) A little later in the chapter, as the two of them return to Dacca and were both looking at the passing scenery, thoughts torment, “What rigmarole was this? What kind of world had come into existence? How many millions of human lives had been lost in the creation of this particular world, how many homes destroyed, how many millions became refugees and exiles? How many millions who used to starve then, continued to starve now?” (pg 393) This sense of history impinging on the lives of some and upturning fortunes while some continue to be ignored by history- revolves on resignation to or acceptance of fate. As Kamal makes his return journey, he is on the platform at Howrah station and his heightened imagination inverts his notion of being an exile to turning into a fugitive.

“At the platform he noticed a police officer coming towards him briskly. Unnerved, he felt for his passport and travel documents in his coat pocket in order to assure himself that he had not entered India illegally. The police officer went his way without looking at him. Kamal continued to feel acutely miserable.

The train began its westbound journey. Burdwan... Asansol... Patna... Mughalsarai... Banaras... Allahabad [...] hurtling through a strange, unknown land. A year ago this was his own country, the land of his forefathers. Today he was a foreigner here. He felt as though people were looking at him suspiciously. “You are a Pakistani,” they seemed to be saying, “Come to the police station. You ought to be in the lock-up. You are a Pakistani—Muslim spy—Muslim spy.” The wheels of the train too seemed to be repeating the same clangorous, harrowing, blood-curdling refrain—spy—traitor—spy—traitor—traitor—traitor--.

He opened his eyes, trembling. (pg 395-396)

In Lucknow, he looks up Champa who has returned to India for good. As they catch up on each other's lives, Champa introduces him to her family. Though Kamal is "...just sick of this Indo-Pakistan melodrama..." (pg 401), he converses with Champa's family.

"Her uncle talked to him at some length in a slow dolorous tone, going over the same old topics—the impending war between India and Pakistan, the distressing economic problems. "We UP Muslims have been ruined because of the creation of Pakistan," he concluded.

"Why is this place so quiet? Where has everybody gone?" Kamal's voice trailed off.

"Over there—where you have gone," replied the old man. "Most of our family members packed up and left with just a few old fogeys like myself here. The place will be haunted by ghosts after we die."

"But I saw the city chockfull of Muslims," Kamal argues.

"Only the hoi-polloi, Barey Abba replied dismissively. "The gentry has more or less emigrated." (pg 400)

Kamal leaves Champa behind and proceeds to complete the business for which he had journeyed back to India. He finds their Dehra Dun house, Khyaban, occupied by a genial Sardarji who cordially invites him in and reassures him, "...please treat this as your own home, Apni hi ghar samjhen." (pg 406) The storeroom that stocked their precious possessions had become so much junk. He left it all behind for the Government of India to take a hold of it or sell it to the kabariwallah. He then goes to Delhi and decides to visit Laj, Hari Shankar's sister.

"Hello Laj—I am at the police station," Kamal airily informed his childhood friend, trying to sound jovial.

"Police station? Whatever for?" Laj was shocked. She had never had a Pakistani visitor before.

"To report my arrival, stupid." (pg410)

From Laj's place, Kamal hunts up Gautam's number and telephones him. As the conversation opens, Kamal has to force himself to summon up his old manner; but Gautam's total recall of the residents of Gulfishan puts him at ease, only to tie him up in knots and he exclaims,

"Everybody is fine except yours truly...Qadeer and Qamrum...My god! You remember them! You remember everything! Everything, you said? Well, you do have an excellent memory! Qadeer went back to Mirzapur after the car was sold. Why was the car sold? Yaar, entire lives have been sold, mortgaged, auctioned off, thrown away, and you're worried about an old motor car!

"You have not sold yourself, you say. No. No. I was talking about myself...I got a good price and market conditions were favourable." (pg 412)

Kamal's experiences reinforce the feeling of being a stranger in his own land, an outsider looking in. The sense of déjà vu continues to haunt him in the visit to the museum as he tags along with Dr. Hans Krammer, whom he bumps into. They are being given a guided tour of the museum where they stop at the 4<sup>th</sup> century B. C. sculpture (Gautam, the student of the Gurukul) and a conversation ensues about form and non-form when Dr. Krammer says,

“Wish we knew the name of the sculptor who created this girl under the kadamba tree. But in India history has no meaning. Events are not important. Reality, myth and tradition all get mixed up. Historical time does not exist. The moment is eternal, man remains nameless. His creations get lost in this ocean of eternity. No crisis affects the Indian mind because crisis is also part of time and time has no meaning,” Dr. Krammer intoned. “That is why the artists of the East hardly ever bothered to inscribe their names...” (pg 416)

Soon, it is time for Kamal to return and he boards his train. Familiar scenes and landmarks whiz past and “...He kept looking out of the window. He was going away.” (pg 417) As the train enters the countryside, he remembers Gautam's early philosopher's pose, “Every journey is symbolic, Gautam had observed once... “The entire symbol of India is the journey. The habit of always travelling, always searching...” Spengler had said.” New rituals are noted as normal as when the both Indian and Pakistani soldiers board the last compartment which is there to guard the travelers.

“Kamal had been mustering his courage all these days to remain *intact*. He broke down finally when the train crossed the border and he saw, for the last time, the grinning, jovial face of a Sikh soldier who stood alert with his gun under a telegraph pole.

Suddenly, the other country began. The gun-toting Sikh soldiers were left behind.

I am in Pakistan. I have come from India. Refugee. Muhajir. Displaced Muslim from Uttar Pradesh...how terrifying...Refugee...displaced...homeless...

Abdul Mansur Kamaluddin wept.

After a few moments he realized that his fellow passenger, the Pakistan Border Police officer who was returning to Lahore from Amritsar, was looking at him intently.

Kamal was crestfallen. He felt as though the police officer was saying: “You still stand at the cross-roads of conflicting loyalties, don't you?”

The eyes of the whole world were glued on him. You are an Indian Muslim...Indian spy...

The train's wheels seemed to be repeating the same refrain—traitor... spy... traitor... spy... traitor... spy...

He opened his eyes, trembling.” (pg 419)

Thence Kamal boards a plane for Karachi and tries to shake off the gloomy thoughts tormenting and immerses himself into the politics of his newly minted state. When he looks up next, he observes rain clouds beetling and realizes that “The clouds need no passport.” (pg 420) Kamal is left to plunge headlong into the tumult of his new life and to learn to live with the schism of identity and the disruptions in memory that will continue to haunt him. The last chapter is set in Shrivasti where scholars and disciples from across the globe have gathered to commemorate the 2500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Buddha. As Gautam flees from his house to escape the feeling of being cooped up, he traipses back to the rock shrine where another Gautam had once sheltered; and the same serendipity is at work for Hari Shankar arrives fortuitously to seek him out. After they have re-enacted the age old ritual of tossing a coin into the Sarju, they both feel the despondent vacuum of Kamal’s absence. While Hari contemplates Kamal’s desertion and betrayal, Gautam perceives it as a mutual betrayal, a betrayal that has left in its wake a gaping wound, a sorrow so deep that the very soul apprehends it and is affected by its pain.

A parade of pilgrims walked past on their way to Jetvan Vihara to honour and pay homage to the Buddha. As their footsteps faded, nothing remained but silence. The ironic end doffs its hat to the fact that all the ahimsa in the teachings of the Buddha or the knowledge of the experiences of history couldn’t prevent the monumental tragedy of the Partition. The sense of ‘been there, done that’, that this too has happened somewhere before and is happening again cannot be shaken off. The Partition can be equated with an amputation, the wounds may heal with time but the ghost of the limb still lingers. Hyder explores the psychological trauma as etched on the mindscape of the victims, essentially not handing out the victory trophy to either contenders but portraying both as victims. *River of Fire* presents this as the tragedy that imploded and demolished both the nation’s collective memory and that there is no going back.

The trouble with writing about violence is that it can be easily used to shock and awe the reader but then the event becomes a parody and is reduced to mere spectacle. Writers of Partition have been cautious in their depiction of violence and Hyder in particular, uses oblique references and the trauma of loss to eviscerate the tragedy of Partition. Where other authors portray a few characters of both communities practicing kindness to allay the risk of inciting hurt sentiments, Hyder binds her characters in surrogate filial relationships that sustain them through the disruptive wake of Partition

only to have them scattered in India, Pakistan, England and the US. This brings to fore the fact that there is a contentious and contending diaspora in the aftermath. The violent bloodshed is often depicted as collective insanity and lunacy is the metaphor many writers use to signify this fiery doom that imperiled everyone. Hyder chooses to keep away from the lunacy syndrome as an explanatory trope but instead finds space within this depravity to repose faith in humanity. The rendition of her characters in separate aeons of history allows her the freedom to present the creation, efflorescence, decadence and decay of each period; the sorrow of the receding age acutely felt by those characters, only to resurge and re-emerge from the sands of time.

Urvashi Butalia implicates the study of Partition to only the heightening political fervor and its attendant actions and hence finds it wanting in its erasure of the human cost. (The Other Side of Silence, 2000) This alludes to the total silence on the memory of trauma, divided psyches and the challenge to reconstruct identity and community through their new lives and relationships. Hyder's *River of Fire* dissects this trauma by colluding and confronting history and memory (by memory, the personal is implied here) in the four major consecutive phases of Indian history through the protagonists that enter and exit and repeat this outing in each new period. Hyder, as also all writers of Partition, stand testimony to remembering the Partition. In making history a party to the discourse on Partition, these authors' repository throws up the possibility of exploring the cultural politics which the nationalistic histories overlook. Hyder's *River of Fire* is a revisionist history and is a fine example of a people's history. It is totally imbued in a cosmopolitan outlook that looks beyond the parochial interests and is all embracing in its essence. It ensures space within its flexible framework to encompass difference and celebrate it. Though the debate on a pan-national cosmopolitanism ranges from accusations of rootlessness that makes for an inability to commit, to comparing it to advocating nationalistic/globalizing agendas of capitalist ideologies, Hyder's cosmopolitanism emerges from a deep mooring in the syncretic culture of Lucknow. *River of Fire* foregrounds a marriage of the local and the global influences to form the 'glocal' community that is respectful of difference and upholding the dignity of the individual.

#### **2.4 This Is Not That Dawn**

From being a narrow, stifling endeavour of merely recording political history, history today has ventured into allied literature and social sciences to enable an engagement with different points of view from a broad range of interdisciplinary subjects to arrive

at the most composite picture of the truth. This engagement stems from a perspective that views history and historical sources in broad terms along with the intellectuals that blew the straightjacket and saw the materiality of history in diverse subjects. If history can permeate literature then can literature not be a repository of history? Thus began the debate between historicizing fiction and fictionalizing history. This approach, in literature, was ushered in by historicism, carried forward by Marxist materialists and given its head by New Historicists. These critics saw the text as embedded in the larger political scenario of the age along with the material means of production. Twentieth century evicted the concept of the text as innocent and devoid of historico-political aspersions.

#### **2.4.1 New Historicism**

The canonization of the text as the Holy Grail to the extent that the historical background is dismissed merely as noise, is what the major part of twentieth century literary criticism was all about. This radical divorce narrowed the search for truth within the confines of the text. Yet, with the close analysis of the text came a richness of reading pursuant to which a larger understanding privileged the need to dig deeper into the age that gave birth to the text. The social aspect of the text and the historicity of its production and journey became the focal point of investigation with the publication of Stephen Greenblatt's *Renaissance Self Fashioning: From Moore to Shakespeare* in 1980. New Historicism takes cues from discourse analysis of the post structuralists, study of ideology by Marxists and venture to create a new avenue wherein the text is not studied in a vacuum but is embedded in the social, cultural and historical milieu of the age and goes on to include the economic and political implications too. The simultaneous study of other disciplines bring to the fore the deceleration of privileging the text and instead perceiving it as a product of the historical forces.

New Historicism is a fusion of the perceptions that stake the reading of the text as embedded in particular histories and privilege the language which brings this to us however elusive it may be. The universalizing tendencies of literature along with its jurisdiction on truth are negated in favour of understanding the historical and cultural contexts that give rise to these assumptions. In Greenblatt's words, "[T]hat there is no transhistorical or universal human essence and that human subjectivity is constructed by cultural codes which position and limit all of us in various and divided ways" (88). He then moves on to demolish the haloed 'objectivity' of textual analysis and sets it in

opposition to the subjectivity of the critic, who must be aware of the challenges to view the past minus the cultural baggage of the present. Greenblatt proceeds to discuss the representation of discourse as a means to engender events that influence human conscience and hence the many forms of representation must be explored in relation to each other whereby the non-literary text takes the form of an event to be studied in relation to the text under consideration. This process arrives at using thick description as a tool of analysis of such a study wherein links are established between the literary text and the surrounding cultural phenomena of the text. This emerges from the debunking of the notion about the homogeneity, and thus, the stability of history. The New Historicists view history as a web of interactions to engage with several disciplines of study to negotiate a better understanding of what the past represented.

The text, according to New Historicism, embodies the voices of the dominant culture and ideologies of the age and continues to exert influence on the present to develop a symbiotic relationship. Thus, social privilege becomes a currency that is at the same time invisible and is used as means of exchange. This then is viewed as ‘social capital’ and a powerful tool of negotiation in the socio-cultural interactions. The reader will syncretism upon the text if it fits within his own weltanschauung; but if the same does not match his world view, then an attempt is made to appropriate and naturalize it so as to tailor it to approximate his beliefs. This juxtaposing of the literary and non-literary is an attempt to eviscerate the ‘actuality’ of the text as opposed to the ‘representation’ it is usually viewed as. Thus, New Historicism declares that literature is a mediation of human experience and hence has the power to influence ideology. With reference to ideology, literature then not only ‘reproduces’ the dominant ideology, it ‘shapes’ the understanding of human experience. The central attack against New Historicist analysis in the main is with reference to ideology—its place in the past and not located in the critic’s sympathy. This is related to the seeking of power and power struggles as is disbursed in the text. The text is studied to read the sites of struggle so as to identify the group with the most power. Foucault’s Panopticon becomes a metaphor of the submission of the common people.

New Historicism denied literary texts its privileged position, haloed in vacuum and reverberating with objective universal truths. Instead, the movement encouraged a

simultaneous juxtaposition of the literary and non-literary texts of the same period. This new equivocal positioning demolished the assumptive duality of literary foreground and historical background and invited permissiveness to each to interrogate the other. This mien is furthered by Stephen Greenblatt who sates this need in demanding “an intensified willingness to read *all* of the textual traces of the past with the attention traditionally conferred only on literary texts.” The New Historicists sited the texts within a historical document of the period whose major dilemmas find echoes in the literary text under consideration.

The historical incident is the dramatic opening that links the two texts viz. *River of Fire* and *This Is Not That Dawn*; and hence, the historical resource is a co-text, and not the context of prior approaches. Historicism, often seen as the precursor to New Historicism, privileged the literary text and relegated history to the background. New Historicism also looks at history, especially recorded history, as a co-text. The literary world is replaced by the documented word which is thence subjected to a close reading. This is their tilting their collective hat towards the deconstructionist movement and whose influence is acknowledged by reposing their faith in the recorded document which is subjected to the ideology of its times and ours while braving the distortion inherent in language itself. The New Historicist outlook is that of remaking a text by siting it within the ‘historical anecdote’ to recreate a different reality.

#### **2.4.2 Subaltern Studies and Partition Studies**

To read Yashpal in this context is also to link the Subaltern Studies conclave. The systemic infiltration of Eurocentric education, ideas and values within the native frameworks was an attendant of the Empire building enterprise. This strengthened the stranglehold of the Empire and funded a cozy lifestyle back home. In the freedom struggles too, one sees the parlay of Eurocentric notions. It is only in the aftermath that identity formation demanded redemption from being the ‘white man’s burden’ to being their own people. A shaking off of labels, a fight to shrug off the inferior status and the consequential lack of agency led to the acceptance of subalternity as a point of departure to rescue/reclaim the past before colonialism as a platform to question, explore and rewrite the colonial experience from the colonized perspective.

Ranajit Guha, in the Preface to Subaltern Studies I states, “The word ‘subaltern’ in the title stands for the meaning as given in the Concise Oxford Dictionary, that is, ‘of inferior rank’.” (vii) He further clarifies that the usage of this term is “... a name for

the general attitude of subordination in South Asian society whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender and office or in any other way.’ (ibid) Further, the expressed intent is to “...help to rectify the elitist bias characteristic of much research and academic work in this particular area.” (ibid) The summit is often perceived to be a vantage point to observe and comment; but simultaneously, the summit precludes a closer look at the players but is a safe place to grandstand. This appellant has brought the elitist bias under scrutiny and researchers now expend their time and effort to view the unfolding events from the point of view of those impacted the most. In the words of Ranajit Guha, “There will be much in these pages which should relate to the history, politics, economics and sociology of subalternity as well as to the attitudes, ideologies and belief systems –in short, the culture informing that condition.” (ibid) Inherent in the subaltern position is the binary opposition between the dominant ruling elite and those under their control/power. Subaltern Studies is an attempt to usurp the hegemonic status enjoyed by the elites in favor of the marginalized. Ranajit Guha concurs with this view and states, “Indeed, it will be very much a part of our endeavour to make sure that our emphasis on the subaltern function both as a measure of objective assessment of the role of the elite and as a critique of elitist interpretations of that role.” (ibid) The need for such an inversion is felt on account of the lionizing tendency which tilts the balance in favor of the elite and, thereby latent in such accounts is the distortion of the facsimile of the event. Such distortions allow for discrepancies to creep in the telling and for these discrepancies to revel in the pseudo truth halo bestowed upon them.

In the first chapter titled ‘On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India’, Ranajit Guha’s opening salvo reads, “The historiography of Indian nationalism has for a long time been dominated by elitism—colonialist elitism and bourgeois-nationalist elitism....Both these varieties of elitism share the prejudice that the making of the Indian nation and the development of the consciousness-nationalism-which informed this process, were exclusively or predominantly elite achievements.” (1) Guha has gone on to further split this between the notion wherein Indian nationalism is the byproduct of the elites’ negotiation with the colonial apparatus for a share of the pie and alternatively led, to quote Guha, “The general orientation of the other kind of elitist historiography is to represent Indian nationalism as primarily an idealist venture in which the indigenous elites led the people from subjugation to freedom.” (2) Guha does find a major use for the elitist historiography and that is,

“It helps us to know more about the structure of the colonial state, the operation of its various organs in certain historical circumstances, the nature of the alignment of classes which sustained it; some aspects of the ideology of the period; about the contradictions between the two elites and the complexities of their mutual oppositions and coalitions; about the role of some of the more important British and Indian personalities and elite organizations. Above all it helps us to understand the ideological character of historiography itself.”

Guha, however, critiques the elitist history and claims that it does nothing by way of proffering an explanation of Indian nationalism for it offers no logical explanation for mass upsurges which he terms as ‘popular initiatives’. The text that is under consideration next is Yashpal’s *This Is Not That Dawn*, a narrative that juxtaposes the elite and subaltern points of view and critiques the freedom movement’s non-violent credentials. The narrative contrasts the revolutionary fervor reined in by the doctrine of non-violence; it subjects the elitist leadership to questions of motive and the leaders do come under the fire of criticism. The subaltern perspective and the history in the making are integrated into the narrative. He goes on to lampoon the almost *cult* status that the colonial apparatus and functionaries enjoy in this narration

#### **2.4.3 *This Is Not That Dawn*: Introduction**

. Therefore, *This Is Not That Dawn*, the translation of Yashpal’s *Jhootha Sach*, is a valuable source for further investigation. ‘*This Is Not That Dawn*’ (1958, 1960) by Yashpal belongs to the corpus of Partition literature. Though Yashpal wrote it in Hindi, it was translated by his son, Anand. Though the title ‘*Jhootha Sach*’ could be rendered as ‘*False Truth*’, the English title ‘*This Is Not That Dawn*’ alludes to Faiz Ahmed Faiz’s Urdu poem that laments the Partition which belied the hopes of a united country. The book is divided into two volumes and is a massive tome at 1119 pages. The narrative is split between the build-up to the Partition, which is set in Lahore in 1946 titled ‘*Vatan Aur Desh*’ (Homeland and Nation); and the next volume follows the period from Independence to 1957 and is called ‘*Desh Ka Bhavishya*’. The book is a testimony to the events that led to the Partition and the violence that was unleashed in the name of religion. More importantly, it narrates the story of the birth of the nation and its infancy. It is a tale of idealism soured by pragmatism, a collapse of the old social order and a re-creation of a new order.

The narrative begins innocuously enough with the death of Puri and Tara’s grandmother and the rituals involved enclose the fraternal ties of the *gali biraadari* (the camaraderie within the closely-knit community sharing the by-lane) that exists in Bhola Pandhe’s Gali; the hierarchies that have long been entrenched in the community’s mindset which sanctions a certain belief system and a way of life are

foregrounded. The death instantly juxtaposes a conflict between ritualistic mourning and reformist cleansing. The family opts for a *siyapa* (ceremonial mourning) and follow tradition since it moors all life activities as it has evolved sufficient sign posts of what is expected; thereby roles are typecast and there is no room for doubt. Tradition is upheld not because it eases life along but mainly because it implicates status; no one is interested in courting embarrassment and stigma. The entire episode points to the comfort of custom while simultaneously underlining its suffocating grip on social mores.

The narrative captures the near schizophrenic ambivalence of the safety of the pre-partition days interrupted and laced by hearsay to volatile instability. This is evoked from the very title of 'Volume I: Homeland and Nation'; whereby one refers to the ties that bind one to one's birthplace, the lane where one grew up, the friendships forged with the neighbours, the attitude of looking out for each other, running interference, gossip, rumour, sharing life events of marriage, birth, death as also participating in each others' festivities. These relationships are akin to blood relationships and are tagged in intimate terms of affection and respect. The people of Bholu Pandhe's Gali live cheek by jowl in close quarters which does not offer much privacy; instead this state of living does ensure that everyone is privy to the goings on in everyone else's homes. Growing up together means that the children are welcome everywhere, their welfare and that of their families is a communal affair. Giving unsolicited advice may be equated with interfering often leading to quarrels between neighbours and an exchange of sharp words; but ultimately, if calamity were to befall a member of the gali, the entire gali would land up to mitigate the situation.

The narrative thus captures intimate themes and weaves them skillfully into a magnificent story; the protagonists' actions set them in constant tumult and the reader is swept into the sway of its undercurrents, tugging relentlessly at the readers' sympathy. The social control of a traditional society is set in opposition to the newfangled ideas that come via western education; the pivot of a changing world thus is engaged in terms of the old versus the new. Deaths, marriage, status of women, poverty, idealism, pragmatism- are some of the threads explored in this narrative. The locale is Lahore, the year is 1946 and Part I is, as mentioned earlier, about the Homeland and Nation; starkly representing the dichotomy between the mother land and the nation; the former, signifying the emotional ties that bind one to the land of one's birth, and the latter, is an idea yet to take seat. This hairsplitting of seemingly

synonymous terms is the fulcrum of the novel; the events preceding the Partition are built with acute tensile strength right up unto the moment of carving out of Pakistan. In his Introduction (2010) to 'This Is Not That Dawn', Harish Trivedi in citing the locale avers,

[I]t is possible to map the lanes, roads and various neighbourhoods of Lahore accurately enough from this novel, as it is in the case of Joyce's Dublin which was also recreated from memory in exile, with the difference that in this case, the geographical verisimilitude exists not only for its own sake (or indeed for art's sake) but also serves to undergird the imaginative authenticity of the historical tumult. (xviii)

Harish Trivedi ascribes originary significance to the siting of the novel and recalls his translation of Yashpal's own words in a Hindi interview, "I felt constantly agitated. My Panjab and Lahore were gone; could not one preserve even a memory of them? And the anguish of penitence at the folly of collective madness due to communal ill-will?" (2006, pg 194) Trivedi further claims that this emotional outburst was on account of revisiting Pakistan and, in particular, Lahore in 1955 wherein Yashpal is said to have bemoaned, "Is it the same Lahore that I had last seen in 1945 for a couple of days and whose grandeur still lived in my imagination? Instead of a fairground, it seemed to be a graveyard....The shops were deserted, and the devastated city lay under a pall of gloom." (ibid, 193)

#### **2.4.4 "Vatan Aur Desh"**

Bhola Pandhe's Gali is the centre of this universe and the epicenter of this gali is Masterji's house. The narrative unfolds through Jaidev Puri and Tara, Masterji's older children. Puri, a budding writer, having completed his MA is on the lookout for a job to alleviate the poverty of the family. As a student, he had been jailed for "[...] being a part of a secret political movement" (13). His stories were much sought after by all publications, but no word of payment was ever forthcoming. He waited for a job to be offered to him and to make ends meet; he took up tutoring the children of the well-off families. Finally, armed with a letter of recommendation, he joins the newspaper *Pairokaar* as a journalist, but not without first getting lectured by Kashish, the editor, who equates journalism to the selfless service through sacrifice rendered by the freedom fighters. He complains that the present generation wants the pelf and power without either learning the craft or hard work. He further admonishes that journalistic writing can bind the politics of the state or sink it; the fortifying/destabilizing force is the responsibility of the journalist.

Puri saw journalism as a platform to hone his skills as a writer; thinking that from writing news to becoming a published author would be a cakewalk. Puri was learning the otherwise of life: “He had been welcomed as an honoured guest, as an independent writer. He was leaving as a paid subordinate of Kashish. This was bitter medicine, but with a source of livelihood now at hand, swallowing it had been less difficult” (ibid, 38). Puri realizes that news is a full time occupation and finds little time for writing stories and his budding romance for Kanak takes up the rest of his time. In this twist of tale, Yashpal weds the story to the interplay of larger political events. Thus, the story is both intensely personal at one level; at the other, constantly interrupted and directed by the larger historical narrative of nationhood.

Puri is still involved in student activism and his leftist leanings give way to the moderation of the Congress stance. The educated friends of the Student Federation apprehend the innate divisiveness of nationalism that operates on exclusionary politics and the dream of an undivided nation is slowly ebbing with the separatist movement supporting a pro-Hindu nation and an anti-Hindu pro-Muslim Pakistan. Where early statist narrative lays the blame squarely on League politics and its supporters, it is only recent scholarship (Hasan, Jalal, Pandey, Saint, Kothari) that reveals the role of Hindu organizations in fomenting trouble. Two women representing the Hindu Defence Committee venture into Bhola Pandhe’s Gali and encounter a Muslim fruit-seller at the entrance to the Gali. They insist that he make way and the younger of the two says, “Sisters, haven’t you heard? In Calcutta, Muslims have murdered thousands of our Hindu brothers; they have raped and mutilated hundreds of women from Hindu families. It is indeed sad that these people still come to peddle their stuff in your gali.” Such is the thrust of this conversation that the women of the gali who initially resented the action of these women trying to shoo away the fruit seller now resent his intrusion and send him away with the admonition not to venture into their gali anymore.

The two ladies were welcomed and seated amongst the ladies of the gali. They resume their talk of the Bengal tragedy and soon the numbers get fudged and the horrors multiply. The ladies of the gali agree with Meladei when she asserts, “[...] Their honour is our honour!” (pg 60) and agree to collect items to be donated to their welfare. They call out to Tara and Pushpa, the most qualified girls, to keep an account of the items donated along with the donor’s names. The committee members try to influence the two girls to organize a similar committee in their gali. The two ladies

then attempt to convince Tara that Muslims are the real threat while Tara persists in her stance that the real enemy is the British occupier. Rational argument and an appeal for co-existence are easily brushed aside. The Hindu fear of losing their wealth and property to the Muslim is linked to the Muslim rule in Delhi, Agra and Lucknow. The ladies insist that the women send their men to enroll in the *akharas*, the training ground for wrestlers, to learn self-defence. Historical evidence is marshaled to encourage the women to be aware of the danger encumbering them and to bring to the fore their fighting spirit. Yet, the insistence that the Muslims are somehow the root cause of trouble simply refuses to be shrugged off easily, as delineated in the following conversation,

‘Bahenji, it’s the British who are causing all this strife.’ Tara began in a quiet voice.

Ishwar Kaur at once contradicted her, ‘But why do the damned Muslims fight us at the urging of the British? They don’t have to.’

‘The Hindus too can be instigated,’ Tara said boldly. ‘We were just talking about preparing for a war.’....

Tara said to Gyandevi ..., ‘Bahenji, the Hindu-Muslim conflict is nonsense. Where will the two go if they fight one another? Their country is one! Our real fight is with the British oppressor.’

Ishwar Kaur replied vehemently, ‘Don’t be so simple, beti! The Muslims are the ones behind the demand for Pakistan. What’ll we do with the country if we lose our homes and native land?’ (63-64)

The youngsters feel that the enemy being common, if only the people realized this and fought united against the British imperialists, the dream could still be salvaged. They make desperate attempts to shore up against the divisive elements through demonstrations, speeches and assisting in the rescue operations post riots without discrimination. Yet, their combined forces seem paltry and feeble to staunch the contagion of hatred and violence. The reality of the homeland is large and enveloping, it sustains and nurtures difference. The concept of the nation is narrow and exclusivist; it sets in motion the process of ‘othering’ and generates schisms where once there existed friendship. This idea finds echoes in the competing processions taken out in favour of the demand for Pakistan and the equally vehement demand for preserving the unity of the Hindu-Muslim-Sikh to protect civil liberties. But as the divisive forces gain momentum, it chisels away at the fabric of the fraternal community experience, replacing trust and camaraderie with fear and doubt.

The participation of student bodies in overseeing the counter-processions that seek to secure the idea of a united nation reverberates with the trust and respect of classmates who belong to different religious denominations but are united by friendship. They are tuned into the fact that sectarian violence will eventually chip away at the very foundation of communal harmony and replace it with distrust and fear. They have lived peaceably enough that the canards spread to other them are viewed as just that—canards spread to sow seeds of dissension. Change is inevitable; change through conquests have been inevitable; but to trade their stability for religious identity as the watermark of freedom seems to choke the student idealists, who insist that the Congress and League join forces to overthrow the British. This idea finds echoes in Hyder's *River of Fire*: where the friends are Hindu and Muslim, both homes are open to each other and they fail to comprehend the divisive nature of the politics leading to Partition.

Tara is concerned by the spread of such hearsay and she vows to speak to Asad bhai of the Student Federation, 'He should be told about all this, about these people fanning the flames of riot in the gali.' (pg 66) The entire town is seething in resentment of the Provincial Autonomy government headed by Khizr. Protests by the Leaguers were on the rise, and they raised slogans, 'Allah-u-akbar! Muslim League zindabad! Down with the Khizr government! Long live Qaid-e-Azam! We want the League government! Hindu-Muslim unity zindabad! We must have Pakistan!' (75) While the Hindus worried, the Hindu press admonished the administration to monitor the situation closely. Puri had written a piece in *Pairokaar*, "A storm of sectarian-inspired politics and of sectarian violence and hatred is gathering on the horizon. This storm will end civic peace and security. No one will remember these sermons for Hindu-Muslim unity when the storm breaks.' And again, in another piece, Puri warns:

[...] The change in the mood of the processions will give some comfort to peace-loving citizens. We do not oppose a democratically constituted ministry or even a coalition of two political parties. Nonetheless, we want to warn the political parties involved in the movement the demand for Pakistan is based on a sectarian division of the country. At the root of such a demand are religious intolerance, enmity and hatred for other communities. Such tendencies will neither foster unity nor bode well for civic peace. (76)

For the young, the demand for Pakistan is untenable. Jaidev and Asad get into a heated argument and Jaidev charges,

You communists support the creation of Pakistan! Isn't that breaking up the country? This march is a front for that demand!' Jaidev said forcefully.

‘We oppose the partition of the country!’ Asad replied equally forcefully. ‘What does the demand for Pakistan mean? Only that there would be a Congress ministry in one province of Hindustan and of the League in another province. This is a demand for self-determination! The Congress is willing to accept the break-up of the country. We oppose that. (77)

Yashpal, thus, uses the medium of newspaper editorials to report on the way the competing ideologies are seeking to direct history. History in *This Is Not That Dawn* is not a passive backdrop that serves a largely aesthetic purpose; history is being made afresh: the colonial past is sought to be overthrown in favor of self rule. This history is being pulled in different directions as is obvious from the reports/dialogues quoted above. Yashpal adds a new dimension to this manifold struggle: the youth align themselves to the ideal of a secular nation; whereas the political leadership indulges in partisanship. For the youth, the stakes are high: they are keenly aware that the dissipation of the secular ideal is equal to the dissolution of social harmony. The leaders plot and manipulate, bargain and negotiate with the British to gain freedom; their service is not without the aspiration to political ascendancy and staking personal claims to their legacy of sacrifice and service.

So there are processions by different groups aligned under different ideologies. The idealism of the youth is keenly felt when Asad asserts: “‘If Hindus and Muslims entered into marriages and relationships despite their religious and communal differences, there’d be less strife. Then the religion or the sense of community would have some meaning. At present, you merely adopt the religion of your family. The difference between two faiths has separated two people [...]’” (79) Thus, as the chapters proceed, the escalation of hostilities is relived by the reader. The initial sporadic violence sees many deaths; many of the victims are poor and innocent and in no way concerned with the conflict. The circumstances favour those who thirst for revenge and with police being told to conduct inquiries as to the cause of death and investigate into the belongings of the deceased; those who wished to help hesitate because they realized that rather than actually being of any help in taking victims to hospitals, they would be embroiled in police cases. The tussle between the Congress and the Muslim League is focused and Yashpal is at pains that both sides of the story get equal representation.

The public meet called by the Congress gets out of hand when a speaker began a tirade,

“Right from the time of creation, this country was known as the Aryavarta. This is the land of the gods Ram and Krishna. The Vedas called it the Panchnad, the land of five rivers. How can Pakistan be formed here? Those who want Pakistan should go to Arabia. The policy of Gandhi and the Congress has always been detrimental to the Hindus. The Congress has always sacrificed the rights of the Hindus to appease the Muslims. Now the League and the Muslims have the gall to demand half of the country. The Congress leaders have acquiesced so that they can hold positions in the government, but the League and Jinnah would next demand control over all of India. What the Mughal tyrant Aurangzeb failed to do, Muhammed Ali Jinnah wants to accomplish! We’ll get Pakistan with a smile! We’ll get Hindustan by bloodshed!” (103)

The Hindu-Muslim dissonance is palpably audible in this spiel and so is the move to hark back to mythical history of a pure culture. Asad comments after listening to the fiery speeches that the leaders aim salvos from the relative safety of their power centres, while the brunt of the discord would be fought in the streets by the people. Asad lays the blame for the political crisis in Lahore squarely on the British governor and Khizr since they did it unilaterally without following the due process of consultation with their colleagues.

In this intermingling of the personal and the historical, journalism plays a central role. The ‘facts’ of the political discourse of the freedom struggle are disseminated while juxtaposing the reports of the sporadic spurts of violence beginning to disturb the denizens. The murdered are innocent of any complicity; the perpetrators are strangers who commit crime and are never apprehended. The victims of this violence are the weak and the poor; the criminals are ordinary folks out to take revenge. The revenge is against a known enemy—the person belonging to the other religion; the avengers are those swayed by the communal diatribe put out by self-seeking, self-styled guardians of the faith. The death of Dauloo, stabbed by an unknown Muslim shakes the inhabitants of the Gali for whom, like Puri admits, “[W]hen someone dies, you express your feelings of loss and grief to their relatives. The feeling of grief at the death of Dauloo mama was not for show. It was everyone’s personal grief. He had not belonged to anyone, but to everyone” (113) The death of Dauloo marks the difference in the ceremonial mourning at the outset of the novel and the ones that follow. The outside world intrudes on the lives of the denizens of the Gali. What went on beyond the borders of the Gali was of no concern to them, except as news from far off places

that was discussed by the men with the women showing no interest, and hence, with no knowledge of such events.

Journalism is defined as ‘history in a hurry’ on account of its immediacy; for today’s news is tomorrow’s history. Journalism and journalists are bound to be objective and keep both personal opinion and predilections out of reporting. Yet, Yashpal shows that biases do creep in and reportage, far from being objective, is often parochial and inclined to a particular perspective.

“There were reports about widespread riots in Rawalpindi, and of the success of the police in controlling the situation there, about firing on the meeting of Hindu-Sikh students in Lahore, about the incidents of rioting and arson in Chowk Matti, and also about sporadic knife attacks in Mazang and near Delhi Gate.

The Chowk Matti incident was described in the Hindu newspapers as an attack on a peaceful march of Hindus passing through a Muslim mohalla. The Muslim newspapers reported it to be an unprovoked attack by Hindu mobs on Muslims [...]” (114)

This partisanship developed into the norm. Every incident, statement, relationship, even appearance would henceforth be viewed from the prism of religion; and this refracted viewpoint would unfavourably colour even newspapers. Puri’s stance on Hindu-Muslim unity proved expensive for Pairokaar sacked him for his editorial enjoining for unity in the face of violence; as the editorial exhorts both the Congress and the League to bury their differences and to oust the imperialists. This occurred on March 6. The next day Puri is shown the door. What Puri forgets to his own detriment is that newspapers are not organs of social change and order; but a business, a material process of engineering consent. This event is praised by his friends for the strong stance taken on the grounds of high principle. In the meeting held in support of Puri’s ‘sacrifice’, Asad exhorts:

‘[T]he newspapers demand freedom of the press from the government. [...] Such one-sided freedom will not be in the public good, and will also serve the interests of the newspaper bosses [...].

The workers of Lahore should raise their voices in support of his demand that the Congress, the League and the Akalis stop playing into the hands of the British imperialists in the hope of getting ministerial positions, and that they work together to form a common front to take back the administration from the governor [...].

The gist of their speeches was that British imperialists, who manipulated the two Hindustani peoples by their ‘divide and rule’ policy, were the enemy in the struggle for independence. But greater and more dangerous enemies were

those who were turning the struggle for political autonomy into a sectarian confrontation. The independence and the unity of India rested on harmony between Hindus and Muslims. The negative consequences of gaining political upper hand by inciting communal hatred and rivalry, and of working hand in glove with British civil servants, were obvious to everyone.” (123)

That the British targeted the vernacular press for their ‘factionalism’ in the wake of the 1857 War of Independence is capitalized by Hyder in *River of Fire*. In her delineation, the press was a votary of the struggle and their support was unconditional. Here, there is a twist: the Hindu press versus the Muslim press—taking the idea of ‘factionalism’ closer to its meaning no doubt, but actually symptomatic of a new low in Hindu-Muslim relationship.

Unfortunately, Puri is caught up in his own problems of unemployment and his uncertainties relating to Kanak. The rioting has been fanned by unscrupulous elements and propelled by fear. “The League’s demand for Pakistan had become increasingly vociferous and militant. The Anti-Pakistan League, under the leadership of Master Tara Singh, roared to match its stridency. The newspapers were full of reports of terrified Muslims fleeing westward from their ancestral homes in eastern Punjab, and of frightened Hindus on the other side uprooting themselves to settle in eastern Punjab” (127) If previously, the denizens of Lahore shook in fear at the thought of weapons of any kind as in time of the Quit India movement; then now, there was a flourishing trade in firearms in Lahore as people began to buy and stockpile weapons. Puri was being isolated by the young men of his Gali for,

“These men had joined the Anti-Pakistan League, and were helping to sabotage the efforts being made towards the inclusion of Punjab in Pakistan. After Clement Atlee’s proclamation of 16 February and the resignation of Sir Khizr, the possibility of the formation of Pakistan had ceased to be a matter of bigger demonstrations, different opinions and discussions on the formation of the next government, it had, instead, become a confrontation between the two communities: the Hindu resistance to the Muslim demand for Pakistan, and the Muslim insistence on creating it. Puri was in favour of Hindu-Muslim unity. How could he be close to these men?” (pg 129)

Thus, as the narrative proceeds, it is apparent that the early random violence was sporadic; since then, people actively prepared for their defence by procuring arms. When the violence actually broke out, its incendiary proportions can be accounted for in the presence of these stockpiles. The violence spreads in their vicinity and curfew

is imposed regularly. Curfew was lifted only to enable the faithful to offer namaz during the month of Ramzan. The holy month does not offer any respite from the spate of killings.

Reality intruded in the form of a news report. A Gali youth called out, “Look at this newspaper special. The Congress has agreed to the formation of Pakistan!” (pg 221) In the discussion that followed, Jaidev attempts to explain this decision but Tara reads his hypocrisy as he defends Hindu-Muslim unity. The partition would be along the lines of the majoritarian population and this saddens the people. They persist in believing that they are safe as though Lahore has a Muslim majority, the real owners of Lahore were the Hindus who owned vast property in Lahore.

#### **2.4.5 Tradition and Modernism**

Herein, Yashpal deftly inserts the wedge that history had pushed between the people: the usherance of modernity into a traditional society in the guise of western education. Tara and Jaidev are educated, speak Urdu, Punjabi and English, and have aspirations beyond the life and customs of the Gali. They are aware of themselves as individuals first and equals among all. This impinges on their consciousness and the two live a double life of following the customs and traditions of the family at home; yet, the moment they step out, they belong to their friends who discuss and debate traditional assumptions of love, marriage and family ties. This is often misconstrued as the idealism of youth by the elders and the waywardness of education by the traditionalists. While in the educated upper classes, it was not quite uncommon to have love marriages, even to intermarry, both were taboos in the social class to which they hailed from. Though one knows of Sheela’s infidelity, Puri’s romance first with Urmila and then with Kanak, no one else seems to take it seriously other than them. Tara’s feelings for Asad are frowned upon by Puri as an aberration, thus giving the lie to his ideal for Hindu-Muslim unity. The inter-mingling with the boys of her class, the freedom to visit with friends, the going to cafés—all speak of the influence of an English education. This calls into question the notions of both duty and loyalty from the traditional and the western points of view. Thus, Sheelo’s acceptance of traditional wisdom is in stark contrast to Tara’s new found independence of thought. Tara also realizes her helplessness is also because of the lack of economic independence as much as her being tied to the social circumstances of her community. David Gilmartin in ‘The Historiography of India’s Partition: Between Civilization and Modernity’ opines,

“[...] interpretations of Partition carried their own powerful implications of polarized visions of world history, such as Samuel Huntington’s “clash of civilizations,” that have powerful implications for the contemporary geopolitics of Islamophobia, not only in India but in the world more broadly. With Partition sometimes portrayed as the culmination of a civilizational clash between Hinduism and Islam in South Asia dating back almost a millennium, “Islam” and “Hinduism” have themselves become political actors, shaping history as if they were independent civilizational agents. “Civilizations”, in this vision, defined quintessentially by religion, have thus become for many, the great actors in the Partition drama [...]

But there is another large-scale drama that often lies behind alternative visions of Partition—and one linked to historical debates focusing on the grand historical changes associated not with “civilization”, but the coming of “modernity”. In this view Partition’s root causes lay precisely in the very forms of “modern” knowledge that gave license to the large-scale, “essentializing” cultural visions that led to the imagining of religions as historical actors at the core of bounded “civilizations”. Projections of “Hinduism” and “Islam” as distinct, inherently coherent yet mutually opposing systems in fact themselves had their origins, as many historians have argued, in a vision of “religion” that has far less to do with the longer-term story of Hindu-Muslim relations in India than with the structures of thought brought to India by nineteenth-century European thinkers which deeply shaped British colonial (and ultimately much Indian) thinking, defining a particular understanding of India’s distinctive religious history. And it was commonly argued that it was precisely this structure of thinking—far more than historically deep-seated civilizational structures—that ultimately lay behind the subcontinent’s religious Partition in 1947.”

Incidents in *This Is Not That Dawn* reference modernity through the protagonists’ relations with the domestic and public spaces. The chief debate among friends is the choice of life partner: whether the choice should be made by parents or whether this choice should be left in their hands. The budding attractions in their circle of friends and their reactions to this makes for an interesting debate skilfully leveraged by Yashpal as that between tradition and modernity; more significantly, the debate between a collective social choice is pitted against an individual and personal stand. Between the social and collective choice lay fate and destiny as the actors that directed the lives of the people; while in the individual and personal view, the choices made direct life and not vice versa. While the older generation viewed religious identity as integral to their lives, it does not enthrall the younger generation represented by Puri, Tara and their friends. Their friendship is based on shared ideas and intellectual like-mindedness. Yet, the arguments and conversations underscore the

economic reality too: ideas tend to be nebulous and seductive, but if they are not underpinned by riches, then one's choices are limited and this limitation then circumscribes life. Puri and Tara share a deep bond and converse in English whenever they want to share something they don't want the others to know about. Puri's volte face in withdrawing his support to Tara against her forthcoming marriage to Somraj drives a wedge between them. The religious differences force in suspicion as when Puri realizes that Tara and Asad are drawing closer; he accuses Tara of perfidy for the regard with which she treats Asad.

The acts of violence on religious grounds have an explosive effect on the people. Their sense of safety and security in the place and their neighbours is threatened. Suddenly the people belonging to the other religion become representation of types and the old wars/feuds become fecund fodder for the evocation of the villainy of the Muslims as intruders. Suspicion and anger add the vitriol that escalates the hostilities. Mischief makers in the form of radicalized members of the communities abound; the intension of protecting their own leads to harming the other. The spatial aspect of these attacks is laid bare: the galis are peopled by majoritarian populations; therefore, their attacks are staged to ambush those galis that are populated by the other community. From the galis, the fight is taken to the streets and it is not long before the city is ablaze with riots; separating people and dispersing families, who have no choice but to leave/flee.

Puri's choice of profession is intentional: Yashpal uses Puri's journalism to use the authorial voice to not only recreate the fervour of the pre-Partition time but also to nimbly flit between the opposing ideologies while covering the large body of the competing discourses with the brevity of the editorial authority. The numerous strands of the narrative—the main voices are those of Puri, Tara and Kanak, whose points of view are the alternating narratives that hold the book together—are resonant and cohesive by centring them around the news of the day. Ideas that circulated then are bought within the narrative fold through the quotes from newspapers and the debates that revolve round these articles. The news is initially a shock to the system as it veers away from the known and accepted way of life. The idea of freedom and a united nation had held sway for so long that people were attuned to it. The process of the political split is a discordant note that strikes at the very identity of the people: it

generates fear and conflict, as is evinced by the various conversations—both among men and women—that hotly debate the topic. These conversations have a strong role to play in their circuitous approach whereby they debate it as though it is personal, only to let it fall as though it is happening to someone else and that there is no need to worry about it happening to them and theirs.

*'This Is Not That Dawn'* does have heated discussions on politics either in general or based on newspaper reports and invites comments on the larger than life leaders of the freedom struggle—in the main, Pandit Nehru, Gandhiji, Sardar Patel and Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah. The newspapers thus became the vehicles of carrying their thoughts, ideas and plans of action across the subcontinent and affected the lives of the people in ways that cannot be easily accounted for. With the Congress' in principle acquiescence to the formation of Pakistan, the Gali people debate,

“Puri addressed him on behalf of all those sitting on the chabutara, ‘Doctor sahib, didn’t Gandhiji assert that Pakistan would be created over his dead body? [...]’

‘Why blame Gandhiji?’ Prabhu Dayal answered, but with less than the usual conviction in his voice. ‘This was decided by Pandit Nehru, Sardar Patel and the Congress Working Committee. Gandhiji had nothing to do with the decision. He had made it absolutely clear that Nehru and Patel were responsible for running the government. [...]’

‘Remaining true to your principles must also mean something,’ Ratan contradicted him in a loud voice.

The conversation lampoons the Congress leadership for acceding to expediency rather than persevering to achieve their stated goal of ‘one nation’. Another anecdote in this conversation narrates the how Nehru and Patel criticized the Quit India movement as anti-Congress; but took credit for it nonetheless when they formed the ministry in 1946. While the doctor persists in pointing out that independence was the first priority and if Partition was the only way forward then so be it. The hope for a last minute reprieve is hoped for certainly; but the stronger emotion is that of resignation to the inevitability of Partition. The sarcastic questioning of the value of truth and non violence is the tragic irony that besmirches the political flip-flops over the contention of separate nations to accommodate the religious mutation. The Gali people are contemptuous of the ideals that they had invested their faith in had been tarnished by political pragmatism that compromised the faith of many for the interest of a few. This betrayal assails them and the affront prompts them to judge them harshly and

find them wanting. The doctor is prescient in foretelling the missed opportunity of keeping Lahore on the Indian side.

#### **2.4.6 Violence and Separation**

Pursuant to this, the smouldering emotions flare up more frequently between the Hindus and Muslims leaving no room for any semblance of rapprochement; the rising scale and scope of violence leading to curfews becoming a way of life. This conflagration seems to engulf all the Galis of Lahore. Despite the imposition of curfew, violence sneaks in and coterminous to it, suspicion and fear. People from the more posh areas begin to make their moves: first, by transferring their money and fixed deposits to an Indian branch of their banks, and secondly, by scouting for places to settle in India if their worst fears come to be realized. In June of that year, news of which areas will be included in Pakistan begins to trickle out; but the people of Lahore live in denial. An enormous fire breaks out in the market area which takes three days to extinguish.

Kanak is in Nainital to introspect about her relationship with Puri. New acquaintances and new offers of a fresh start come her way, and she is buoyed by the thought of opportunities awaiting her. She writes to Puri to invite him over to seek gainful employment. He reaches Nainital and tries his luck at Lucknow and, for all his trouble, faces still more insult. On returning to Nainital, he is invited by Nayyar to the clubhouse to celebrate Independence Day. The delight and euphoria charge the air and all are in its thrall. The next day, people are back to doing what they always did; and herein, Yashpal ironically inserts the question of whose independence, as independence didn't bring them freedom from want and poverty. The euphoria settles but without a job in hand, Puri feels no particular buoyancy about this newfound independence. He demands,

‘What independence, and for whom?’ Puri asked with frustration. ‘Whose homes and families are being destroyed? Whose lives are being sacrificed? All these politicians know is how to take credit for something others have sacrificed their lives to achieve. Who do they think they are? At the time of the Quit India movement in '42, when Congress leaders and workers alike were being arrested indiscriminately, these very same people would telephone the police to come and arrest them in their homes so that they didn't have to fear being roughed up during their arrest. I too risked my life for the country's freedom. I too went to prison. All I get now are sermons about the importance of building the nation.’ (pg 403)

A few days later, Puri learns by way of a delayed news report that Lahore was in the throes of a communal riot of gargantuan proportions. His personal predicament is as much a problem that persisted before independence as it continues in the present; there is no respite for him as he is soon pulled by the currents of history to search for his family. He has harrowing experiences of witnessing murder, looting, arson, and the violence that render women helpless. The enmity and hatred is raw and real; but this is juxtaposed with kindness and generosity of strangers as also the old acquaintances—and he cannot begin to comprehend the insanity that has seized human beings and turned them into beasts. His search leads him to several refugee camps but all to no avail. Fortuitously, he runs into an old prison intern, Sood, who is a man of some eminence. Sood helps Puri find employment, room to stay in and assists him in his attempts to track his family.

As the Radcliff Line—the border named after the lawyer, Cyril Radcliff, who was assigned the task of dividing the terrain along religious majorities—stretched inch by inch, violence came home to roost. Tara moves the narrative forward with the events that unfold next. From her hasty marriage to her brutalization at the hands of Somraj and escape from her in laws house to her subsequent assault and rape at the hands of Nubbu, Tara's life is the story of several families. From sheltering in Hafizji's house, she is sold/abducted and finds herself in a dilapidated house with other women. They spend, what seems like an aeon, in utter terror until they are rescued by an Indian contingent accompanied by Pakistani escort. The journey back is tedious, slow and alarming as the views along the path unleash new horrors. Burnt vehicles, charred remains of bodies and cattle, columns of emaciated refugees-dragging their meager possessions—making way to the promised land, vultures sitting in wait, the dust and stench and flies imperil the journey. As they cross the border into India, more horrors await them. The road becomes a metaphor of the partition, of people making a journey in hopes of succor, not knowing whether they will make it and if they do, what fate awaits them.

With the birth of two nations, where there had been only one, there were several exchanges: transfers of population and territory, co-operation to recover women left behind as trophies of the conflict—to be had and replaced. The new nations had to tackle problems of refugees—their safety and security, food rations and homes, health and sanitation, transport and communication to reunite families torn asunder in the ensuing conflict. It is here that “Book I: Vatan Aur Desh” ends. The scale of violence

that is narrated in *This Is Not That Dawn* is unprecedented. The immense length and its division into two parts facilitate this telling. As will be seen in subsequent chapters, authors either gloss over or prefer to use the tropes of insanity to describe the incomprehensible violence that resisted admonitions from leaders from both sides of the border as also Gandhi's fasts. As Rita Kothari opines,

Maybe it is time to acknowledge that in this shared experience of violation we belong with each other. We are inextricably, ontologically, bound to each other in having violated each other simultaneously, in having suffered simultaneously, and in equally abysmal ways. [...] For, to acknowledge such mutual identification in suffering is also to acknowledge such mutual culpability in the exercise of evil. (53)

The list of violations is unimaginably large and daunting; Yashpal makes no bones about the reprehensibility of the acts, but chooses to indulge in the graphic details as an integral part of the narrative. It gives credence and supports the original title, *Jhootha Sach*. The promise of freedom and the gap between that dream and reality is brutally rent with this indictment of the violence that both sides freely indulged in.

#### **2.4.7 The Politics of History and Fiction**

Yashpal's *This Is Not That Dawn* is an account of history in the making: a keen and observant eye of the witness but with participatory knowledge of the politics of revolution weaves together the narrative where high politics and real lives collide. Within this larger narrative, themes of communal ties of love and loss are explored. What is fascinating is that while statist discourses emphasized ideas and leaders to the exclusion of people; literary narratives displace them to mere presence in the background and foregrounds the stories of ordinary lives during Partition—their loves, lives and loss. The literary narratives therefore are extensions of history. Though etymologically, the terms 'history' and 'fiction' share similar roots, as previously noted in 2.1.1, a border exists between the two disciplines viz. that history is fact oriented and, therefore verifiable and that fiction being an imaginative recreation cannot aspire to the same. The rise of science imposed an empirical-objectivist thrust upon historiography which sought documentary evidence that paralleled the actual event.

New Historicism arose in reaction to the 'autonomy of the text' approach of the New Critics and instead attempted to 're-historicize' the texts. They differ from the earlier historicists in that the historicists explored history from stable points of view. While historicists put their faith in the 'knowability' of history, they also accepted that texts

are reflective of this history; the texts thus could be therefore analyzed in this perspective to come to a better understanding of the text itself. New Historicists question this very stability of history and critiques this objectivity to elucidate that these are constructs too, used to persuade and entrench a certain idea with a view to assign and abrogate greater power. The cause-effect linearity of historical facts made way for investigating the ‘representational’ aspect of historiography. New Historicists plank their base on the participatory aspect of history. The possibility of complete immersion in history minus the contemporaneity of the current ideas neither appeals to logic nor finds acceptability in outlook. The stability of historical fact lay in the generally accepted notions of events rather than in the immovability of facts themselves. The act of arranging facts to construe sense in order to arrive at meaning is to politicize the reading of the facts themselves. “The relation of writers to politics is a modern question. It arose out of a sense of history and historical change, and a concern over whether writers, as part of the intelligentsia, are on the side of the old order or a new one. Toward the end of the eighteenth century, particularly in the climate of the French revolution, writers, philosophers and social thinkers, all of whom might be included under the heading of intellectuals, tended to become spokesmen for radical or conservative movements and ideologies—ideologies that affected the fate of nations and societies,” claim Kurzweil et al, the editors, in their ‘Introduction’ to *Writers & Politics: A Partisan Review Reader*.

Karl Marx’s famous claim, ‘The ruling ideas belong to the ruling class,’ paved the way for writers to align themselves as those supporting the ideology of the superstructure and those who believed in revolution to create a new social order. Writers have often been condemned for being dreamers and hence not belonging to the reality of society; but they have also been romanticized as prophets and harbingers of a new better world. This aura of inhabiting a transcendent world, gave them power of ‘truth’ on issues pertaining to the world. In truth, from the notion that writers assay the role of conscience keepers for each age to their political predilections often set them at contretemps to accepted norms that alienate them—the role of writers has indeed undergone a sea change. The comforting, secure world of the liberal humanists have been invaded by outliers; ousted from its central position and held up to point to its illusory nature. Partition Literature too discards the illusion of the continuum of the past to provide safety and security. In its enclosed world, the centre falls apart: the meta-narrative of the freedom struggle is undermined by the fear-fuelled rage and

hate-engendered dismemberment. There is ‘active distrust’ against the over-arching political history playing out to weave the disparate threads into some semblance of order and to yoke it to the notion of a ‘unified country’.

This utopian dream fades in the light of the reality of the sheer insane violence that engulfs both communities: neighbours turned into bitter enemies. Mobs were neither known for their rationality nor sanity; and the unleashing of mindless violence further entrenches this notion of mobs. Hordes baying for blood and vengeance roam the countryside and prey on the refugees; for the power equations that existed previously, no longer hold sway. The subjected and subjugated arise in bestial fury to trample on fleeing folks. Material wealth, the yardstick of power and status, is no shield against this twist of fate. History has dealt a most powerful blow under whose pressure the common man is left reeling. In the ensuing mayhem, fortunes change hands, barricaded homes are broken into and ownership staked, remorseless plunder of cash and jewelry left behind, unimaginable cataloguing of crimes against women—are some of the stories of those left behind. Those that fled left with the clothes on their backs, cash and jewelry hidden on their person, meager possessions that could be carried by them; thus began their journey into nightmare. Robbery, looting en masse, lynching, mutilation, rape, mass murders shadowed the refugees. The outward attire and appearance of people easily identified them as belonging to a particular religion and thus people became easy prey for the marauders.

## **2.5 “Desh Ka Bhavishya”**

‘Book II: Desh Ka Bhavishya’ narrates the story—first, of continued violence between the two communities, and secondly, intra-community violence for rights to property and survival. Like the phoenix that rises from its own ashes, the denizens of Bholu Pandhe’s Gali find themselves and their lives slowly limping back to a semblance of normality. Though the riots separated them and they lived different horrors, they end up in Delhi, UP and Jalandhar. The splintered lines traverse parallel paths—the narratives of Jaidev Puri, Kanak and Tara are followed through. Every one of the characters who survive the brutality of Partition and had connection with the main protagonists finds their way back into the narrative. Whatever were their experiences and however did they react to the series of events that overtook and engulfed them, their destinies are intertwined. The twists and turns in the plot are too many, but by these circuitous incidents of the plot, they find themselves meeting in the newly independent nation. Their experiences till then had given them certain

character; after the harrowing experiences of Partition, their characters reveal themselves as full of positive life force or conveniently they are revealed as scoundrels. Partition meant loss of a known way of life; traded or forcibly exchanged for another indeterminate life. The victims feel that the country owes them reparation for all that they have lost; the refugees insist on the government making good their tragedy. However, even for the system, sieving through genuine loss and people out to make a fast buck with a piteous story to evoke sympathy is a tough challenge. Both kinds of people exist in the narrative and both the kinds stake their claim for a piece of the pie.

The anecdotes of Isaac Mohammad, Rikhiram, and Bela Singh point to the sense of an injustice done and the different ways they in which they seek recompense. Land lost and land claims are narrated through the situations the various minor characters and the protagonists face and their aspiration/achievement to ownership. The major cause for concern here is the description of the migrant as refugee, a victim of circumstances on which he had no control. This victimhood of the refugee ensconced power in the state over them—their physical and material welfare. What these statist narratives overlook is, as Pradip Kumar Bose observes: “That refugees were victims, who had to involuntarily leave their homes, compelled by forces over which they had no control during and after partition, cannot be denied. But in the process such a narrative missed out the question of agency.” (3) Though the Partition was viewed as a viable solution to religious conflict, the end result meant violence and displacement. Victims began to haunt the discourse as waiting for state intervention to resolve their issues. This took the forms of Evacuee Property declaration/ reclamation by the state and the same treatment was meted out to women in the Recovery Programme aimed at restoring to the abducted and violated women to the bosom of their respective families.

From homesickness for things known but no longer accessible to being assailed by the new nation with its necessity for reconfiguring the modes and means of living—life as a refugee was a constant battle for survival. The refugees first attempted to meet the basic needs of food and shelter; once these needs were met, then began the endless rounds in search of news of families and opportunities for work. Having undergone immense trauma, the refugees used their skills and grabbed any opportunity to learn new skills so they could work and survive on their own efforts; not charity doled out by the government or religious charitable institutions. As they state in Yashpal’s *This*

*Is Not That Dawn*, they wanted to move beyond being ‘sharanarthis’ to becoming ‘purusharthis’. They are refugees till they can recover and come to terms with their suffering and loss before going forth to assaying their role as breadwinners.

History in *This Is Not That Dawn* is a complementary narrative to the fictive narrative: without this history, the fiction would not resonate as powerfully as it does. Greenblatt differentiates between two modes of exhibiting viz. resonance and wonder—both of which evoke different responses in the viewer. While resonance invokes “...[a] reach(ing) out beyond its formal boundaries to a larger world, to evoke in the viewer the complex, dynamic cultural forces from which it has emerged...”; wonder is a power that lies within the artefact that arrest’s the viewer’s attention to its enthralling lure.

New Historicism is aligned with resonance, for Greenblatt claims reflection on texts to include “...the historical circumstances of their original production and consumption and to analyze the relationship between these circumstances and our own.” Historical background in literary study has been limited to certain fixed qualities/ features of the ‘age’, a presumption based on the ‘past’ of history that is over and hence unchangeable. Traditional literary study imposes/ foregrounds the text onto this background and studies the features as reflected in the text as also the percentage of deviation. New Historicists concentrate on historical circumstance ‘as a dense network of evolving and often contradictory social practices.’ Though the ‘fixity’ of historical background affords ‘solidity’, it is the ‘flexibility’ of the New Historicists’ approach that engenders a densely rich texture of non-literary material, which in Greenblatt’s words, “[...] but rather to situate the work in relation to other representational practices operative in the culture at a given moment in both its history and our own.”

In *This Is Not That Dawn*, Greenblatt’s discussion on ‘resonance’ is explicated. Marxist ideology underwrites the text as Yashpal’s leftist leaning percolates to interrogate the formation and nurturing of the nation. The text goes beyond the narration of Partition and manufactures a prodigious critique of the process of nation-building. Yashpal’s profound observations penetrate the statist ideology of historiography to generate a prolific advancement of reality. Even as the reader wonders at the luxuriant narrative, it is the narrative juxtaposing of political and social history that resonates with the readers.

For resonance, like nostalgia, is impure, a hybrid forged in the barely acknowledged gaps, the caesurae, between words such as state, Jewish and museum.” This resonance that the museum generates is the same in the instance of Partition narratives. They are the archive and the museum, for unlike the Holocaust that ensured memorial spaces and memorialization of artefacts, Partition memorialization occurs only within the narratives of Partition.

In Partition, the main idea espoused was religious separatism; yet the denizens who had lived in quiet harmony in Lahore wondered, “[...] we’re still here. If we can’t trust our long time neighbours, whom can we trust” (pg 236) This is the belief of old timers; while the young affluent too believed in this truism as when Nayyar defends the idea in the club house at Nainital, “‘But some of us don’t consider them as two separate peoples. We want to prove that it’s the nation and not the community that matters the most. Punjab is my birthplace and it is my motherland too.’ (pg 336) This is the idealism of homeland posited with the politics of schism.

If occlusion occurs in narrating national history, then such domestic sagas offer counter-histories as a rejoinder to the amputation of history. Such stories throw open to the reader the process of suppression of certain experiences as sanctioned by nationalism. By intersecting the official trajectory of history within the personal sphere, not only is the lived experience brought to light; but also people and events elided by history are foregrounded. The heavily idealized national history is tempered and forced to shed inhibitions through fictionalizing it in its direct intrusion in the personal and familial spaces. If the (b)ordering was legitimated, it was through precise excisions of violence and trauma from the national history. This sanitization is defeated by narrating the impact affects of the cataclysmic events to circumcise the official account with personalized stories.

## **2.6 Conclusion**

The two texts serve as a decisive reminder of the Partition; moreover, these texts convey the multivocality of Partition. For the lay reader and the common man alike, the Partition is a single event that occurred on 15<sup>th</sup> August, 1947. The reality resonates with Partition at several levels: from the moment it was accepted by the British administration, the Congress and The League as inevitable, speculation ran rife about their homeland in this grand scheme hatched in a tripartite agreement that failed to take cognizance of the people. The people first began to idly wonder how and where

the new border would fall; as Partition became a certainty, the people came under the cloud of exceptional uncertainty. Their every day existence was threatened and they lived under the shadow of conjectural ambiguity i.e. they remained in the dark as to their place: firstly, which side of the border would their homes/villages be placed, would this be on the right or wrong side of the border and whether this positioning would secure them the right to that place. Thus, Partition in no way refers to a single event but incorporates the immense uncertainty that ruptured their sense of identity and belonging in terms of the personal, social and economic through a politically motivated religious divide.

Both texts effectively seal off the two nations. When Kamal's train leaves for Pakistan, he is haunted by his divided loyalties: his love for the land of his birth is problematic—India mandates that all Pakistanis report their presence to the police; while Pakistan views him as a muhajir. The denizens of Bhola Pandhe's Gali resist any active seeking to remember their lives in the gali; instead, they persevere to secure their present. In Kamal's instance, his deep and abiding love for his homeland is tainted by the enforced containment of identity and belonging in the structural spatiality of the two nations. In *This Is Not That Dawn*, their gali biraadari is transplanted in India while they attempt to recuperate their loss. Kavita Panjabi insistently questions, 'A reconciliatory force may of course be forged anew, but can it be forged from a blank slate? Or be built upon a forcibly suppressed history of mutual violence? Wherein lies the possibility of reconciliation that is capable of restoring the broken continuity of a history divided?' (52)

*This Is Not That Dawn* testifies to the reality of the phrase 'there is no going back' and invests the narrative with the robust angling of the refugees to re-cast their lives and get on with their lives as well as can be managed; while *River of Fire* is loaded with loss and nostalgia. The two texts narrate the trapping of identity in watertight compartments while memory refuses to be contained by the new borders and easily goes back and forth across the newly drawn border. When the new border is the line that prevents crossing over in all senses of the term, then the violence and migration that came in the wake of Partition must be problematised to question the easy acceptance of the statist narrative. This chapter emphasizes that the statist narrative that forecloses Partition into a single event is challenged by the fictive narratives that narrate the ruptures that begin before Partition, whose aftershocks are still felt today. Fictive narratives articulate the experiential frames of history that transform into

points of access to filter the statist narrative to arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of Partition than is let on.

Bipan Chandra makes it emphasizes Hindu-Muslim unity as the strength of the 1857 Revolt. Here, he quotes a British functionary to prove the non-communal nature of society then: “[T]he role of Hindu-Muslim unity in the Revolt was indirectly acknowledged later by Aitchison, a senior British official, when he bitterly complained: “In this instance we could not play off the Mohammedans against the Hindus.” In fact, the events of 1857 clearly bring out that the people and politics of India were basically not communal in medieval times and before 1858” (152). Kurzweil et al state in their editorial ‘Introduction’, “The question not only of the politics of writers but the politics of their writing is further complicated by the radical demands that writers be engaged and responsible” (2-3).

This is strikingly obvious in the case of the Partition litterateurs; writers who were directly or indirectly embroiled in the conflict of Partition. These writers witnessed and/or experienced the pandemonium created by the decision to cleave the country in two and the spiral of violence that unleashed turbulence in the political, economic, social, religious and cultural domains. The national histories eulogized the leadership and villainised the ‘other’; the silence on the question of personal histories of violence was complete. It is the writers, writing in their native tongues that captured the personal histories and memorialized the same lest we forget. Was it the exorcising of these ghosts or was it a confrontation, only time will tell. Tell these stories, they must and tell it well, lest their fate be repeated.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **TERRITORY AND NATIONHOOD:**

#### **A GLIMPSE AT DISLOCATION AND RUPTURE**

##### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

Chapter Three sets to examine the notions of nation and nationality from the point of view of the protagonists of the primary texts under study—their experience, their bewilderment, their re-alignment in the post-Partition scenario. The Chapter will explore how the idea of nationhood, with the coalescing of princely states under British rule, began the struggle for self-realization as one nation only to settle for the bifurcation of the sub-continent with violent reprisal. This violence was unleashed themselves when the dream of one nation was queered. The following discussion will delineate the ways and means by which ordinary people of the land became either perpetrators or victims of the violence. How this violence punctured the continuum of daily life as experienced by the sense of permanence that had hitherto pervaded their social relationships is part of this discussion. What shook this sense of ‘foreverness’ and in what manner this tragedy was resisted; and, to what extent were they successful in reconciling to the new reality—are additional aspects considered in this Chapter. Furthermore, this discussion will also engage with the nature and outcome of this new reality that redrew their notions of home and homeland and identified them as belonging to a specific religious community and the sense of loss and alienation that haunted them. But before that a brief elucidation of the key terms—nation, nationality and the allied notion of nationalism—will be of use to place the subsequent analysis in perspective.

##### **3.2 NATION, NATIONALITY AND NATIONALISM**

Identity is woven in terms of narratives that stand the test of time and become larger than life. Human communities have shared spaces, traditions and forged destinies that unite them through the cohesive myths and legends that evoke kinship through the tales of valor, struggle, want and triumph. From oral traditions to written texts, narratives are the woof and the weft that knits community ties through common social practices that create a unique identity and build loyalty. The place and the right to that place are justified in these stories. They are elevated to the status of creation myths and every religion and country has their own unique repertoire of tales that seek to acclimatize and nurture their young in the ways of life that they represent.

In the modern world, the creation myths of nation states are more obviously ideologically grounded than perhaps in ancient times whose ideological moorings have been submerged to the status of articles of faith. In contemporary societies, it is the mythified historical narratives that own pride of place in the creation of nations. National narratives carve a new identity, loyalty and destiny. The historical juggernaut is an immense force that has a tendency to flatten the particular for the general, the people for the leaders, the reifying of the few to the muzzling of the rest. The territorial struggle for sharing of resources implicitly acknowledges the exclusion of the other. This process of creating the other to the valiant WE is intricately woven in the grand narratives of nation and nationhood, Andreas Wimmer and Yuval Feinstein look for the beginning of such nationalistic designs and the grand narratives of the nation in the interstices of the two epochal revolutions of the western world,

The French and American revolutions of the late eighteenth century gave birth to the ideal of the modern nation-state—an independent state with a written constitution ruled in the name of a nation of equal citizens. During those days, all other states were still governed on the basis of other principles of legitimacy. In dynastic states, a prince was entitled to assume the mantle of power upon the death of his father (as in the multiethnic Habsburg and Ethiopian empires); in theocracies, religious leaders guided their flocks in worldly matters as well (e.g. in Tibet and Montenegro); Ottoman and Spanish elites spread the true faith across the globe, British governors brought progress to “backward” peoples in faraway places, and, during the twentieth century, the party cadres of the Soviet Union advanced a revolutionary transnational project in the name of the world’s working classes. (764)

This take straddles the debate of the origins of nations: two schools of thought stand in intellectual confrontation viz. the modernists that proclaim the origin of the nation

as analogous to modernity and the traditionalists who trace its pedigree to earlier times and climes.

### **3.2.1 Nation/Nationalism/Nationhood in Europe**

Ernest Gellner in his book titled *Nationalism* (1997) introduces his argument by citing that culture and organization are the key principles around which all social life revolves. After building this argument, Gellner uses these attributes of human social life to arrive at the definition of nationalism thus:

Nationalism is a political principle which maintains that similarity of culture is the basic social bond. Whatever principles of authority may exist between people depend for their legitimacy on the fact that the members of the group concerned are of the same culture (or, in nationalist idiom, of the same 'nation'). In its extreme version, similarity of culture becomes both the necessary and sufficient condition of legitimate membership: *only* members of the appropriate culture may join the unit in question, and *all of them* must do so. (3-4)

Gellner furthers this argument by stating that it presumes an 'institutional leadership' composed of advocates of 'national culture'. A corollary of this implies an antagonism against all *not* belonging to the group; especially being ruled by foreign power. This explains the native invocation of nation to coalesce the group to overthrow the colonizer. Such a position presumes the presence of a state as a given. Gellner also argues that neither the state nor nationalism is ubiquitously prevalent, by emphasizing that:

It simply is not the case that, at all times and in all places, men wanted the boundaries of social units and of cultures to converge, or to put it in a manner closer to their own style, that they wanted to be among their own kind, excluding 'others'. On the contrary: men very, very often lived in units which violated this principle, and most of the time, this violation was accepted without protest or opposition, indeed without any awareness that a vital, alleged universal principle was being violated. (6-7)

This brings to fore the idea that communities have lived in quiet inter-dependence and harmony and therefore, this virulent version of nationalism is an extremist approach that leaves no room for negotiation and involves violence to serve their end. The community which has fallen foul of the majority is vilified and every failure is attributed to their ability to vitiate the purity of the original culture. When proponents of belligerent nationalism go to any extent to channelize their hatred of the other, it engenders hostilities against a particular community and even legitimizes the use of violence to corral, exile, and even exterminate this perceived threat, as can be seen

from most primary texts used in this study. Can threat perception—especially that the survival of a community necessitates the neutralization of this perceived threat—lead to such extremist stands that sanction terror and trauma to effect just such an end? While treading the middle path to the question of whether nationalism is necessary or contingent, Gellner amplifies the other oppositional pair—should one align with the primordialists who believed in the atavistic origins of nationalism or should one root for the modernists who claim that nationalism is an offshoot of modernity itself.

Gellner elucidates this point by dwelling on the three phases of civilization viz. the hunter-gatherers, the agrarian and the scientific-industrial interface: the insufficient numbers of the first phase precluded evolution to engender nationalism; the agrarian phase centred on the land and labour allowing for settler colonies for the tilling of the land ensured the survival and security of the people. The vast swathes of land brought under the plough also permitted other groups to integrate as demand for other skills (craftsmen and traders, 15) was felt. The production and storage of food propelled a consequent growth in population that led to stratification of society where privilege was hierarchical and entrenched. A cult of honour prevailed and the system performed order and discipline because it encouraged constancy to its group and allegiance to its ‘assigned task’ (20). This made for highly stable but stagnant societies.

Gellner’s contention that nations are invented is refuted by Benedict Anderson who posits the idea of the nation as ‘an imagined political community’ (6). Anderson claims for the nation an imaginative and creative life force where Gellner reads into ‘invention’ a negative stance of pretension and false truth. This debate harks back to the question of origin of the nation and while Gellner argues in favour of nation as a modern phenomenon, Anderson ties its origin to pre-modern community-building traditions. He does this by classifying nation as ‘a deep, horizontal comradeship’ (7) and declares that such a fraternity is ‘not so much to kill, as to willingly to die for such limited imaginings’ (7). This willing sacrifice of life is linked to the ‘cultural roots of nationalism’ (7). Anderson sites the birth of the nation in the erosion of religious certainty and the ebbing of the hereditary dynastic reign. The legitimacy of these reference points gave way to ‘[T]he novel and the newspaper. For these forms provided the technical means for ‘re-presenting’ the kind of imagined community that is the nation’ (25). Wimmer and Feinstein are convinced that the circumstances

favoring a regime change are a prerequisite for the assertion of nationalism. This is a critique of both Gellner and Anderson in that they fail to find a direct co-relation of nation to the impact of industrialization, mass education or more direct governance as is claimed in these theories.

### **3.2.2 Anti-colonial Nationalism**

These links to earlier symbolism become relevant in the formation of nations in the postcolonial scenario where nationalism was evoked through a pre-colonial past to rally the natives to overthrow the colonial powers that be. The view that the growth of former nations into colonies is an outgrowth of the colonial template is popular. Colonies liberated themselves and rid themselves of parasitic powers that robbed them of territory and its resources by invoking a golden age before being ‘discovered’ by the Europeans. The colonial period is an eon of exploitation and debasement which included loss of territory, identity, language, kinship systems and culture.

Franz Fanon unequivocally emphasizes the fact that such regime change from European colonizers to native ascendancy whether, ‘National liberation, national resistance, the restoration of nationhood to the people, commonwealth: whatever may be the headings used or the new formulas introduced, decolonization is always a violent phenomenon.’ (28) Fanon makes no bones about the violent process that decolonization is, for he finds the processes and protagonists involved are antagonistic opposites that involve the inversion of the power equation in favour of the native over the colonizer. Fanon is clear that this transformation comes at a price—that of ‘[A] murderous and decisive struggle between the two protagonists’ (28). In fact, he professes faith in and advocates violence to achieve this end. What he analyzes is true of most African nations but when applied to Indian liberation, a few caveats are apparent: that violent struggle is portrayed as sporadic and limited to underground movements; that the British colonizers privileged the European educated Congress members to negotiate the terms and conditions of self-governance; that the revolutionaries were dealt with swiftly and with no compunction. The tropes of ahimsa and Satyagraha have been upheld, validated and drummed in through historiographic content which simultaneously deplored the violence of the revolutionaries without negating their contribution. The violence contributed in quelling the complacency of the British Raj and in galvanizing the process of the

transfer of power. That this transfer didn't work to plan of a smooth takeover but erupted in violence along the religious fault lines that became the rule of thumb for the division of the subcontinent is the truth.

Native appropriation of the notion of nation is perceived as an extrapolation tantamount to fetching a shell in order to transmute it by legitimizing the pre-colonial 'past'. The reaching out to the pre-colonial past does have comparisons to the pre-modern/traditionalist approach to the origins of European nation states. The traditionalists argue that the modernist argument for the generative impulse of the nation state reinforces the rise of modernism itself viz. the industrial revolution, democracy, mass education and printing technology—which lays a fertile ground for the circulation of ideas. This approach underscores the fact that each feed off the other and is both cause and effect that strengthens this perception. Wimmer and Feinstein track the presence of the notions of nation/nationality/nationhood that indicate the existence of such notions in vestigial strains in the writings that represent the intellectual and the popular. From this discussion, it becomes apparent that the colonial nationalisms reach back to the past to grasp at their cultural roots to reclaim and restore their sense of pride and energize the struggle to evict the colonizers has parallels.

Franz Fanon clarifies the significance of the pre-colonial past to the liberation struggle in these words: '[A] national culture is the whole body of efforts made by a people in the sphere of thought to describe, justify, and praise the action through which that people has created itself and keeps itself in existence [...]' (155). Fanon insists that nation is antithetical to colonialism and therefore a subversive strategy to narrate anti-colonial sentiments. This staunch instinct proceeds from gathering the past to gird the present—especially to reach deep into their 'nonage' to unearth the rich cultural memories clothed in shame and condescension by the colonizers to pave the way for the entrenchment of the colonial power. Thus, literature, and through it, historical/ideological narrative, underpins the nationalistic fervor being stoked to build unrest to such levels as will provoke the masses to participate in the struggle to overthrow colonialism along with its practitioners. The 'nation' garbs itself in a glorious pre-colonial culture that is often a necessary reactionary romanticization of the past to moor the struggle in order to at once offer the enervated people an opportunity to weed out colonialism while favoring the nurture of their own proud heritage. While

Fanon advances this argument, he also holds that such unrestrained and ebullient ardor for the past, which arms them to defend themselves against immersion in the colonizers' *weltanschauung*, ought to impede their alienation from their own culture.

### **3.2.3 Nationalism in the Indian Subcontinent**

'Nationalism' is essentially a western concept and its application to the Indian experience is often viewed in terms of a handy tool/weapon to combat the colonial powers. Bipan Chandra points out that the modern western educated Indians of the time imbibed the notions of rationalism, secularism and nationalism. This inspired them, in Bipan Chandra's words, thus: 'They also began to study, admire and emulate the contemporary nationalist movements of European nations' (202). In the chapter titled "The Nationalist Movement: 1905-18", he underscores this idea when he states: 'Revolutionary movements in Ireland, Russia, Egypt, Turkey and China, and the Boer War in South Africa convinced the Indians that a united people willing to make sacrifices could challenge even the most powerful of despotic governments. What was needed more than anything else was a spirit of patriotism and self-sacrifice' (246). When looked at from this perspective, nationalism acquires negative connotations--viz. that of being a reaction to outside rule. Such a view fogs the larger context of nationalism being a state where local socio-polity is cast to best serve its members. Nationalism is a prerequisite to the creation and/or maintenance of a nation state; anti-colonialism is then a mere spurt to the development of the nationalistic spirit.

The Indian Uprising of 1857 failed largely due to the restrictions of regionalism. It is with the establishment of the Indian National Congress and its association with various political currents—from swadeshi, non-co-operation, Home Rule and Quit India—enacted to sustain the momentum to displace the British Raj that the idea of India as a nation state is diffused and the mass movements invite the masses to invest in this notion. Hence, it would be more accurate to evaluate India as a nation state was a movement to accrue status as an equal in the comity of nations. In order to achieve this aspiration, the anti-colonial surge to the nationalistic prerogative to be, was an impetus to vanquish British rule and a necessary pre-condition to achieving freedom and self-hood.

The kernel that gave birth to the rise of nationalism in India is English education. The brown sahibs entered and served in the British administration but never in positions of

power. This is often cited as the reason for the rise of nationalism and is seen as evidence of its affinity to European culture. The ideas of freedom, liberty and self-determination are largely drawn from the west; but judging this struggle for independence as inferior to the revolutions in Europe is a Eurocentric worldview. Nationalism was best expressed in patriotic fervor and idealism. The zeal and enthusiasm of the various people of various hues to usher in a new dawn of self-rule is palpable as in Romila Thapar's paean on nationalism in her essay "On Nationalism" thus:

For Indians of my age who grew up on the cusp of Independence, nationalism was in the air we breathed. Nationalism was not something problematic. It was an identity with the nation and its society. The identity and consciousness of being Indian did not initially need to be defined. We understood nationalism to be Indian nationalism and not Hindu or Muslim or any other kind of religious or other nationalism, and a clear distinction was made between nationalism and other loyalties. Nationalism could only be Indian. And Indian meant that which was above all the smaller loyalties to religion, caste, ethnicity and region. Nationalism meant differentiating between the nation and the state, and it was clear that no government could take upon itself the rights of a nation. Sovereignty resides with the nation and not with the government. A nation referred to the people that inhabited a territory who saw themselves as an evolved community created by drawing upon the range of communities that existed prior to the nation. It was based on shared history, interests and aspirations frequently expressed in a common culture that in turn drew from multiple cultures. (107, Kindle edition)

From the bounded life of socially fixed territorial and social circumference to the (b)ordered space of a nation lies massive territorial space. The social conservatism of the pre-national had regional variants within the 'nation' space. Before Partition, there existed small intimately inter-linked communities within a small territorial space of the village/gali. The communities had built a culture of inter-dependency; their differences were accepted as part of who they were and not perceived as threats to the other. Nation-building pre-supposed a larger percentage of homogeneity than existed in India. The terrain was varied, the people supported regional chauvinism and the nation was too much of an abstraction to be easily assimilated. Despite a national struggle to overthrow the British colonial power, the people received the ideas from the leaders as circulated through the newspapers, speeches and mass meetings organized to galvanize the public to participate in the struggle. The farther away they were from the centre, the more the ideas the disseminated receded from practice to

ideals. These ideals were locally implemented to intervene in matters local and the received notions were many times removed from the intended affect by the leaders.

Though the freedom struggle attained the status of a mass movement, the concerted affect was felt in centres of power and by the time the wave reached the periphery, its impact was leveled off into large gentle ripples that didn't shake those at the rim. The struggle was also divided into: the foreign/English educated and reformist; educated urban population as against the larger illiterate populace of the villages. The issues for the urban centres were perceived in terms of that affecting the entirety of the indigenous population i.e. of the 'nation'; whereas, the village populace had lived in thrall of a life lived of the land, by the land and for the land.

### **3.3 NATION AND TERRITORY**

This draws attention to the conundrum of the ideological space v/s geographical terrain. Geographical space is viewed as the *tabula rasa* upon which are writ human practices and ideals. Territorial holding is the fulcrum of human civilization encompassing economic functions, social relationships and practices. Politics owes its existence to the ideological underpinnings of sharing and dividing spaces. This is consequently reflected in the exacerbation of differences or their resolution. The manner and pattern of territorial occupation is the mirroring of the mutual *pari passu* of give and take along with the conflicts of collusion. Whether exhuming history or reviewing current antipathies, the pivotal emergent factor is that conflict hinges upon the ability/(in)ability to share territory. The colonial history/experience of the so called global South has amply demonstrated that territorial expansion, no matter in what dialectics it is couched, is a statement of power with the dictum to the victor go the spoils allowing for ease of access to supplementary resources. War and empire building have been primarily a staking of claim to resources embodied in the anatomy of the territory. This throws up the paradox of schism and linkage between nation and territory. According to Chisholm and Smith,

[W]hen we speak of a nation or a state, we generally assume that it is cohesive and that its citizens share a 'national interest' which transcends class, language, race or creed. In practice, many countries experience deep internal divisions based on distinctive group identities, which often have a geographical expression. (vii)

In the case of 'undivided India', such extant or stirred up internal divisions appear to have found a 'geographical expression' through the 'agency' of the state-sponsored Partition on paper; but the human cost in terms of dislocation and re-location was tremendous.

After all, territorial occupation is never permanent; yet it is certainly strategic. Habitation, social organization and the advancement in development is concurrent with the accretion of resources both human and material. As such, the depletion of resources, including loss of human resource and the destruction of the material resources, signals a consequent repercussion in the mutation of social organization and habitation as another territory metamorphoses into focal plenipotence. Smith analyses this condition succinctly, when he observes that:

[H]umankind establishes an identity with pieces of geographical space, and a sense of place, comparable with the deepest of emotional ties and feelings. Such an identity can be expressed at a variety of different scales, which are by no means mutually exclusive; they may in fact satisfy rather different feelings. Just as home and (for some) garden may provide sources of security, privacy and recreation, (it) can bestow a sense of belonging to affiliation to something beyond self and family. Some people find the primary territorial identification at the regional rather than local scale, for many it is nationalism and patriotism [...] (2)

Territory is a dynamic entity, having different values attached to it by the stakeholders and the contenders, as the case may be. The materiality of territory is defined as its tangible essence that influences the conflict of interests. It is the computation of its intangible value that escalates this conflict. It is the significance and worth invested in the land on historical, cultural, religious and social accounts that, in the words of O'Leary et al "[...] fundamentally raise issues of territorial conflict grafted onto broader concerns of ethnicity, religion, and historical memory" (O'Leary et al 2004). Moreover, from the historical connotations of collective memory emerges the notion of the 'social frames' of memory composed of "[...] family, religion, class, and the nation." (Ibid) The sacrifices made and the losses suffered to validate the territorial connect weaves an attachment to the land that goes deep and, if disputed, can rally the folks to justify that kindred attachment. For instance, Kemal in *River of Fire* prides in his unequivocal sense of belonging to India; yet, in his first foray into India after being forced to cross over, he is deeply stricken at the persistent sense of exile when he confronts the familiar route of numerous happier childhood journeys. The journey

back is emotionally traumatic and Kemal weeps at the wedge that the b/order has created in his loyalty.

From the cocoon of historical co-existence emerges the chrysalis of notional nationality. Instead of citizens as butterflies in the garden of united nationality and nationhood, what surfaces is the worm of Partition that devours and corrodes the socio-politico-economic structures. Partition's ascendancy substitutes the jubilation of freedom with violence and trauma (which is discussed in detail in Chapter Four). The ability/inability to exercise agency in the face of violent reaction to an expunged, though known and secure identity, emphasizes the susceptibility of the populace to the tempestuous attenuation of the psycho-social fabric of communally inter-dependent existence. The atrophying social situation is indicative of the absence of homogeneity along the salient parameters like population, religion, language, culture that are prominent foundational attributes of nationhood.

Territorial associations are many and connecting necessitates a symbol mediated identity emblematic of affiliations. Territorial affiliation as a marker of identity is neither an atavistic nor a latent human urge. This reverence of the land is an ethnocentric attitude that may have surfaced in the course of human society's graduation from the nomadic existence to a settled agrarian life, wherein the land offers both-sustenance to the body and the spirit. Private ownership of property is a feudal concept. The point is that such ramifications that post signs to keep in/out emphasize that territorial inspiration of identity is essentially a social construct. Territoriality then is more than a material impetus to life and living but, in David M. Smith's opinion, is also a source of "political control (and) xenophobia" (3). Occupation of territory assists man's material existence in opposition to the establishment of territorial claim which comes later. Johnston, Knight, Kaufman recognized the centrality of place, "*Territoriality...reifies power, identifying it with a place rather than with social relations. In other words, territoriality can be used ideologically, to promote certain interests which require social control by associating them with a place within which that control is recognized.*" (As quoted by Smith; Emphasis added, 5)

This turnabout is evinced in the scale as also the political re-pairings in the run up to Partition; as depicted in *River of Fire* and *Sunlight on a Broken Column*—by cousin

Amir and Saleem respectively—whose choice to align with the new country to be, are decisive of the territoriality of social space and therein the social b/order. The initial unified nation theory gives way to the idea of a separate state for Muslims, a theme that was first summarily dismissed by the League itself<sup>i</sup>. The provincial election mandate, the rising Hindu nationalism, the othering of the Muslims (engendered by the conservative separatists of both the communities), the sense of isolation and alienation (owing in part to their own insecurities as also a fallout of the Hindu revivalist movements) that preceded the credence given to the two nation stance adopted by the same proselytizers of the one secular nation is a visceral vivisection of what came to be the territorial bisection.

The cleaving of the presumably incorruptible ideals of the freedom struggle tells a tale of the attempted homogenization of population along the parameters of religion and community. This can be situated in the third stage of Bipan Chandra's notional differentiation of communalism's growth; where the emerging 'mutually incompatible, antagonistic and hostile' relations exacerbate difference over shared commonalities. Chandra traces this to the British policy post the 1857 Uprising, the relative backwardness of the Muslim community and the prevalent class disparity framed attitudes to modern education and the assimilation of the ideas of nationalism and democracy. Chandra posits the emphasis of *Muslims as invader-rulers* propagated by "[...] the British and communal historians (who) attacked the notion of a composite culture in India" (263); while simultaneously not sparing the communalized Hindu belief of the 'great, ideal heights' scaled by the pre-Muslim society and culture.

In order to facilitate the containment of such divisive policies, the territorial bifurcation that partitioned the country provided each an autonomous stratum within which to arrest the explosion of violence and to determine the landscape of independent identity. The insanity afflicted by such a proposition is exposed in the pungent critique of Saadat Hasan Manto's *Toba Tek Singh*. The central character in *Toba Tek Singh* is Bishen Singh, an inmate of a lunatic asylum who is immersed in his own plane of the world. The lunatic idea of exchanging inmates in accordance with their nationalistic affiliation derails the tenuous fragility of the mind and he goes berserk, spewing a diatribe of incensed raving against such a fate. The Sikh protagonist, finding that his village now falls in Pakistan, escapes into the neutral

territory between the two borders on the day of reckoning, refuses to surrender and finally dies in no man's land.

Bhisham Singh Sahni's *Tamas* brings to center stage the desecration of the sacred in the episode of the discovery of the carcass of a pig in front of the mosque that elevates tensions already running high into an incendiary cauldron. This re-created the anarchy of the rioting that had broken out and as the division of land and people unfolded there was no security to speak of. In the storm that broke out, atrocities are piled on both communities. The carnage left both perpetrator and victim alike, equal in the infliction of violence against the other. In the years that followed, writers of all hues imagine the partition as seditious, that the freedom dreamt of was *so near yet so far*. Faiz Ahmed Faiz best sums up this position in his poem titled "Subh-e-Azadi":

*Abhī girānī-e-shab men kamī nahīñ aaī*

*Najāt-e-dīda-o-dil kī ghaDī nahīñ aaī*

*Chale-chalo ki vo manzil abhī nahīñ aaī.* (Source: <https://www.Rekhta.org/nazms/subh-e...>)

The darkness of the night has not yet waned,

Heart and eyes their freedom has not yet been attained.

Let us go on, for the goal has not yet been attained.

The shared cultural past is a product of centuries of sharing territory along with acculturation between communities that accorded the other with a prominent status related to their own well being. This filially structured landscape is explored herein to relate the sense of betrayal, chaos and displacement. Characters on both sides of the border experience the disenchantment with freedom and the new spaces. As such, the strangeness of the place, re-location and asylum, the 'perennial outsider', and an oppressive sense of exile pervades much of this writing.

Further jeopardizing their fragile lives, the political events running counter to expectations upend the lives of the citizens and push them into circumstances beyond their control. The sense of belonging is replaced by the avowed sense of non-belonging in the newly free countries of India and Pakistan. The hopes to return

‘home’, the plans to surmount the political and social disasters never pan out. In the emotive tales of the Partition narrative, therefore, is hidden the condemnation of the colonial re-structuring of power and its counter-productive knowledge production measures that entail the victimization of the ordinary people at the hands of the political elite.

The restive ambience of the time is hewn in the land and its rivers, both of which are drenched in blood. This is illustrated in the poignant scene in *Train to Pakistan*, when the villagers are taking turns to keep watch on the rising water levels of the river Sutlej, and they see human bodies and animal carcass floating downriver. As the bodies washed close to the shore, the ghastly and unseemly wounds on their person were noticed and the villagers dazedly realized that these were no victims of the flood but evidence of a massacre. It is less about the clash between the faithful and the feckless, the believer and the heathen, the steadfast and the pagan, the devout and the infidel and more about the history of harmony punctured by the politics of polarization. Culture, according to these writers (like Alok Balla, Meenakshi Mukherjee) is not a piece of furniture or an artifact to be either left behind or carried along to one’s new destination. Rather, it is an intangible interweaving of the fibers of tradition that holds together the fabric of community existence, thereby providing the community as well as its members a/an palpable/indelible identity.

### **3.3.1 Territory and Identity**

Literary historiography comes within the conventional parameters of temporality. New approaches to explore spatio-temporal relationships in literary texts foreground niche terrains of experience. The condensed time frame extends a vivid dynamic view of the periodicity of the literary event in historical time. In sharp contrast is the notion of extended time that takes the events of a brief period and layers it to a nuanced performative act. What is of deep interest here is the concentration of time within historic time intersected by personal time from flashback to the present and projecting into the future—this intertwining captures attention through its largely artistic representation. This visibility is concentrated on the ‘terrain’ on which time and history enact the plot.

A sense of place has been central to one’s sense of identity. This leads to the marking of boundaries, the erection of the insider and outsider, justified by esteeming that

sense of belonging. This relation to place is correlated to the concept of homogenous community. History, with its narratives of exploration and invasion, necessarily punctures such notion while a psycho-social study based on historicity can reveal the social hierarchies and the differential identities evoked by the same place. Adding Gender to this hermeneutic gamut further complicates space-identity notions. Thus, the specificity associated with a sense of place is only notional and not *real*. This is ascertained on the grounds that that sense of continuity within a place is a social construct. Massey finds significant what she calls, “[T]he common association between penetrability and vulnerability. For it is this kind of association which makes invasion by new-comers so threatening” (8). The homogenous nature of identity attributed to a sense of place is thus exposed to conflict—over the inherited past; imposed by Partition; and, by a conflict-ridden future. Massey conjoins history with identity to give the place significance in human relations when she opines, “[A]nd finally, all these relations with [...] the accumulated history of the place, with that history itself imagined as the product of layer upon layer of different sets of linkages, both local and to the wider world.” (ibid)

### **3.3.2 Nations and Borders: The Politics of Identity**

Yet, in the midst of this struggle also arose a parallel struggle- that of Muslim identity and its stake at an independent Islamic nation state. The doubts raised by ambitious vastest political interests over the potential status of the Muslims as minority in a future Hindu majoritarian India—fuelled by self-seeking secularists posing as the champions of the hapless, gullible people—divided the country on religious grounds as never before! Moreover, the demographic collectives of Muslim population in the north east and north west foregrounded by myopic, seditious leadership on either side of this political divide and appropriated as protégés by the colonial rulers, lent voice, apparent legitimacy and credence to this insistence for a separate nation state for Muslims. Finally, the conveniences, connivances, compromises for political authority and the sacrificing of polity for politicking became crucial in the truncation of the Indian subcontinent along religious lines. The history of the period conveniently abrogates blame for this unprecedented violence onto to the ‘divide and rule’ policy of the British who apparently sowed the seeds of distrust that propagated the discontentment between the two communities. A large part of the blame is apportioned to the Muslim League and its demand for a separate state. Only recent studies by critics (Gyanendra Pandey and Mishirul Hasan, in the main) focus attention onto the writing of early nineteenth

century nationalistic writing that captured the idea of an Indian nation and claimed it for the Hindus.

The crux of the matter is the suddenness with which the British departed; the decision to carve two nations from the subcontinent; and, the violent reprisal of the consequent divide. This gave rise to two extreme and contradictory stances: viz. that of the receding ideal of the one secular nation to the increasingly intransigent communal othering. Ayesha Jalal expresses this conundrum in terms of a division of appearance and reality in these words,

The preeminent view of Indian nationalism has been that of an inclusionary, accommodative, consensual and popular anti-colonial struggle. This has entailed denigrating the exclusive affinities of religion as ‘communal’ in an imagined hierarchy of collectivities crowned by the ideal of a ‘nation’ unsullied by narrow minded bigotry. By implying that religious affiliations are, if not necessarily bigoted, then certainly less worthy than identifications with the ‘nation’, Indian nationalism comes dangerously close to trampling over its own coat tails. The cultural roots of Indian nationalism owed far more to religious ideals, reinterpreted and reconfigured in imaginative fashion, than has been acknowledged. (1)

What Jalal seeks to place on record is the harking back to the classical Hindu past as skirting around the issue of the Muslims in India. The western dissociation between the spiritual and material finds its critic in Mohammad Iqbal, who denies that they are divided by the temporal aspect and are indeed a unified content. “The ‘working idea of *tauhid*, the binding principle of a Muslim’s submission to Allah, was ‘equality, solidarity and freedom’. It was incumbent upon the state from an Islamic point of view ‘to endeavour to transform these ideal principles’ into reality” (ibid, 2). This initial thinking saw a separate state for Muslims but not to the total denial and exclusion of Hindustan. This difference was further exacerbated to communal overtones as against ‘cultural differences informed by religion’ which flared into intractable violence in the event of Partition. This happened because the feudal structure of the provinces was continued by the British in disallowing participation of Indians in sharing power. Many resistances fuelled the one nation theory, only to see it go up in flames for the negotiating parties excluded accommodation of intrinsic differences as irreconcilable.

“Religious differences in and of themselves may not have been an insurmountable obstacle in fashioning the ideal of a unitary nation. It was the ways in which religiously defined distinctions bore upon political and economic advancement within the colonial system which gave religion the handle it came to enjoy in British colonial India.” (ibid, 3)

### **3.4 Nation and Narrative**

The nation as an idea is concretized through its narrative concurrence in politics, sociology and literature. Homi Bhabha likens nation and narration to the Roman god of transition, Janus, who is represented with two faces: one that looks to the past and the other that looks forward to the future. This space between the past and the present is the estuarine space that is constantly in turbulence; and it is this space of eddying that Bhabha situates the role of language in articulating the nation. Ernest Renan associates the nation with ‘a soul, a spiritual principle’ while centering its binding nature refutes its material symbols and confers upon it an emotive tonality when he writes in “What is a Nation?”:

More valuable by far than common customs, posts and frontiers conforming to strategic ideas is the fact of sharing, in the past, a glorious heritage and regrets, and of having, in the future, [a shared] programme to put into effect, or the fact of having suffered, enjoyed and hoped together. [...] and, indeed, suffering in common unifies more than joy does. Where national memories are concerned, griefs are of more value than triumphs, for they impose duties, and require a common effort. (19)

This clearly posits the colonial exploitation leading to immense suffering and the coalescing of forces geared to topple the colonial power in direct confrontation in the spirit of solidarity that presages ‘nationhood’. But for ‘nationhood’ to assume form there ought to be some kind of apparatus to give it a concrete form, and Timothy Brennan in “The national longing for form” invests the origins of nation to the novel when he observes that:

It was the novel that historically accompanied the rise of nations by objectifying the ‘one, yet many’ of national life, and by mimicking the structure of the nation, a clearly bordered jumble of languages and styles. Socially, the novel joined the newspaper as a major vehicle of the national print media, helping to standardize the language, encourage literacy, and remove mutual incomprehensibility. But it did much more than that. The manner of presentation allowed people to imagine the special community that was the nation. (49)

Brennan further elaborates the ties of nationalistic leanings to the religious thought that was slowly receding; while also calling to attention the emergence of the novel from the folkloric past in its bid to fuse the ‘high’ and ‘low’ cultures. The colonial literature narrativises the native as pagan and savage to clearly foreground the Eurocentric moral view. That the concept of exile first emerged as a choice to create a change of scene in order to spur creativity is now imbued with a native meaning that alludes to homelessness, of forced migration, of poverty and despair. The writers of Partition narratives are citizens who had romanced the idea of nation but denounced it in the aftermath of the Partition that saw horrific violence enacted in reaction to the division. Yashpal, in “Desh Ka Bhavishya”, unveils the torpor that nationalism had fallen into with the leaders being mere loops for

power brokers to count on to ensure they win contracts and they are happy to grease the palms that will ensure ease of doing business. The loss of the 'spiritual principle' is evinced also in the trading of pre-partition badges of struggle for post-partition repatriation. The question that begs an answer is whether they truly fought in the freedom struggle or had paid for false testimonies that would be a meal ticket.

The irony of refugee/exile is laid threadbare. Fortunes have reversed and unscrupulous opportunists have made fortunes by shrewdly speculating and using fair means or foul to ensure their prosperity. While such behind the scenes corrupt practices are openly flaunted, Yashpal evocatively critiques the Congress and its policies. He is critical of the satellite system that caters to sycophant hangers-on and the bribes paid to procure government contracts. 'Desh Ka Bhavishya' is a critique of the loss of idealism, the tainting of leaders, the reduction of Gandhiji's philosophy to mere tokenism and symbolic passport to sanctity, the galas that expend public money extravagantly, the cronyism surrounding Nehru and his preoccupation with social affairs than the actual business of running the state. The political history of the country is subtly contrasted to the subaltern narrative anecdotes to expose the glaring contradictions. The narrative immerses itself in the social history of the lives of the erstwhile denizens of the Gali and other minor characters as a medium to interrogate the politics of favouritism being played out at the power centres.

Another incident in the novel is that of a farmer, Bela Singh, and his family who squat in Puri's veranda demanding compensation for the land lost in a legal wrangle to someone who could produce papers to confirm his ownership rights in Pakistan. The landless laborers had no rights in the new dispensation that protected private ownership and instead arrested Bela Singh along with his family and are carted off by the police. Kanak differs with Puri on this issue and argues in favor of a more equitable distribution system. The parasitism of the business and political class is mocked in the cozying up to each other for mutual benefit. Yashpal does not spare the leadership for using their credentials to win independence for the country in vote bank politics. The rampant corruption that eats into the systems meant for the protection of the marginalized comes for further parodying in Yashpal and it is in the denouement where Sood loses the elections that hope is evinced in the nation's future. Therefore, it is the study of fiction that holds out the possibility to salvage the 'submerged history'<sup>ii</sup> that is used to reflect the present day reality of the nation.

Literature employs social markers that trace the functional symbols used to valorize national identity and validate heritage since cultural nationalism attempts to garner support to overthrow imperial European regimes. Colonial literature can also be read as the ‘empire writing back’ and since it encompasses the detrimental impact of imperialism and the consequent surge in nationalistic fervor to break away from colonialism by creating a nation sans imperialists, the novel is regarded as narrating the nation. The New Historicist approach enters into this mode of reading, wherein the line between fiction and non-literary sources are blurred, and insists on juxtaposed readings of the two to interrogate each other whereby the text/narrative exposes the discontinuities of the period to stir the complacency to arrive at difference from the present ideological assumptions. The ‘submerged’, the pasted over, the cover up, so to speak, can be uncovered to enter into the discursive narratives of the past. That narratives, and by virtue of disseminating the idea, nations are cultural concepts is obvious and both can be analyzed to reveal the socio-political, philosophical and economic assumptions that bring them to fruition.

The filial relationships acknowledged difference and in Gayatri Spivak’s words lived in ‘conflictual coexistence’<sup>iii</sup>—a more authentic picture than the almost saccharine stories of closeness that are narrated. Spivak pierces the statist narrative to focus attention on the subaltern perspective when she asserts, “[I]t was the working-class people, the underclass people who were mobilized, because the British and the upper-class folks had made a pact to separate the land” (8). In the plight of the present day subalterns, Spivak determines that they are deliberately kept pre-modern while the rest enjoy the comforts of modern life. She maintains that literature and imagination are handmaids to nationalism and are often put to use to achieve its ends. This process, she dissects, as occurring through the collusion of re-engineering memory to visualize the ills done to the people and their attendant suffering taken together weaves historical fact into cultural myth. Spivak claims, “Nationalism is the product of a collective imagination through remembrance” (39). Simon During carves, for the postcolonial writer, a space that requires them “to witness their society, and their writings, which produces images, remain firmly placed in the imagination [...]” (152). Both Spivak and During show the limit of narrating the nation; while Spivak proceeds to dream of ‘de-transcendental nations’, During gnaws on the subjectivity-representation interplay in postcolonial novels as binding the societies—a situation they are undeserving of.

Post colonial fiction ruminates and regurgitates the colonial end and the national awakening. In this sense, postcolonial fiction is perceived as narrating the nation. The

novel's flexible boundaries allow for this form of digressive elegiac odes. Critics, however, have failed to arrive at a consensus of the origin and development of the nation state and nationalism; and therefore, literary critics denounce it as impertinence to abrogate the novel as akin to symbolizing the nation, while acknowledging the novel's facility to trace and record the ideas of national identity and belonging. The novel's free form is used to restructure the nation through the narrating of family stories that explore the struggle and impact of the largely politico-historical events on the family. Within the ruptures of the family and attending to the independent strands of their individual journeys until they regroup lies the historical tumult that affected the lives of the ordinary folks caught up in this melee. Accordingly, the family yields several foci—that of the breaching of the borders that demarcate the safe haven that the family represents by the political episodes playing out; that of a private forum that influences the perception of nationhood and identity, especially the private versus the collective national identity; that of the impact of political events on family members and their interactions which heap a gamut of incidents and emotions for the reader to have an immersive experience of the frenzied times.

**3.4.1 Nation and the Subaltern** The Subaltern Group (SSG as it is called) applies Antonio Gramsci's term in the sense of an oppositional category to the ruling class and recognize the term to represent 'an inferior rank' and subordination in all social categorization. What the Subaltern theorists seek to do is to critique colonialism and overturn the long held view that colonialism modernized India, ushered in benefits to the people and brought it abreast with other nations. That the masses were the ballast to the national struggle is known, but the nationalistic project tones down their contribution as negligible and supportive of (read subordinate to) the dominant literate urban freedom fighters. Their contribution was fraught with violent overtones and hence viewed condescendingly by both the colonial and the Indian elite. Fanon's contention of the possibility that anticolonial nationalism can transfigure into nationalistic authoritarianism and Seamus Deane's warning that it can metamorphose into the very shibboleth it seeks to replace is evident in the othering of the subaltern and the elite assuming the hierarchical legacy of the colonizers.

The most heart-wrenching reality is the experience of Partition violence in the shape and form that the elites escaped by virtue of their power and pelf. The Khalifas, or the serpentine columns of people and their meager belongings, of both genders and all age groups trudging wearily across the broad expanses to the either side is a tragic sight. That they were often

looted, that their women were violated, that many members succumbed to starvation, disease and exhaustion, that the dead were buried with neither ceremony nor markers to signify their presence, that those who survived arrived in emaciated conditions only to languish in refugee camps turned slums. Thus, what they underwent is not mere geographic rupture, but also included within the ambit of their experience the bitter material hardships and psychic dislocation. Partition for the subalterns was not some hoary divine offering but a lived cartographic exercise in nation building through religious identification. The natural and built spatial environments deployed in bordering seek normative status and its naturalization. Partition Literature links the subaltern with the larger socio-political ethos and subjects them to an intense interrogation to reconstruct the traumatic experience, to restructure the social hierarchies, to resurrect the memories and to recover the subaltern voices and to narrate their pain in order to dismantle the elitist dominance.

Gayatri Spivak in her seminal essay deconstructs the bourgeois sentiments that not only fuelled nationalism's aims and goals but also critiques it for overlooking the opportunity to transcribe genuine social, political and economic transformation from below. When she speaks of the subaltern, this is what she has to say, "In the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow" (82-83). Spivak vilifies the narratives for their inability to represent the voices of women and finds that they are thus doubly jeopardized. The silence surrounding the violent aftermath of Partition verifies this humiliating decimation. It is the accounts of the loss of home and the trauma experienced that litterateurs sketch and recount the horror. The depictions of the violation of women, their reduction to mere 'meat' to enact savage revenge and their having no control over their fate speak through the silent interstices of the tragedy they underwent. To comprehend this, the reader must empathize and listen over the din of the tumult and chaos that rocked the zenith of the struggle to give birth to the conjoined twins of Freedom and Partition.

### **3.4.2 The Place as Home versus the Home as Nation**

The home is the centre of the family and that families were forced to abandon homes for nationhood was a devastating shock that meant vacating their known 'world' for an unknown 'nation'. The void that this represented is deeply mourned in the representation of trauma in Partition literature. Many of those who anticipated an epiphanic immanence as pilgrims to the new lands aspired to were in for the rough and tumble of refugee life; insidiously trapped in political morass that hinged on religious identity as the passport to 'civil' lives. Their journey

was necessitated by exigency, shorn off all hope and the violence encountered was more sacrilege than virtuous. The emptiness of their dream is brought home when they realize that those spear-heading the movements, urging them to share and invest in their dream, had nothing offer but the dream. Thence the dream turned to nightmare, the dream was ballast to ‘egotism and ambition’<sup>iv</sup> rather than the palpable epiphany of ‘imagined communities’. The vision was nothing short of a chimera, a mirage that had no substance in terms of valid apparatuses and implementable ideals that would better their lives. They remained outsiders in their chosen destinations for the local natives neither afforded them a warm welcome nor facilitated their assimilation. Such open hostility led people to compromise the ideals for which they had left home and hearth to practice a pragmatic adjustment with corruption to grasp at a living.

The loss of the social network of kinship, the built and natural spaces in and around their homes, the memorabilia left behind in their desperate attempt to secure themselves on the right side of the border and the mundane rituals and routines of everyday life unspools like a film in the recesses of memory. The fear and isolation of living with strangers in a proscribed place is a foreign experience. Home suggests an innate hospitality that the nation denies this basic need for safety and security. While home represents a haven, the nation alienates the populace left bereft of all possessions—from the humble abode to the palatial mansions as is narrated in *This Is Not That Dawn* in the cases of Bela Singh, the tenant farmer to Pandit Girdharilal, the flourishing printer-publisher. *Train to Pakistan* is set in an imagined village, Mano Majra, that sets its monotonous daily routine to the fixed incoming and outbound trains: the mail train to Lahore awakens the villagers to their prayers and work, the midday express lulls them to rest, the passenger train from Lahore rounds up the day’s activities and the arrival goods train’s clatter is the soothing lullaby to send them off to the land of nod. The dacoity and the murder of the money lender Ram Lal in the scuffle leave the village open to the inquest where the constable’s uncharitable remark of having proof of Iqbal being a Muslim divide the village.

Each side was aware of the rumours floating about the atrocities that were being committed against their community members by the other community in the cities and towns. While the Sikhs were blaming the uproar on karma, questions were being asked about the nature of their sins that make them deserving of a visit from karma. The young tussle verbally with Meet Singh and the Lambardar to justify their distrust of the Muslims, but they meet with fierce rebuttals and counter questions as to an account of their personal loss that makes them carry

on so. They defend their Muslim tenants saying that the evacuations from villages in their vicinity must not be on account of their fellow villagers' belligerence. The entry of Imam Baksh and two others turn the conversation to their own village. To the Imam's question as to the fate of the Muslims and whether they ought to leave, the Lambardar responds with '[T]his is your village as much as ours' (133). It is the youngsters who, a few minutes ago were arguing heated, assure them of their protection strongly reiterating, '[...] we first, then you.' (*ibid*) They swear to rain violence on anyone who dares to threaten them.

The Imam is moved to tears and declares, 'What have we to do with Pakistan? We are born here. So were our ancestors. We have lived amongst you as brothers.' (*ibid*) It does not bear even thinking about; the thought of leaving the familiar for an ideal that holds no attraction petrifies these families. Yet, the Lambardar cautions the Imam and requests that they move to a refugee camp to preempt the fury of a lurking mob. Though saddened by this, the Imam acquiesces in earnest solemnity, ironically point out, '[...] if we have to go, we better pack up our bedding and belongings. It will take us more than one night to clear out of homes it has taken our fathers and grandfathers hundreds of years to make.' (135) Both communities weep at the impermanence in life. The news spreads and the entire village was awake that night: sobbing, swearing undying friendship, commiserating with each other, comforting themselves by repeating that this was a passing phase and that life would soon return to normal. Except that the next day a convoy was arranged that insisted on loading people with the possessions that they could carry to make a pit stop in the camp from where they would cross over to Lahore by train. Chaos reigns and Malli and his gang reap a ripe harvest in the possessions left behind in the scramble to be on the convoy as the Mano Majra Sikhs didn't want the temptation of their tenants' property distorting their relations.

The arrival of the Sikh youth to the gurudwara scuttle any hope of peace for they whip up a frenzy of hatred and loathing by challenging the masculinity of the community and drowning out the voice of reason represented by Meet Singh and the Lambardar. Malli joins forces with them along with his men and several refugees. Some of the villagers volunteered too. They hatch the plan to derail the refugee train carrying the Muslims across the border to Lahore in an act of retributive justice; to send onward in kind what they had received in the inbound trains from Lahore. Jugga's love for Nooran, the daughter of Imam Baksh and the mother-to-be of his child was to travel by that train. Jugga learns of the plan and sacrifices his life to ensure the safety of the passengers on the train.

Ergo, the family becomes the hub for narrating the trauma of Partition: the socio-religious discrimination that obliterated the previously shared filial relationships, the violence that ensued, the vengeful abuse of women, the forced migration and the experience of exile—all allude to the family. The suffering of the family members, the particular incidents that tear them apart and haunt them, all point to their being ‘un-homed’. The cocoon they had established to nurture becomes the space that is intruded upon and where its desacralization occurs. If borders are to be drawn to order the world then it is at the cost of distorting the b/orders of the family. The smudging of the family unit dominates the narrative and is scrutinized to reveal the upsurge of nationalistic fervor and the re-fashioning of the homeland into a nation is contemplated within the pages of these postcolonial fictive narratives. The usurpation of the domestic (familial) space by the public sphere is encountered in these narratives—the two spheres are pre-requisites to validate each other and the one cannot exist without the other. To what extent such reciprocity is presumed is open to discussion and debate for each narrative offers a different picture; perhaps all the narratives taken together through an elision of narrative boundaries may offer the most accessible panoramic viewpoint.

The strife in the public sphere intrudes on the private space of the family and divides the members. The experience of this intrusive strife is disorienting and upsets all that is taken as safe and fixed. Thus, history becomes the subtext of the family narrative and the nation is the matrix in which the family saga unfolds. Herein, the public political space and the private domestic space collide and intersect: the overlapping space is the site for each influencing and shaping the other and not equitably. The siting of the narrative within the domestic sphere serves a dual purpose: the novel can present a discursive cross section of the impact of historical events as experienced by the family members while also discoursing about events that are deliberately left out or sidelined in official history. The narratives thus juxtapose contentious segments of the same history that are sought to be erased from history. The novels collapse the compartmentalization of the two spheres and use alternative narrative digressions to counter the official version sought to be imposed from above. Through the representation of trauma, the multitude of personal tragedy resoundingly evokes national trauma. The paean to loss and pain, viz. the rights to life, security, dignity and respect, is what these novels mourn at the obvious level while simultaneously

foregrounding the recuperative effort and resilience of those affected in the ways they cobble together a life post the historical upheaval.

The move away from individualized descriptions of the world to the common cause orientation is what distinguishes these narratives. They structure the discourse within the folds of the familial to inquire, test, argue, debate, shape and re-shape, revise and resist notions of nation, nationhood and national identity. Though the family is the basic social building block of the nation, the national narrative is two-pronged in using the metaphor of the family to unite the nation as one people; yet, the family is relegated and separated from the national narrative. The family is the anvil on which the national identity is hammered by replicating the patriarchal power hierarchies that helm both the family and nation. Resistance is limited to the victims of violence i.e. the marginalized and women. The familial is denounced in favour of the individual to promote agency in recapturing some of the autonomy lost in the national agglomeration. No amount of invoking the sacrality of familial loyalty can be hawked to demand the return of investment when the family itself becomes a symbol of oppression and violence. The familial borders are tightly controlled and patrolled; the family permits interaction but demands unquestioning loyalty to the dictates of the mores upheld by the family. Any anomaly is dealt with firmly and immediately; deviation from the norm is punishable with expulsion from the family. This speaks volumes about the family power structures and the control they wielded on individual lives. Though the nation is often described as the usurper of individual autonomy, little attention is paid to the kind of control measures that the family initiates, legitimizes and normalizes over its individual members. In this form and influence, the nation most closely resembles the family and justifies the narratives and theories proliferating regarding the mirror images that the family and nation represent.

If the family is based on hierarchy then can the nation be blamed for structuring itself around power hierarchy? The family—while a source of sustenance, nurture and support—is also the site where inequities are practiced in its gendered norms and the domestic space does inculcate vacuums signifying erasure through disappearance or death. The enforced exile echoes a keening sense of loss of family and the reworked bonds in the new place signify the reparation of loss. This regrouping in strange places they find themselves in is an attempt to re-create the filial bonds lost owing to the calamity that besieged them in order to replenish the loss and find one's feet. The

ties that bind them help sustain them and promote their will to survive; for survival is the mother of growth and resilience. This again becomes a major motif for the re-imagination and re-creation of the national identity through kinship of choice as a strategy to recoup the loss of inherited kinship. Though this loss owes to the genesis of the nation and national identity formation and should mean loss of nation and national identity, this tragic victimization and its attendant survival is perceived as the re-casting of the nation and a resurgence of national identity through revision.

The loss of home comes with the burden of exile. Every mooring point is erased with this un-homing and the new place is a strange place filled with strangers. This double estrangement is viewed dispiritedly and the only way ahead is the affiliations sought and forged that lessens this burden of exile. In the chosen affiliations are framed the opportunity to re-appropriate the family to staunch the loss experienced and to re-create the support network that has been erased. This network is the deep connect that assists in coming to terms with loss and moving on to re-imagine a new life and live it. The effort to attempt this reconciliation is tremendous because family represents an inherited anchor whose loss is irreparable; this re-appropriation of family is the survival instinct kicking in to sustain life. The question of burying oneself with the dead or resorting to look for those who have disappeared is denying their own present; instead new friendships and neighbours prod them to re-build lives, albeit with a few caveats—in the main, that the new filial relationships accept the ostensible truth of their pain and loss. Even a whiff of shame is not allowed to touch the memory of those who have disappeared or who presumed/known to be dead. From prevarications to outright lies are the ways in which the families cope with loss and recuperation; only the memory becomes the battleground for the truth to penetrate the fabrication of the present. The ‘guarantees’ as represented by the home are experienced to be facades themselves and this allows the percolation of a new transformative agency that negotiates the political to arrive at the a sense of fair play. The ‘guarantees’ lost are mourned but the memories are traded for empowerment and solidarity that can re-define their resurgence.

Partition rendered the masses on the wrong side of the religious divide right-less and therefore homeless. The violence propagated large scale migration left the ordinary ‘citizens’ bereft of the home—the matrix of socio-cultural indices into which they were born and which defined their place in that world—and kept them in an almost

permanent sense of vertigo that presaged the rootlessness they faced and lived with. The bewilderment at the uprooting is obvious more so on account of the tragedy of having to desert a known way of life for an unknown ideal. The common people were totally involved in the business of their daily survival than investing in their religious identity. That religion became the bone of contention that ejected them from the place of their birth and the place of their ancestors in order to ensure their survival is viewed as the betrayal of large proportions. It meant, in Alok Balla's words:

[...] millions of people were forced to leave their homes, their bastis, their desh, their watan, and undertake a difficult and sorrowful journey, often against their desires and better instincts, to cities and villages whose names and images had rarely ever before drifted across the boundaries of their affective realms. (4)

This choice was not made of their own free will but one that they had to make in the wake of the violent political scenario. Theirs was a life of quotidian rituals and faith meant that they knew their neighbours for generations; that included the genealogies of extended families and the best kept secrets. This openness of everyday living and interaction insinuated a confidence and guaranteed permanence to existential brevity. The filial relationships practiced and nurtured meant that neighbours were added to one's extended family. It must be accepted that very few people left their homes on the inducements of being a part of a larger religious community that professed and protected their way of life or held out the carrot of a deeper immersive identity and a place to steep and carve that selfhood. That people fooled themselves that such things don't happen to good people like them but to others is rendered in the strongest vein in Partition literature. None want to leave the certainty of their home; but the violence forces them to flee or they are evacuated by force for their own safety.

The people do not indulge in ancestor worship nor are they being morbid in clinging to their two-bit land but are staunchly defending their right to their home and homeland. Not for them nation and nationhood if it entails a change in place and a new home. Their lingo, cultural practices, social rituals, food, clothing and even that of the other is as familiar to them than the new nation and with it a new alignment in identity and place. The comfort in the familiar cadence that defines their everyday existence is priceless and any seeking to oust them from what is rightfully theirs is met with strong opposition and resistance.

The zeal with which Reza Ali and his faithful lieutenant Zahid labored for the ideal to see light of day is tarnished when Zahid is slain in the train he boards to see the fulfillment of his goal; whereas, Reza Ali's role in propagating the idea of Pakistan through his fiery speeches bury him in the grave he dug for himself, for he relinquishes the comfort of familiarity for the renunciation of the alien. He lives out his life in quiet penance. *Sunlight on a Broken Column* chronicles the splintering of the family and thereby, the home. Ashiana, helmed by the patriarch, Baba Jan, represent the continuity of an old way of life; centred on the patriarch who kept it ticking with clockwork precision. His friendship with Thakur Balbir Singh, Raja Hasan Ahmed and Mr. Freemantle represents the *tehzeeb* of the old world. In his ailment and subsequent demise is implied and foretold the death of feudal imperialism and the consequent splitting of the metaphor of the extended family, inclusive of the subaltern hangers on. The hierarchical structure of society centred on the rich, powerful elite and then in subsequent rungs, the rest of the classes, with the closing of the ranks by the subaltern, marginalized and the depressed classes in the dilemmas of Nandi, Ramzano and Saliman.

The recollections in *Sunlight on a Broken Column* documents the reversal of family fortunes, partly in conversation with Zahra and partly from recalled memory: while the subalterns like Sharifan, the singer, who had gone over to Pakistan and her daughter, became rich because of their voices which found a living in films. Zainab, who had married a senior clerk, was to accompany her husband to America to the Washington Embassy. The feudal rich became impoverished, lived in distressed circumstances and debilitating conditions. Romana and her prince lived off the heritage value of their family title and hung out with the rich and powerful to fund their opulent lifestyle. Sylvia left her bankrupt husband, the Raja of Bhimnagar, and went off with an American Air Force Sergeant.

When ruminating about her friends, the narrator remembers her friend Joan and their continued though infrequent correspondence. The tragedy of the loss of home for the Britishers who had spent most of their lives in India is eloquently etched in the relationships of Joan and Mrs. Martin, their governess, to the narrator. Joan's state is thus recounted,

‘She had not wanted to leave, but her parents had insisted on going ‘home’ to England after independence, and she had too strong a sense of duty to leave them alone in their old age. ‘She had written once, “It is not possible—at any time, at any age, to forget the place and the atmosphere where one was born and brought up. I find myself comparing, and contrasting everything with India; and—would you believe it?—when my parents now talk of ‘home’ they do not mean England!”’ (307-308)

This is a total reversal of the superior airs of the British in India to privileging the memory of the place. The place where they spent their most productive years becomes ‘home’ and though they are English by birth, the loyalty to the mother –country is inbred, they are nostalgic about and yearn for the place they left behind. They find their country foreign and feel alienated from its surroundings and culture. All parties involved in the Partition paid the price of being burdened by the memory in exile.

The belongingness to a place and its influence on identity is deep and irrevocable. The place nurtures the body, guides the spirit and modifies the nature of the natives to arouse a local character and regional flavor. The centrality of the place cannot be emphasized enough and Massey reasons, ‘[W]hat gives a place its specificity is not some long internalized history but the face that is constructed out of a particular constellation of social relations, meeting and weaving together at a particular locus.’ (ibid) In Amrita Pritam’s *Pinjar*, when Pooro’s parents show neither happiness at her return home after her abduction nor willingness to accept her in her ‘defiled’ state, Pooro is haunted by Rashida’s words; “You have no place in that home now.” The estrangements between the communities, the hostilities that run rife, have erased the sense of place as a refuge. Though Rashida’s act of abduction is to settle old family scores, the historical moment is ripe for the act to unfold. The need to escape to safety and security is lost and Rashida’s plan of moving from his village, where no ties bind him, to another where a distant cousin resides, receives neither response nor reaction from Pooro. Pritam captures her response aptly thus: ‘There was no reaction from her—after her parents had turned her away from their door, leaving the ancestral village did not seem so momentous. All said and done, what difference did it make? All villages were alike.’ Pooro, a victim of circumstances, has lost her home and her ties to the place; her indifference stems from her loss of the safe haven home had always been for her and her sense of exile will continue in either place.

The social relations that entomb the home as a safe haven is narrated as memory recollected. As the baby grew in Pooro’s womb, she recalls the ceremonies of birth, the celebration of the birth of her brother, her coy daydreams of her impending marriage, the lovingly gathered trousseau—to be thwarted by her abduction by Rashida. What her wedding would have been like is evocatively contrasted with the unceremonious marriage to Rashida that ensues. Pooro’s memories see-saw between her maternal home and her husband’s home, to focus attention to the disparate social

conventions practiced. The process of othering and its inherent prejudices of superiority-inferiority are evident when the present pushes aside the veil of the past. The incident in *Pinjar* where she learns that the next day is the first day of Baisakh is an appropriate illustration of this technique used by Pritam:

“It would be nice to have sweet vermicelli after the quails,” says Rashida. Hamida (Poro) went in got vermicelli and a lump of gur. She recalled once telling her mother when she was rolling vermicelli: “Mother, I would much prefer it out of a machine.” And her mother had retorted brusquely: “Fie girl, only the Muslims eat machine-made vermicelli!” the memory brought tears to Hamida’s eyes. Then she began to laugh. Rashida looked up surprised. “What makes you laugh?” She told him and started to laugh again. Rashida’s smile changed to a shy snigger. (21)

The differences are viewed from the uniqueness of social beliefs and practices. The humour in the situation speaks volumes of the tentative attempts at reconciliation between Rashida and Poro. She has begun to accept her ‘fate’ and though she had no choice/say in the matter, she has begun to live her fate. She plays out the role expected for her; but Rashida’s kindness and consideration for her allow her a measure of freedom to act in empathizing and rescuing other victims of violence. Rashida’s support may be viewed as expiation for his act of abduction that left her bereft of her family’s and community’s safety net or it can be construed as his innate good nature that gains upper hand to ensure that her loss is mitigated; or perhaps both. The birth of the baby signifies not only a new beginning, but also the arrival of a new family member; an added responsibility not to be burdened with the ill-will of the past, rather to be schooled in love and tolerance.

The land inspires these human customs in accordance with images associated with re-imaginings of human progress etched upon the land. Menon, in her work title “Do Women Have A Country?” captures this rather well:

Partition made for a realignment of borders and of national and community identities, but not necessarily of loyalties. Thousands who opted for Pakistan returned a little later, an equal number, here and there, forsook allegiance to their families and never left at all. Some were unaware of Pakistan as a separate country till some years after its creation, even though they themselves had migrated to it. And any number failed to quite absorb the fact that there were borders now that couldn’t be crossed [...] Large numbers of people chose fidelity to place than to religious community they conveiled and remained where they were. The choice may have been expedient or not- and, indeed, often there as little choice in the matter, what is suggested is that “country” is an elusive entity. (44)

Attia Hosain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column* epitomizes this reality through a haunting narrative quoted earlier referring to the fate of Reza Ali and Zahid are reminiscences by Laila:

I shivered in the sun, as I sat by the waterless fountain. There were ghosts that could not be laid by the passing of the years.

I pulled myself together, and walked towards the room that had been mine, that I would always think of as mine no matter who lived in it, I looked across the neglected lawn towards the blank, boarded windows and bricked-up arches of that part of the house where stranger lived. (309-310)

The grand old house, Ashiana, and home to their family is ironic in its name, for 'Ashiana' connotes haven or refuge; whereas, with the reversal of the fortunes of the family and its own divided loyalty by the Partition, the home is declared as evacuee property. The divided loyalties see the cousins who lived as an extended family in the premises of Ashiana are now dispersed by the border to straddle the two new countries. The home may have remained a bridge to connect the scattered family members, but all that comes of the house is that it is let out to strangers. The memory of home is all that now remains—for the permanent solidity of the house is destabilized by the newly ordained borders and it is implanted in the interstices of memory—where it is treasured and mourned by turn. The borders that divide the territory also section its temporality to pre-partition and post-partition times. The territorial rupture is mimicked by the oscillation of memory between the before (forever frozen) and after (forever altering) time settings.

This occlusion of territorial othering is described thus by van Houtum in his "Prologue" to his book titled *B/ordering Space*, "*B/ordering*, as the strategic fabrication and control of a bounded sphere of connectivity, constitutes a reality of (affective) orientation, power and ease, thereby expressing desire for protective distance from the outside world" (3). This line that demarcates territory performs a function and is again referenced from another of his articles through which he attempts to define the function of borders as, "In so doing borders select and prioritize social relations. Like mapping, *b/ordering* creates and represents an exclusive knowledge. It decides what is to be included and excluded, how the lie of the land, the group, the discipline, and what the border wishes to communicate (ibid)".

The border is significant for several reasons, not least that it creates space for territorial compartments to contain religious sanctity; that these compartments belie and desacralise the social relations maintained for generations by virtue of being good

neighbours and even better friends that respected difference to obfuscate social taboos. Borders divided the land, the people, their houses, their families, their minds, their hearts and their perception too. Families migrated to live in exile with neither ways nor means of slaking their yearning for their roots. The violence of the bordering process manipulated human values and decency and served in their place a battered and bartered mindscape that mourned the loss of the sacred territory with the desacralization of the people. Protagonists enact unspeakable wrongs only to finally learn that two wrongs do not a right make. This is amply illustrated in Bapsi Sidhwa's *The Ice Candy Man* where the ice candy man's love for Ayah is pulverized and bowdlerized by the insanity of the times and Lenny comes to know about that when Ayah escapes his clutches, he follows her across the border, as in the passage quoted from the text:

Until, one morning, when I sniff the air and miss the fragrance, and run in consternation to the kitchen, I am told that Ayah, at last, has gone to her family in Amritsar.  
. . . And Ice-candy-man, too disappears across the Wagha border into India. (277)

The place where the border out-post is built cements the border and is the site for the performance of not only difference but also masked hostility that celebrates a kind of uber-nationalism. The place further concretizes the past tense of the once contiguous territory and symbolizes the political separation of the present reality. It is a space for participative nationalism through the generation of popular antipathy. The signs and signifiers of this performative nationalism are deeply engraved in the mind set of the audience and the take home factor of this audio-visual memory is a catharsis of hate and a justification of that hate. This performance shatters any notion of shared cultural relations of centuries being the source for harmonious relations as ironically represented in the title of Robert Frost's poem, 'Good Fences Make Good Neighbours'.

### **3.4.3 Nation and Trauma**

The dovetailing of trauma exposes the roiling of that phase of history that ruptured a known stable way of life and ushered in immense insecurity and turbulence into their lives. There is the political trauma of instigated violence to check the political adventurism of nationalists as in *Tamas*; or the view that the indiscriminate violence has brought an onslaught of insanity that knows no bounds as in the ironical tale of *Toba Tek Singh*. The disorientation affects the characters of *River of Fire* as they

grapple with the dismemberment of their idyllic childhood. The recreation of the quintessential village of undivided India in *Train to Pakistan* and the dismantling of the 'innocence' of their inter-dependence portrays the deep roots that the divisive forces had taken. *Pinjar* depicts the violence that shook a family when their daughter is abducted to settle an old family score and the incomprehension of her rejection by family and society. *This Is Not That Dawn* re-imagines the intimacy of an entire byelane that is sundered by Partition and their survival in India frames the crux of the issues under discussion. The *Ice Candy Man* delineates the saga of a Parsi family caught in the crosshairs of retributive violence and the events that directly impact them as they witness their world being turned topsy-turvy. The life of privilege enjoyed by the aristocratic families of Lucknow and its dissipation in the light of the sectarian politics characterize the crumbling edifice of the once united family in *Sunlight on a Broken Column*.

The theorists of memory have failed to take into consideration, even denied, trauma as an integral part of socio-historic memory. The realm of history was elevated to the sacred by cloaking it with the symbolic embellishments of nationalistic fervor and/or ethnocentricity to anoint one version out of the many. This upsurge leads to the valorization of ideals over the experiences of the subaltern, demonizing in the bargain the victims and survivors of a human catastrophe in which the perpetrators go scot free. In the instance of Partition, the freedom struggle is exalted and magnified to almost obliterate the violence that erupted during the partition. What is even more painful and disturbing is that history seeks to mow down these prickly voices of Partition narratives that are discordant to the homogenized version that allows cultivating strong nationalistic agendas on both the sides of the border. It is the literature of the times, however, that undoubtedly resuscitates the immensely disturbing and horrific histories of witnessing the horrors of partition, and so, needs to be re-instated at the very heart of the analyses of Partition trauma and territorial loss.

In this context, it is imperative to study the impact of such traumatic experiences on the Female psyche, no doubt, but mainly on the Female Body as a site of violence, conquest and perversely, the mapping of conquered terrain. After all, the spillover of the territorial demarcation came in the etching of the new-found independence on women's bodies. The virgin site for the violent recording of history was the body of women. That new nations born with an independent territory each, was not apparently

self-sufficient territorially or politically, without the women becoming the currency, not merely for barter, but also for negotiating the contours of the newly erected boundaries is emphasized in Partition narratives. Thus, Pooro in Amrita Pritam's *Pinjar* is abducted, forced to marry her kidnapper and has her new identity as a Muslim tattooed on her arm. The Ayah in Bapsi Sidhwa's *The Ice Candy Man* loses her status as highly desirable and falls prey to her self-proclaimed lovers' trap, is raped and trafficked by him.

These tales of antagonistic reversals are deeply misogynistic; the characters are trapped in a patriarchal world that reifies women as property to be owned by men. The deliberate erasure of women's agency by imprinting violent retribution in the form of communal rape is told with unflinching honesty in Saadat Hasan Manto's "Khol Do". The death toll is horrific enough but what women went through goes beyond horror to the realm of the unspeakable. Either killed or abetted to commit suicide to prevent the debasement of her body, therein to strive to stave off the sully of the family honour to the abduction, mutilation, disfigurement, rape, forced marriage/ conversion, and recovery are the attributes of their travails that are chillingly portrayed by these writers.

The Partition is an episode of large scale violence that reached a crescendo in its immediate aftermath owing to the complicity of patriarchy. While at first a stony, impenetrable silence greeted this fury, the literary representations of Partition echoed and recorded the vindictive vendetta and humiliating defilement that resisted the new social and political reconfigurations. Didur interprets the marginalization of the conflicting sources of Partition in favour of the 'official' canonical version that 'explains away' the violence of Partition in these words:

The move towards the 'two nation solution' however, was accompanied by an unprecedented occurrence of mass migration to and from areas that would become India and Pakistan. Diverse representations of the violence that accompanied this migration (often referred to as a holocaust) can be found in historical, autobiographical, critical and fictional accounts of the events of partition. Despite the availability of competing figurations of the events, a dominant, 'universalist' (and consequently, elite, patriarchal and nationalist) history and interpretation of them has been canonized. This canonical viewpoint represents the violent events that accompanied partition as a 'natural', primitive and spontaneous outburst of fanatical, uneducated, irrational, religious and backward groups who were unable to appreciate the benefits of modernism and nationalism. (iv)

The issue of gender in the violent events preceding and following partition vouch for the misogynistic conflation of the purity of territory with the virginity of the female body. In the defiling of the female body lie the subtexts of honour and the culture of shame that drew a veil of silence about women's experience of Partition. The female body was thus a commodity: in one respect worthy of protection, in another, the focus of discipline; and yet in another, deserving to be discarded on being defiled beyond repair. Strong notions of purity and passivity of women's sexuality informs the parochial idea of honour. This notion is threatened by the 'recovery' of women who have been abused by the other and hence, manages to mute the gendered experience by using the culture of shaming to produce silence. Such a response is enlisted to further the elite, masculine, nationalist narrative through a denial of agency for women.

The inspiring figure of Mother India came into being in the run up to the freedom struggle and Indian women were idealized in this embodiment of the ideal woman. The woman was a wife and mother first, for whose safety the men folk must risk life and limb. The participation of women in the freedom struggle is well documented; but at no stage is she a revolutionary leader in her own capacity. She merely is an appendage to the male discourse and works in complementary parallel to the men folk to keep the fires of the struggle burning when these men folk were incarcerated. The women are permitted to participate by the men folk and that itself is a telling sign of the secondary position of women in the political and social spheres of the day. The women had to conform to the idealized image of her and exercise agency only within the lakshman rekha drawn by man. The image of Mother India employed to galvanize the masses into participation in the freedom struggle is also the image that presages the 'women as territory' motif rampant in the patriarchal retribution in the aftermath of Partition.

The first fruition of the exposure to western education is seen in the emergence of a close look at social practices that are detrimental to the welfare of women and a reformist mode of action against such norms as sati and the encouragement of widow remarriage, women's education, and property rights for women. The liberal ideas of the west applied wholly to the elite males; while the women continued to labour under traditional stereotypes 'of an inner spiritual sphere of the home'. (ibid) The idealized image of Mother India is a classic trope that celebrated the traditional Indian womanhood in sustaining the home fires while simultaneously delineating Indian character. Though women were viewed as the representatives of the 'Indian character', the position of men towards women was rather ambivalent with the question of women's rights getting sucked into the vortex of the

nationalist struggle which was largely elitist, masculine and patriarchal in character. The future of women in the soon to be independent countries is uncertain with a greater emphasis on what women can contribute for the country rather than the political and social empowerment that the country can offer to its women citizens. The citizenship automatically conferred on women does not presuppose a legal standing with freedom to exercise her rights through self-regulated agency.

Women were seen as the agents of building peace between the warring communities which is highly ironic in view of her brutal experiences during Partition. It is this cultural trope of putting women on a pedestal as the idealized image of mother, as the representative of honour for the various communities and religion that allowed for her sexual victimization during the Partition. There is an innate reverence visible in this idealization, but it did not stand the test of time. There is a latent prediction of the high esteem with which women are revered and the profanity with which she is torn asunder in the attempt to settle scores. The elevated status apparent in her deification belies the battleground that her body becomes in the religious fratricide that Partition degenerates into. Independence did not usher in the emancipation of women; rather it only served to reinforce patriarchal norms. This assisted in the dehumanizing of women, raising the opportunity to wring an all out wrecking of the physical, emotional and mental well being of women. Far from being free, women's ability to conform was idealized and her capacity to direct destiny was ordered for her. The hopes that independence and freedom would alter her life positively betrayed in the deep silence that shrouded her greatest victimization.

This leads to the posing of essential questions: Does their representation in literature add to the notion of repression? Do popular literary representations re-write history? Is there subversion/inversion in such narratives as strategies? This then further pushes the reading of texts to rethink the nature of memorializing and forgetting partition. The narratives often give voice and agency from a decentered position to the permeability of the notions of nation, history and identity. To study the hegemony of history from above obliterating the emotional impact of Partition, scholars turned to literature as a site for the memorialization of the trauma. From the objective analysis of facts, scholarship in this area centered on the collateral damage inflicted upon the citizens. This objectivist tendency that presented a chest thumping version of nationalist narrative was countered by the subjectivity of literary representations that archived the human cost of partition. The medical terminology and its psychological dimensions of trauma are deployed in full measure by scholars to explore and explicate the

materiality as also the psychic nature of the violation. In doing so, these results can then be tied to the existing power structures to understand the overwhelming shock that it belies comprehension. Repression, once viewed as an unconscious attempt to forget, is today re-viewed as an active act of forgetting. Repression does not make the trauma go away but it keeps rupturing the apparent normalcy to haunt the victim. This denies the victims a genuine site for mourning, denies them the power of healing and buries it under the weight of collective forgetting. The enforced silence is a burden that continues to paint grief and trauma as the illegitimate off springs of Partition.

As Richard Lee in his article “For What is Identity Without a Stake in One’s Country?” opines: “Women were arguably the worst victims of Partition having to endure not only the destruction of their homes, displacement and violence, but also abduction, prostitution, mutilation and rape as they became “a sign through which men communicated with each other” [...]. Atrocities were enacted upon the bodies of women as men of one religious group sought to dishonour the men of another faith by proving them impotent in their ability to ‘protect’ their women” (74). The state’s intervention in ‘recovering’ abducted women was a two-pronged misery-in the sense that the abducted women themselves had no say in the matter and those who were brought back had to face the humiliation of rejection by the family and community thereby rendering reintegration painful and futile. The entire process was to re-cover the ignominy of patriarchal values and a salve to wounded egos than a measure of reparation and creating a space for the assimilation of the feminine. Through this process of recovery, the veil of shame could now be buried behind the brick wall of convenient amnesia. The erasure of spaces for the feminine experience to be was expedited by the official connivance of the state.

The state narrative of the becoming of nations is a neat and ordered progression with no scope for the representation of the *aberration* that the violence of Partition was to official accounts. The celebration of independence and the valorization of its leaders were emphatically extolled in the anniversary special celebrations and the discourses on nation and nationality; while consigning the memory of partition to the periphery of individual remembrances. Communal disruptions that broke out would violently remind all about the trauma of Partition, only to have the inconvenient wrinkle of such a reminder smoothed away. The state invested in actively pursuing the agenda of ‘collective amnesia’ in public remembering and memorializing of Partition trauma. No attempt was made to recover the traumatic memories, to remember the violence, to provide for space to mourn the loss, to

create a repository of the stories, to bring the perpetrators of this ill-advised project to book, and thus, to arrive at re-integration through a public grieving of the betrayal of all social and human mores of decency and morals. It is the literary representations that narrate the trauma and tragedy of Partition; thereby disrupting the linear trajectory of state narratives and carving a space for the experience of violence during Partition. Herein lies a treasure trove of stories, that reenact the untold trauma undergone. This mine of stories supplements the state ideation by creating alternative representations that deny the willful forgetting of the traumatic experiences that deny closure to the victims.

Though nationalistic narratives continue to be written and examined, the place to site Partition seems to continually elude historians. The very existence of the two nations was concomitant upon the Partition of the subcontinent, yet there hangs an indisputable uncertainty, even illegitimacy that hovers around the place to be accorded to Partition within the larger body of the historical narrative of the freedom struggle and consequent independence. While history from above posits itself at an exalted pedestal far removed from the politics from below, literature opens the magic casements to allow for an intense scrutiny of highly brutal personal histories. The anxiety of witnessing is perhaps reduced in the relationship shared by the author and reader via a work of fiction. Collective amnesia ensures an erasure of collective trauma by abdication of collective responsibility and enforces a collective recall that is linear and ordered. It is literary representations that serve to explore the impact of Partition on the lives of the common folks and not vice versa-i.e. the role of the masses in the Partition of the sub continent.

In the take home factor from literature to history is, in the words of David Gilmartin in “Partition, Pakistan, and South Asian History: In Search of a Narrative”, “[I]ndeed, the disconnection between the rarefied decisions leading to partition, and the searing consequences on individual lives, remains one of the most powerful tropes that has been carried from partition fiction into the work of historians” (1069). More recent researches into partition history offers a nuanced reading on the impact that partition had on different groups, even gendered readings that seek to grapple with its violence and in the upsurge of tools of coping with the aftermath. Yet historians struggle on the horns of the dilemma of narrating partition within the larger historical narrative. In Gilmartin’s view, “[T]he disjunction between the narrative of high politics and the personal experience of violence is here raised to a principle—suggesting, by implication, the impossibility of creating a meaningful narrative of the partition story” (1070). This is at the very heart of the objectivist State narrative versus

the subjective experiences of the people on the street that that lends to munificent interpretations when viewed from below.

The reinterpretation, assimilation and integration of partition within the larger narrative of history is what separates the historical representation from its literary counterpart. Can the two intersect and intercede to create a new narrative that incorporates the multiplicity of platforms? Gilmartin appears to have an answer, albeit with a caveat:

But the very problems in making narrative sense of 1947 should perhaps push historians toward rethinking some of the key concepts that have defined the story. Its very intractability should perhaps lead us to new questions about the relationship between high politics and popular violence, between state authority and moral community, and about the relationship of these oppositions to the meaning of nation. Most important, these problems should push us towards a narrative that places the tension between multiple realities and the production of shared moral meaning at the very heart of the partition story. Rather than aim for a “master narrative” of partition whose moral meaning will transcend the multiple and sometimes inchoate stories produced by the violence of partition, we need to understand the ways that the tension between multiple constructions of identity and the search for moral community *itself* defined the partition event. Indeed, it is only by putting this tension at the centre of the story that we can begin to define a narrative line that will encompass the divide of 1947—a narrative that will link the causes of partition to its results, and at the same time incorporate, while not being subsumed by, the story of the nation. (ibid)

In this exploration, what is often overlooked is the sense of urgency that pervades the investigation and recording of personal stories as the victims of partition are reaching the end of their life span. Midnight’s children have lived with the memories of their parents and grandparents. Lived story as against a second hand retelling makes for alternates ways of experiencing trauma. The question that then arises to the fore is that whether there is a generational gap in which the memory is lived with? What are the ways in which the memory remembers? Does it vacillate between the good old days to the horrific bloodbath of partition? Can the genuine angst and trieste of partition be represented by the different generations? Lived reality versus recollected memory within the individual and across the generations: is there a larger question of the truth of representation?

The nation is not a top down communiqué but the lived experience of its citizens. The early narrators of partition stories represented the unrepresented: viz. partition violence. This done, the next installment made space for coping with the loss. The current sequence of writing

partition narratives centers on the diaspora and further problematises the notion of nation and nationality within the new dimension of transnationalism that blurs boundaries. Can the supra national build bridges between the islands of nationalism, cultural and religious differences? Though the modalities of the application of trauma theory is under fire from its latent negative connotations, the main bone of contention is its “[...] blind spot to politics” (251) that fails to directly address the issue of the violent atrocities of conflict. In focusing attention entirely on the impact-i.e. the trauma experienced-modern trauma theory overlooked the political aspect and even rendered the subject dehumanized. When the question is about the exploration of the inherited legacies of violence, trauma theory needs to be recalibrated to include a political and ethical framework in studying the postcolonial violence. Trauma theory is jettisoned for its overt euro centrism and a review provides us with its event centered approach is out of sync with collective events of violence. This is best illustrated in Holocaust trauma studies that show clear demarcations of historical temporality, perpetrators, victims and responsibility. Trauma in post colonial societies is a long process with no clear assessment of affixing clear limits of temporality, the nature of victimization and responsibility.

#### **3.4.4 Nation and Exile**

Many of the authors selected have directly experienced Partition, have borne witness to the violent outrage and have crossed the border before explaining in narrative the rupture of the space-time equilibrium and the schizophrenia of being there and here in both space and time. The nation fills the void left in the uprooting of communities and kin, and turns that loss into the language of metaphor. “Metaphor, as the etymology of the word suggests, transfers the meaning of home and belonging, across the ‘middle passage’, [...], across the distances, and cultural differences, that span the imagined community of the nation-people.” (291) Bhabha splits the word—*dissemi-nation*—to critique the nation state in its Janus-faced double living entity that seamlessly coalesces and differentiates, that poses the vulnerability of describing the exo- and endo- scape of place and identity, that turns on several planes of temporality, that problematises the ‘obligation to forget or forgetting to remember’, that cultural difference is the juxtaposition of the current specificity with the diversity of the cultural context. The nation reaches the experiential place in exile; for it is in the separation of people from place, the division of identity from place to nation and therein vertigo induced of living in between. It is the interrogation of the ability and/or capacity to disseminate the other versions of historical record than the historiography of the event per se.

### 3.5 Conclusion

The past is real, not merely a temporal space but a memorial space of belonging to a physical space and a socio-economic space. The politics of forging new identities in newly independent nations often works on the premise of the ability of large scale self-imposed and/or collectively imposed amnesia. Yet, the politics of forgetting is to be questioned as the privileging of hierarchy takes place in the case of this endeavour or its implementation. The intense process of generating an antagonistic other, the vituperative prejudice against this monster, the violent conflict that sees itself represented in the segregation of population assigning majority and minority status, engendering fear, re-mapping territory and its bifurcation as the only solution for b/ordering to settle permanently an apparently every day, escalating and irreconcilable conflict: are the modes deployed to create the politics of Partition. The past continues to be current in the present for it has neither been reconciled nor resolved for it to be conveniently entombed in the silo of forgotten events of history or memory. History meets people in the way they remember the past and the modes they use to commemorate that past. This concern with the past is neither self-immersion nor self-indulgence; but is an attempt to assess, adjust, settle and/or offset the mainstream and peripheral versions of historical remembrance.

History, as the repository of the fluid past, is often viewed from the watershed of several cataclysmic events. The creation of a standard official version and the cultural remembering of the same events run parallel to each other. Hence, the received notion of Partition is embedded within the larger conscious memory of the nation: whereas, the actual remembered stories are deeply personal and are rendered in consequentialist terms. Manto's "Khol Do" is an apt illustration where the daughter is found by the father in a comatose condition and brought to a doctor's clinic. To escape the stifling heat, the doctor gestures the orderly to open the window, 'khol do' (open no?). In heart rending irony, instead the semi-conscious girl spreads open her leg and undoes her pyjamas. This scene brutally depicts Sakina as the victim of mass/gang rape. The commonplace phrase 'khol do', which means 'do open' and refers to every day innocuous acts takes a sudden turn and becomes sinister in the context of traumatic individual experiences on the sidelines of Partition.

The marriage of Poro to Rashida was shorn off of its ritual pomp and social ceremony associated with it across communities. This was essential to settle old scores in the phase of existing hostilities that pre-empted a 'normal' negotiation and instead was a retributive

judgement enacted by Rashida amidst political turmoil. But it is the tattooing of her new identity on her forearm that splits forever her identity between Hindu Pooro and Muslim Hamida.

From that day “Hamida” was not only inscribed on her skin in dark green letters but everyone began to call her by that name.

In her dreams, when she met her old friends and played in her parents’ home, everyone still called her Pooro. At other times she was Hamida. It was a double life: Hamida by day, Pooro by night. In reality, she was neither one nor the other; she was just a skeleton, without a shape or a name. (20)

The sense of the past as is apprehended from the state’s compact narrative is one of a distant past, an object of scrutiny for an intellectual inquiry. The social memory that forms a parallel continuum in contrast to this depersonalized ‘what had happened’ offers a generational layering; and depending on that generational segment, were either victims/survivors or were heirs to this memory. The past is current in the present in such a telling of the story of Partition. Partition narratives look at inheritance and legacy of the past through the memorialization of the event. The state views this even at the level of an intellectual discussion where both inheritance and legacy are objectified. The social memory encompassed in literary narratives challenge the objectification of partition legacy by raising questions of the moral and ethical nature of not only recognition but also responsibility. The writers probed the causality of the violent retribution that ensued while simultaneously describing the strategies employed in the personal reconciliation of the past. This event defied the casting of identity by an avowal of public oblivion.

It is imperative to understand, in the words of Harald Wydra, ‘Political memory is usually constructed by elites, to convey minimum content and symbolic reductionism. Organized remembering and forgetting are tools for shaping a resemblance of citizens in order to make individuals feel attached to the collective frame of the nation.’ (3) History often embodies a silo effect in that it is a repository of the knowledge of the past. The physical repository of such knowledge lies in the library, archive and museum. Thus, the objects representing history neither form part of active memory nor do they gather dust to lie forever forgotten; but hold out the promise of being there for the future generations interested in its contents. Memory, on the other hand, is a cultural construct that lies just below in the social plane, where individuals grapple with the changed notions of space and time. There is also the very subjective aspect of remembering, burying, selecting, recounting and the forgetting of such

memories. The cultural artefacts of such memorialization are ever present in literary texts, painting sculpture, monuments and memorabilia. The serialization of memory is comprehended as a legitimate ritual cleansing necessary to purge the violence of the past to move towards reconciliation and closure. Essentially, it is the fear of erasure that prompts the instinct to recover what lies deeply buried in memory.

The immediate aftermath shows the shock and disbelief that attends such horrific violence. The politics of experiencing and witnessing often overlap. The social norms of accepted behaviour and acts associated with shame come into play. The perpetrators want to forget that they were either active or passive actors in this mayhem. The victims want to bury their experiences for they associate shame with what happened to them. In these interstices, the state steps in to assuage the memory of violence enacted and experienced, the general narrative dwells on the events impervious to individual pain and suffering. Cultural memory reposed in its artefacts recoup this loss by rendering the invisible porous. When the state's narration follows a linear time span, cultural memory is diachronic—wading between the past and the present—in fluid continuation, recollection is triggered, filtered, remembered or forgotten.

The 'biological finitude of individual lives circumcises the role of individual memory. The historical continuity defies the death of individual memory in favor of the collective memory as social framework underpins a collective consciousness. Wydra Harald hypothesizes that there exist "[...] four dimensions through which generational conflict underpins the politics of meaning formation in a culturally coherent setting. This background is the context in which memory appears as carriers of meaning, as they structure perceptions of time, link individual consciousness to the collective group experiences in an inter-generational fabric of memory, and create symbolic universes" (1). The linear nationality of history makes for an objectified and verifiable meaning. The cultural meaning is subjective and subversive in its diachronic transition to before partition and after partition that seamlessly traverses the terrains of nostalgia, dismay, regret, pain, displacement, loss, violence, reconciliation, rupture along political, social, historical, religious, spatial and temporal frames.

Edward Said in *Culture and Imperialism* ventures,

[I]t is one of the unhappiest characteristics of the age to have produced more refugees, migrants, displaced persons, and exiles than ever before in history, most of them as an accompaniment to and, ironically enough, as after-thoughts of great post-colonial and imperial conflicts. As the struggle for independence produced new states

and new boundaries, it also produced homeless wanderers, nomads, vagrants, unassimilated to the emerging structures of institutional power, rejected by the established order...And in so far as these people exist between the old and the new, between the old empire and the new state, their condition articulates the tensions, irresolutions, and contradictions in the overlapping territories shown on the cultural map of imperialism. (402-403)

Said explores the population question and the changes effected by policies of colonialism. That is not to say that migration didn't occur in earlier periods of history. Hyder present a glimpse of and reasons for migration in *River of Fire*, which underscores that migration has occurred in history previously; what Said seeks to emphasize, however, is that it didn't involve pigeonholing the population in cultural, religious, racial, ethnic and political categories. That it eased bureaucratic administration of the vast empire and its diverse people sounds like a lame excuse and more a decisive strategy to separate and contain the colonized people.

Bhabha in "DissemiNation: Time, Narrative, and the Margins of the Modern Nation", argues the preeminence of narration in the process of constructing the nation in the west. The opposition is structured between those who are desirous of coherence in this narrative process and those who seek its very disruption. This tension is further hinged on the difference between the performative aspect i.e. people who live the nation, and the pedagogic aspect, i.e. involving those who write the nation. The nation lies emergent between those who schematize its nature and those who perform its social community. Onto this notion is rendered the criticism: first of Gyanendra Pandey who decries the fact that the history of partition does not envelop the lived experiences of the people ("Prose of Otherness", 194); secondly, Suvir Kaul who claims that the political and social nature of partition has been better researched than the human dimension. Ritu Menon and Kamala Bhasin in *Border & Boundaries: Women in India's Partition*, bemoan:

The abundance of political histories on Partition is almost equaled by the paucity of social histories of it. This is a somewhat curious and inexplicable circumstance: how is it that an event of such tremendous social impact and importance has been passed over virtually in silence by the other social sciences? Why has there been such an absence of enquiry into its cultural, psychological and social ramifications? There can be no one answer to this question, but what seems to have stepped in, at least partly, to record the full horror of Partition is literature, the greater part of which was written in the period immediately following the division of the country. In one sense, it so approximates reality...but because it is the only significant non-official *contemporary* record we have of the time, apart from reportage. (6-7)

Theorization enables one to ransack history to arrive at a *mélange* of the truth. In the current norm of transnationalism propelled again by trade and commerce and, significantly, communication and media, the question of nationality gains new import. General thought in this regard point to a weakening of borders and loyalty; far from it, it actually propagates a nationalist ideology that is self-perpetuating in its espousal of

the traditional culture and othering of minorities. This calls for a trans-territorialization involving the consolidation of a mythic national identity as against the alien other and transcribing this identity on their diaspora to produce a material medium for loyalty to translate into remittance. The loyalty of the diaspora to the land of the origin is cemented through the socio-economic, political and cultural practices that bolster national identity and allegiance in the host state. They revisit and revise national history and challenge its understanding and narration. This thread is inserted here to underline the fate of refugees who owe allegiance to the Indian State but the emotional umbilical cord ties their loyalty to the place of their birth, the *vatan*, which is today perhaps ‘imagined’ in the reality of the lived nation. This homeland is not merely one’s birthplace, but also the place where the performance of community first appeared. Can this stage be wiped out by drawing the curtains of an artificial boundary closed?

### END NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Mishirul Hasan makes reference to this in two instances: 1. in his Introduction to an anthology on Partition Writings curated by him titled ‘India Partitioned- The Other Face of Freedom’ (1)

<sup>2</sup> In the Introduction to ‘India’s Partition-Process, Strategy, Mobilization’ edited by him (6-7).

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **VIOLENCE AND TRAUMA:**

#### **REVISITING EXPERIENCES TO TRANSCEND MEMORY**

##### **4.1 Introduction:**

As the title suggests, the present Chapter focuses attention on the enervating violence of Partition shrouded in silence. The silence put an effective lid over the public display of attendant trauma and the resultant grief was relegated to the private space of family lore. The memory of the horrific experience finds echoes in the manner in which memory oscillates between before and after Partition: thus Partition effectively becomes a marker by which memory is recorded. The theoretical interpretations of violence are examined and the texts are analyzed to eviscerate the evidence of the various ways in which the violence is depicted to have unfolded. From patriarchy and its social structures to the more recent notion of nation and the role of government, every constituent player is set forth with corroborating evidence. The trauma of the time is explored with suitable insights from Trauma Theory. The Chapter concludes with the findings of this examination.

##### **4.2 Violence in Partition Literature:**

Seventy years since the Partition, Partition literature has altered the narration of the Event with time and space. Yet, the first and immediate literary response to Partition was the blunt depiction of the mindless horror of violence, the harrowing trauma that people experienced; the disruption and dislocation of their lives. This was followed by literary experimentation with narrative styles which involved intense political engagement of the authors—with Salman Rushdie as the iconoclastic torch-bearer. The current literary exploration of Partition themes is the voice of the cosmopolitan diaspora as reflected in the writings of Amitav Ghosh.

This thesis, however, concerns itself with the writers of the first phase, many of whose works came to light only after their English translations became available. This immediate literary response was twofold—some of the writers recorded the political spectacle that engendered the violence, while others restricted themselves to the personal narrative of violence. Although both sets of writers' present history-while the

former serves political history, the latter delivers social history. There is no denying that both these histories provide an affective and potent re-creation of the violence of Partition. The Partition is an episode of large scale violence that reached a crescendo in its immediate aftermath owing to the complicity of patriarchy. While at first a stony impenetrable silence greeted this fury; the literary representations of Partition echoed and recorded the vindictive vendetta and humiliating defilement that resisted the new social and political reconfigurations.

#### **4.2.1 Violence Classified: as portrayed in select texts**

Partition literature categorizes violence under several subdivisions. From the individual to the familial, from random acts to mass destruction, from acts of honour to acts of shaming, from the incidental to the vengeful—violence took many shapes and donned many forms. The whole of the violence was in consonance with the norms of patriarchy which Simone de Beauvoir (1997) associates with the advent of private ownership of property and patrimony. Patrimony became an exclusive ‘male only’ club as it was believed that if women had equal access to the father’s property, then an unusually large part of it would simply get attached to that of her husband thereby impoverishing her maiden family. By divesting women of access to inheritance, women’s status is diminished and, in the words of de Beauvoir, ‘[...], because she owns nothing, woman does not enjoy the dignity of being a person; she herself forms a part of the patrimony of man: first of her father, then of her husband’ (114). This dependency is not symbiotic but parasitic: women are subject to pernicious social norms that further render her helpless. The deep-rooted cultural norms of ‘honour’ and ‘shame’ are invested in the ‘chastity’ and ‘easy virtue’ of women. The women were the vesicles of cultural transmission and their chastity was equated to the honour of first the community followed by the religion. Thus, violence had the male aggressor and the female victim; and, for each community, the women became the demonic ‘other’ who was reviled and feared in equal measure.

#### **4.2.2 Self-Inflicted Violence:**

The acquiescence to the two nation theory opened the flood gates of fear and fury. Metaphorically put, in this regard, the land became the arena, the men the gladiators and the women the prize. As it is, the notions of ‘honour’ and ‘shame’ are so deeply entrenched in the social psyche that women tend to internalize these social rectitudes.

As such, during Partition, when they were the victims of abduction and rape, or even at the threat of it, they much preferred death to defilement—of the body, the family, the community and the religion to which they were born. In *Pinjar*, Pooro is abducted by Rashida and when he communicates to her about the arrangements for their marriage, she is spurred to break free from a fortnight of forced captivity and runs towards her village and home. The gamut of Pooro's sudden experience—from her parents' grief, their tragic refusal to shelter her on the grounds of the certain vindictive revenge that would follow—accentuate the tenuous position of women.

Pooro remembered Rashida's words: "You have no place in that home now." But what about her fiancé, Ram Chand? What was the difference between being engaged and being married? Why had he not bothered to come to her help? There was one hope for her: escape in death.

Pooro got up and went out of the door. Neither her mother nor her father tried to stop her. When she had come this way earlier, she had believed she was returning to life; she had wanted to live again, to be with her mother and father. She had come full of hope. Now she had no hope, nor any fear. What more could anyone take from her than life? The thought dried up all her tears.

Rashida came running breathlessly towards her. Pooro stopped in her footsteps. Even death had slammed the door in her face.' (18-19)

This passage clearly indicates the lack of agency that plagues woman and her status as a 'pawn' to settle scores of an old family feud is latent in the cultural norms imbued in the social mores of the times. A woman being equated to 'paraya dhan' (other's wealth) is a cultural edict that holds a grip on the traditional patriarchal society. That daughters are temporary guests to be finally and permanently transferred to her husband's home underlies the presumption of their inherent transience and transferability. There is yet another incident that illustrates this idea in Yashpal's *Jhootha Sach*. When Tara's marriage is arranged and the groom to be is rusticated from college for examination malpractice and assaulting the invigilator, social backlash grows against Tara for expressing her displeasure against this alliance. Tara's uncle comes bearing news from her fiancé about the need to fix the date of marriage. Tara's refusal is dismissed and she is distraught enough to think, 'Maybe I should hang myself with my dupatta to fulfill God's will [...]' (140).

Women's lack of agency is most acutely felt whilst choosing a suitable husband and then marriage. Fate is a convenient label to encompass her luck/happiness/ well-being and its inverse too. Tara's education has inculcated in her an independence of thought;

hence, she resists a marriage of convenience; instead, she is inclined towards a marriage of equal minds. Further ahead, Jaidev Puri wants to know what Tara could confide in Asad that she found so difficult to communicate to her own family. Tara is nettled by Puri's double faced reaction and contends that he initially supported her against Somraj but was now facilitating this very marriage. Inherent in this illustration is the contrasting attitudes of men and women to education: while men view education as a means to an end i.e. employability; women are desirous of change that will empower them and transform their lives. Tara keenly feels the injustice of her situation and her brother's betrayal. Puri's sense of injustice is provoked too as she prefers to confide in Asad unmindful of the family's honour. Her brother's harangue is thus met, 'In self-defence, Tara hid behind a wall of silence.' (218)

Puri knowing he had her back to the wall, wanted to draw blood and, like a hunter he springs for the kill, accusing her of an attempt to elope with Asad. At this, Tara bangs her head on the corner post of the string bed and repeats the action. Puri pulls her away and puts her on the bed. Tara is unconscious, her mother comes in and wails at the sight of the blood oozing. She believes Puri's lies that Tara had fainted and admonishes Puri for not grabbing her before she fell and reveals that Tara had not eaten anything and was feverish too. Once she realizes that the wound is not too deep, she hopes that the gash does not leave a scar. When Tara regains consciousness, she accepts Puri's proffered explanation as true; for,

What could she say? She was not worried about a scar on her forehead, but the thought of why she had to cut open her forehead sickened her. What else could she have done to silence her brother as he leveled those accusations? Even if his accusations were true, what could she, a woman, do to save face? He, of course, wasn't concerned with losing face when he sent a message through her to another woman, Kanak, under the pretense of a casual visit. 'His, and the family's honour, would continue to hang in the balance unless I was sacrificed to save it. That's what he meant by his big talk of fighting for truth, justice and his country, and for the sake of Hindu-Muslim unity! But who cares what I feel or what I want? And if I do say what I want, where could I go? Men can spend the night roaming the streets, or on a bench in a park...And how would I face anyone with this telltale scar on my face showing that I was trying to escape an injustice? (219-220)

Puri is struck with remorse and scared by Tara's gash. Yet he cannot forgive Tara for her apparent perfidy and contemplates, 'Such hypocrisy! To disarm and put down others with the threat of harming oneself! What a weird, conceited way of arguing! Doesn't it amount to suppressing truth and justice by accusing others of violence? ... What a cunning use of satyagraha!' (220) Tara is depressed. She uses the opportunity of her family's absence, when they go over to a neighbour's house to attend pre-wedding festivities to call out to a neighbour who had not gone to attend the festivities. Tara pretends to want to borrow some kerosene; the neighbour, Pushpa, is alerted by Tara's low cast eyes that something is amiss. She hits on the truth when she sees that the bottle is full and guesses what's on Tara's mind. She bursts into tears and hugs Tara and Tara too is drawn into the embrace and allows for the cleansing release of tears.

When Sheelo turns up the next evening to participate in the festivities, Pushpa confides of Tara's misery about her impending marriage to Somraj and how she had averted a tragedy in the nick of time. Sheelo is saddened and aghast by turn. She chastises Tara and is prepared to do anything for her after she listens to Tara's story. '[...] But I'll do anything to help you. Love is no sin. When Lord Krishna saw his sister Subhadra was in love with Arjun, didn't he himself tell her to elope with her love?' That's the tale in the Mahabharata; we all know that [...]' (230). Sheelo recounts Somraj's threats to assault Tara in the marketplace as the news of her refusal had reached his ears and he was both insulted and hurt in his pride. What Sheelo references is an anecdote that is hoary and rightfully representative of the rich tradition of the land and not the 'chattel' annexation of women. Here, the dilemma is clearly stated in terms of stultifying tradition and liberating modernism.

The two accounts are shocking in their description of the status of women. The idea of women as property is clearly delineated. Also the need to settle her in matrimony is evident in both: in Pooro's case, although she was engaged, she was abducted and married by her kidnapper; whereas, Tara was engaged, she was unhappy with the choice of groom who was more a thug than a prospective husband. In Pooro's instance, Rashida's tag of abductor is slowly erased with his every action beginning and ending in Pooro's welfare and happiness; but, although Tara's marriage is with her family's consent, yet she is roughened up on her wedding night forcing her to escape when her marital home is attacked.

It is obvious that women didn't have much say in their future and this lack of agency is the fate that keeps usurping their will. Fate, combined with the culture of 'honour' and 'shame', keep women bound within the circumscribed space that men permit them to occupy. Though women are brought up tenderly and protectively, the very same protection turns to vigilance and surveillance when they become of marriageable age till their marriage. Even marriage means further subservience to the husband and his family. Though Tara is educated, her will does not extend to exercising freedom of choice in the selection of her life partner. Religion in the circumstances becomes a double whammy for as it is in the scenario of Hindu-Muslim riots, there would have been neither empathy nor support for an inter-religious marriage; and particularly, it would be perceived as nothing short of sabotage, blasphemy and treason by turn.

The reactions of both Pooro and Tara to the family's lack of acceptance are the same: both are afflicted with a keen sense of betrayal and seek to inflict grievous self-harm to their bodies, to the extent of attempting suicide. The idea of suicide may find neither religious favour nor sanction; but within the patriarchal scheme of social propriety, women who commit suicide are revered as goddesses for preventing the defilement of the family, community and religion by choosing death over the defilement of their bodies. Sita's kidnapping by Ravana and her rescue by her husband, Ram, forms the central trope of the Ramayana. Ram accepts Sita and when the people clamour for her chastity to be affirmed, he accedes to their demand. Sita proves her 'chastity': once through 'agnipariksha' (an ordeal by fire); but on the second occasion, instead of kow-towing to the people, she prefers to return to the bosom of mother earth than go back to her husband.

The religious myths also accord secondary status on women and make it glaringly obvious that women were property to be kidnapped to satiate a whim; the marital status of the woman in question being no issue. Whether it is Sita or Pooro—both are victims of kidnapping; so even if one is a divinity or a mere mortal, one's gender renders one helpless and dependent. The victims' fate is decried and both are villainised for their helpless surrender. Sheelo narrates the story of Subhadra and Krishna's role in aiding and abetting her, it is more the exception than the rule. When Tara expresses her wish to remain unmarried, she is scorned at and it becomes evident that without the benefit of marriage, women have neither any identity nor sanctity.

Unattached women are not only suspect, but also perceived as game for all kinds of salacious activities. Beauvoir's stance of the womb being the downfall of women everywhere thus finds echoes in Partition narratives.

The impulse to self-inflicted violence is again present in two traditions: that of Sati and Johar. Sati is the practice of the self-immolation of the wife on her husband's funeral pyre; Johar was committed when the news of the defeat of Rajput rulers along with the news of the advancing, marauding Muslim army reached the palace and the women would commit mass Sati. Both practices were imposed to protect the inheritance of private property and to stave off the attachment of women as property to undesirable elements who could possibly disinherit the rightful heirs. The vice-like hold of such practices is evident in the instances quoted above. If women were to escape violence from the enemy or family/community, suicide was her only escape clause. *River of Fire* narrates an incident where the father of a forced victim-to-be of Sati rushes to beg assistance and Cyril Ashley rushes to the rescue in time to prevent the gruesome incident. Sujata Debi's beauty perforce makes her a victim of Cyril's sexual appetite and she concedes to become his mistress. Her rescue from a gory fate to her subordination as Cyril's mistress is a tale of women being revered for her nubile sexuality than as a person. The women in all these accounts are denied identity and agency of their own as individuals in their own right; instead, their identity and agency are attendant to their appendage as wife/mistress i.e. with reference to the male's prerogative over their status and destiny.

In *Tamas*, as the violence reaches a crescendo, the Sikh families gather in the gurudwara. Neither was there any abating of the violence nor were the peace negotiations bearing fruit. In this scenario, the women and children gathered around the figure of Jasbir Kaur, the daughter of Harnam Singh. A devout Sikh, she was given to intense elation during the religious services. As the parleys between the two communities continued and panic mounted with news of the attacking Turks, the women chanted with greater frenzy. As the battle neared the gurudwara, the men rushed out to meet the Turks head on. What unfolds at this moment is best apprehended from the text:

Just at that time a group of women, emerged in a row from the gurudwara. At their head was Jasbir Kaur, her eyes half open, her face flushed. Almost all the women had taken their dupattas off their heads and tied them round their waists. They were bare-

footed, their faces too were flushed. As though under a spell, they came out of the gurudwara. 'The Turks are here! The Turks have come!' Some of the women shouted, while some others chanted the verses of the Gurbani and still others, shouted in frenzied voices: 'I too shall go where my lion-brother has gone!'

'Some of them had their children with them. Two or three women had little babies in their arms, while some, holding their children by their hands, were pulling them along.

[...] The throng of women headed towards the well located at the foot of the slope. This was the well to which the women used to come every day to bathe, to wash their clothes, to gossip. They were now running fast towards it, as though under a spell. None knew why and wherefore they were heading towards it. Under the translucent light of the moon it appeared as though fairies were flying down to the well.

'Jasbir Kaur was the first one to jump into the well. She raised no slogan, nor did she call anyone's name, she only uttered Wahe Guru and took the jump. After her, one by one, many women climbed up to the low wall of the well. Hari Singh's wife climbed up stood there for a moment, then pulled up her four-year-old son on to the wall and holding him by the hand, jumped too. Deva Singh's wife held the breast-fed child in her arms when she took the plunge. Prem Singh's wife jumped, down, but her son was left standing on the wall. The child was pushed into the well by Gyan Singh's wife, and thus sent back into the arms of the mother. Within a matter of minutes tens of women had gone into their watery grave, some of them along with their children.'

(292-293)

Menon and Bhasin in *Borders and Boundaries* report, 'Very large numbers of women were forced into death to avoid sexual violence against them, to preserve chastity and to protect individual and community "honour". The means used to accomplish this end varied; when women themselves took their lives, they would either jump into the nearest well or set themselves ablaze, singly or in groups that could be made up either of all the women in the family; the younger women; or women and children' (42). The notions of 'honour' and 'shame' are too deeply ingrained in the cultural nurture of children within each community not to be imbibed in toto. The field studies in social histories of Partition like '*Borders and Boundaries*' testify to the coercion of the male family members as also the elderly women members goading the younger women to have the courage to commit 'suicide' than submit to the marauding 'other'. Worse is the way in which these suicides are viewed as willing sacrifice in the name of family, community and religious 'honour'. The male narration of the very same suicides is equated to martyrdom for the cause of the family, community and religious 'honour'.

What is often lost in this emphasis of women's victimhood is the self-infliction of harm by the men too: among some men, it is brought on by the thought of being

sundered from their home and homeland that becomes the impulse to do themselves grievous injury; among others, it is the guilty afterthought of their own frenzied attack on some helpless female as part of a mob. To illustrate the former, *Toba Tek Singh's* Bishen Singh is distraught by the very notion of the impending exchange of the asylum inmates to match the newly cast territorial reorganization and its geopolitics. On the day of the exchange at the Wagha checkpoint, Bishen tries to run when he learns that his beloved hamlet, Toba Tek Singh now lies in Pakistan. No amount of explanations or cajoling had any impact on him as he broke free and,

‘There he stood in no-man’s-land on his swollen legs like a colossus....

‘Just before sunrise, Bishen Singh, the man who had stood on his legs for fifteen years, screamed and as 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.’ (78-79)

If Bishen Singh died in no-man’s-land of his own accord to protest his forceful eviction from his homeland, then in Manto’s *Thanda Ghosht*, Ishwar Singh is emasculated when he joins a gang and kills six male members with his kirpan and carries away the beautiful girl; whom he cannot wait to sexually exploit. When he does so, he realizes that he has been doing it to a corpse and the shock renders his erection dysfunctional; so much so that he cannot make love to his own wife, the burden of guilt is so great that he becomes impotent.

#### **4.3.3 Violence within the Secure Realm of the Family**

The family is, no doubt, the smallest unit of society and, in the patriarchal system of social organization, the joint family system prevailed. The largely agrarian society demanded large labour force and this system allowed for a distribution of labour to meet the needs of the family. The family is also perceived as the most sacred of units, where both social and religious duties are ordained and abided. The family is both a place for the nurture and sustenance of all the members; a place of safety and succor. When this circle of trust is trespassed, then the family itself loses its sacral position; this owes itself to the deeply held belief in women’s purity and its representation as the strength of the community and its religion. The stranglehold of this deep-seated creed is what causes the first ruptures to happen within the embracing fold of the family. In *Tamas*, when Harnam and Banto are about to knock on a door in search of

shelter, Harnam cautions Banto in the following words, ‘Banto, if we find them hostile, then I shall first finish you off with my gun and then kill myself. I won’t let you fall in their hands so long as I am living’ (227). The same sentiment is reiterated when they take shelter in the loft of Rajjo’s house, ‘If anything untoward happens, Banto, and our life is in danger, I shall first press the trigger of the gun on you; I would rather kill you with my own hand,’ Harnam Singh said in a hoarse whisper [...]

( ).

Female sexuality is fearsome and to be disciplined. The taboos around it abound and it is strictly regulated. The myth of the feminine mystique is imagined to infiltrate the body proper into submission to the male will. The feminine gender is better suited to role play—that of the mother overrides all other roles. Other safe options are daughter, sister, aunt, grandmother; but that of a young unattached woman is setting up for a fall. In the incidents quoted thus far, it is obvious that an unsullied reputation is of paramount importance to any young woman; her chastity is equated to her pristine reputation. In *Jhootha Sach* for instance, threats of violence, as in Somraj threatening to dishonour Tara publicly, work on the principle of fear; a bad reputation is equivalent to social death for a woman. Not only do her options of a suitable matrimonial alliance dry up; but she is also viewed as a threat to the matrimonial prospects of the other female members of the family. Pooro is sent away after she breaks out from her temporary confinement on the grounds that she has been defiled, she has no prospects, she would mar the chances of her siblings, the family would face social ostracism and the worst scenario of all, is the abductor coming back with his clan and wiping their family out without a trace. The continuity of the family is of prime concern and this falls on the male lineage; women are mere load bearers to assist in this sacred duty.

From a young age, girls are taught the art of house-keeping and relevant skills to take to her matrimonial home. Pooro, though a teenager, is her mother’s right hand—she assists in the kitchen and even looks after her younger siblings. Likewise, again in *Jhootha Sach*, although Tara has the opportunity of higher education, education per se is not viewed as empowerment. Tara is pressurized to abandon her studies because her fiancé isn’t a graduate and it wouldn’t do for Tara to be better educated than her husband. In *Sunlight on a Broken Column*, both Laila and Zahra are educated: Laila is given the opportunity to pursue an English education in keeping with her deceased

parents' wishes; but Zahra has limited access to western education. She is schooled in the traditional way so she can be a source of pride and assistance to her husband and in laws. Aunt Abida ensures that Laila is also taught to keep the customs and traditions of the family. From a young age, they are taught the dictum, 'Never forget the family into which you were born' (38). After Baba Jan's death, Uncle Hamid becomes the head of the family and is deciding the future of each of the children. The ensuing conversation best sums up the notion of wives being in accordance with the notions entertained by eligible young men:

'Uncle Hamid leaned towards me and said, pontifically, "I have always believed in the education of girls; it is the duty of parents and guardians to give them the kind of education that will best fit them for their responsibilities in this changing world." He paused, lit a match and puffed rapidly at his pipe.

'Aunt Saira said, "Young men want their wives to be educated enough to meet their friends and to entertain. Nowadays they lay down all sorts of conditions." (109-110)

Tara and Laila alienate their family through inappropriate choices of love—Tara loves Asad, a Muslim; Laila loves and marries Ameer, a man with neither pedigree nor prospects. Tara is forced to marry Somraj and she uses the attack on her in law's house to escape her dreary fate. Laila and Ameer's marriage is happy, yet the weight of her wealth and privilege added to her family's disapproval and distancing takes a toll.

Every notion of purity is tied to the feminine gender, including the softer, empathic feelings; while the masculine gender represents the physical and mental attributes that are required to move out into and up in the world. This is again associated with the demarcation of space: the home and its safe environs are the domestic space and belong to women and the public space is the man's territory. The man being the master of the house, the women of the family belong to him just as the house belongs to him. Transgression is neither overlooked nor forgiven. In *Ice Candy Man*, Lenny reports to Godmother her conversation with Hamida, the new Ayah, as she wants Godmother to explain to her what is meant by 'fallen woman'. The conversation between the two further illustrates both the notions: 'woman as property' as also 'once abducted forever defiled', while underscoring the pitiable lack of say in matters that affect her.

“‘Hamida was kidnapped by the Sikhs,’ says Godmother seriously. On serious matters I can always trust her to level with me. ‘She was taken away to Amritsar. Once that happens, sometimes, the husband – or his family – won’t take her back.’ ‘Why? It isn’t her fault she was kidnapped!’ ‘Some folk feel that way – they can’t stand their women being touched by other men.’” (215)

The latter is further emphasized in a conversation between Lenny and Hamida. The plight of these ‘fallen women’ is pitiable and unbearable.

‘I wonder about the women’s children. Don’t they miss their mothers? I pray that their husbands and families will take them back. Hamida seldom mentions her children. All I’ve been able to get out of her is that she has two teenage sons and two daughters, one as old as me and one younger.

‘The youngest was just beginning to walk,’ says Hamida one crisp afternoon as we sun ourselves on the roof. Hamida has come to fetch me for lunch, but she is willing to stay for a while.

‘Don’t you miss your children?’ I ask.

‘Of course,’ says Hamida.

‘Then why don’t you go to see them?’

‘Their father won’t like it.’

‘They must miss you. You could see them secretly, couldn’t you?’

‘No,’ says Hamida turning her face away. ‘There are better off as they are. My sister-in-law will look after them. If their father gets to know I’ve met them he will get angry, and the children will suffer.’

‘I don’t like your husband,’ I say.

‘He’s a good man,’ says Hamida, hiding her face bashfully in her *chuddar*. ‘It’s my kismet that’s no good ... we are *khut-putli*, puppets, in the hands of fate.’

‘I don’t believe that,’ I say. ‘Cousin says we can change our kismet if we want to. The lines on our palms can also change!’ (221-222)

While Hamida has accepted her changed circumstances as her lot in life, some women are so traumatized by such incidents that they would rather die than accept this additional cruelty of fate. The story of Banti in *This Is Not That Dawn* is one such story. No sooner did they arrive at the refugee camp than they were greeted by the keening sound of a woman. Kaushalya Devi asks with concern whether Chinti’s family couldn’t be traced. The family was traced but they feel that since they had married her off, she is now her in law’s concern. The truth bears out the ‘defiled’ have no place in society.

Their trepidation increases as their worry of their own reception quickens in anxiety. Banti is assisted by Tara in her search for her family, part of whom they trace to Ambala. When they alight at Ambala railway station, Banti sees her neighbour’s boy selling roasted peanuts and learns that her husband and in laws have moved to Delhi. From Ambala, the two of them proceed to Delhi and arrive at a refugee camp there.

The next day they go explore the lanes and by-lanes in the hope that they will fortuitously meet Banti's family. She is anxious to see and be with her son. She refuses to turn back although night was drawing near but her insistence pays off. A little later she sees her son in the arms of her mother in law. She snatches him, hugs him and begins to cry in relief of being reunited. Her cries bring out the neighbours who begin to ask uncomfortable questions as to her whereabouts this long and what had transpired in the duration of this long absence. Banti's mother in law takes back the child, enters her home and shuts the door. The support of the neighbours annoys Tara enough to rouse her and she retorts, 'Maaji, how is she to blame? She didn't stay behind on her own free will. You were cowards, and left her behind. She came back at once to you, without thinking of anything else. For the past nine days she has been looking for you' (603). The old woman denies Banti entry and does not allow the mother and child to bond either. The scene on her husband's return is steeped in pathos and the realization that women are better dead than alive in such extenuating circumstances is driven home.

Fate is a convenient persona to blame their misdemeanors and whitewash their culpability as when Banti's husband, Mohandas, beseeches the crowd; Tara is quick to retort that it was fate again who was responsible for their predicament. The neighbours who had gathered implore him, asking him to show mercy. He shouts them down, tells them not to meddle in affairs that don't concern them and slams the door shut to emphasize his point. Banti instantly loses the thread of hope that had kept her strong till then. Banti reads the finality of fate in the shutting of the door and she begins to hit her head on the threshold of her husband's house till she drops dead.

The husband's family shrouded her body in red cloth signifying her married status, not that that status was of any use to her. The incident narrated here makes it amply clear that a woman's lot was a cursed lot. Banti was not abducted like the other women; she was among the three young married women and three unmarried women who were claimed as hostages to allow safe passage to the males, the elderly women and the children. Women thus became the bounty on both sides of this war. They were the spoils for the enjoyment of the marauding men. When they made their way back either to their natal or marital homes and families, they were denied entry and were cast away. Banti made a ferocious attempt to claim her place in the family for the sake of her son, but she ends up beating herself to death on her husband's

doorstep. Hamida, on the other hand, knows her children will be better off without her presence to either confuse them or to divide their tender loyalties; so she doesn't challenge her fate. In *The Ice Candy Man*, Lenny's inappropriate moment for blurting out the truth ensures Ayah being heaved and hustled away by the mob included among them are her amorous admirers. Nothing is suspected until Cousin and Lenny glimpse a bedecked and made up Ayah passing by in a taxi on two separate occasions. Everyone had presumed that she could be counted among the rescued women who had made it to Amritsar to her family.

Godmother uses her formidable network of connections and learns about Ayah's fate. That she is presently married to the Ice Candy man is known and she invites him over. He traipses in assuming the pose of a poet-lover who narrates the story of Ayah's misfortunes and how he rescued her from this ignominy by marrying her and restoring her to respectability. Godmother is not taken in by this glossed over story and shrewdly unravels the real story. Godmother had already gleaned Ayah's predicament and whips the Ice Candy man with the knowledge that he has allowed her rape. He is properly shamed and like the whipped dog that he is seeks to defend the implausible by emphatically declaring himself her slave. This does not fool Godmother, who contemptuously thunders,

'Oh? What kind of a man? A royal pimp? What kind of man would allow his wife to dance like a performing monkey before other men? You're not a man, you're a low-born, two-bit evil little mouse!' ...

'You have permitted your wife to be disgraced! Destroyed her modesty! Lived off her womanhood!' says Godmother as if driven to recount the charges before an invisible judge. 'And you talk of princes and poets? You're the son of pigs and pimps! You are not worth the two –cowries one throws at lepers!' (248-249)

As Godmother rebukes him harshly and he makes weak excuses for himself, Godmother makes him confront his reality rather than leave him in his contrived new sensibility. She interrogates his claims of marriage and her safety since their marriage and finds them both lacking in credulity. That's when she tells him off thus,

'When did the marriage take place?' asks Godmother unmoved.

'In May.'

'She was lifted in February and you married her in May! What were you doing all that time?'

Ice-candy-man remains silent.

‘Why don’t you speak? Can’t you bring yourself to say you played the drums when she danced? Counted money while drunks, pedlars, sahibs, and cut-throats used her like a sewer?’ (250)

Women were thus used and abused before the men handling them are struck by contrition; in remorse, they marry the women they bartered and battered. Did women have any choice? Once again, the answer is an emphatic no. They were abducted from the bosom of their families—natal or marital—and taken away to satiate the passions for lust and revenge. Many a times, women became the currency/ bargaining chip in return for a safe passage for families. Abandoned by their families and held hostage by their abductors, women were the trophies of the massacre that happened in the name of independence and Partition. Children were either killed by the marauders or by the women themselves to prevent religious conversion. Conversion was seen as the most unforgivable transgression of all and death was preferred to it. As Menon and Bhasin admit,

‘Yet, in the recounting of violence within their own families we noted an element of detachment in the men. The story is told in the heroic mode—the singular and extraordinary instance of doing a kinswoman to death is elevated to supreme and glorious sacrifice. So, one man’s—or one family’s, or one village’s, even one community’s—tragedy is sublimated and unfolds against the backdrop of siege and resistance, valour and vanquishment, honour and shame.’ (54-55)

#### **4.2.4 Communal Violence:**

Partition violence proceeded along religious lines for the bifurcation of the subcontinent occurred on the basis of majoritarian populations—either Hindu or Muslim. Ismat Chughtai in ‘Communal Violence and Literature’ opens her essay feistily bemoaning:

[T]he flood of communal violence came with all its evils and left, but it left a pile of living, dead, and gasping corpses in its wake. It wasn’t only that the country was split in two, bodies and minds were also divided. Moral beliefs were tossed aside and humanity was in shreds. Government officers and clerks along with their chairs, pens and inkpots, were distributed like the spoils of war. And whatever remained after this division was laid to waste by the benevolent hands of communal violence. Those whose bodies were whole had hearts that were splintered. Families were torn apart. One brother was allotted

to Hindustan, the other given over to Pakistan; the mother was in Hindustan, her off-spring were in Pakistan; the husband was in Hindustan, his wife was in Pakistan. The bounds of human relationships were in tatters, and in the end many souls remained behind in Hindustan while their bodies started off to Pakistan. (445)

The Hindu-Muslim rioting in the wake of Partition was totally unexpected by the powers that be. In *Sunlight on a Broken Column*, the political debates that frequently occur among the youth, the following conversation best summarizes the sheer shock of the shaking of the ground beneath their feet:

‘The important question is—what will be the relationship between these—er—separated Siamese twins?’

‘As no one applauded his joke, Saleem went on, “Let us imagine the worst that could happen. Suppose the sporadic violence that has preceded partition continues after it—though when one considers that the leaders on both sides have accepted the decision, there is really no reason why it should—.”

“Except the logic of inculcated hate,” I said....

“If, God forbid, our young Cassandra’s forebodings are correct,” Saleem continued, “then it will be worse than a civil war. The British will have pulled out their forces in good time; mixed forces of Hindus and Muslims, in the army and police, will have to stop Hindus and Muslims killing each other.” (285-286)

This conversation clearly indicates the pained surprise that much of the rioting caused the leadership; for, they had led the freedom movement for so long and inherently believed that the masses followed their decisions. There is a reference in *This Is Not That Dawn* where Puri reads the newspaper: ‘He read aloud the news of Gandhiji’s speech that India and Pakistan should have friendly and even brotherly relations. Both governments should invite back the refugees who had fled their homelands’ (520). The communal carnage left them shaken beyond belief and scrambling to right a wrong. In this scenario, the leaders come to the fore sullied and tarnished off the basking light of idealism. The mayhem of the masses illuminate the shallow world of politics inhabited by them, where they themselves and the colonial intermediaries considered them representatives of the masses; when this was patently not true. The leaders come off the affair in less than idealistic light and almost are seen as if they were cutting and quartering the territory for their own convenience. The panic and the consequent fratricidal violence give a lie to the secularist credentials of the whole enterprise.

There are a couple of references to this idea of hate bred by the colonial masters in *Sunlight on a Broken Column*. The first of these comes when the cousins—Laila, Zahra, Asad and Zahid—are hotly debating the topic of the romantic inclinations of the two cousin brothers, when the tazias taken out for Muharram are mentioned and Zahid vehemently denounces these processions as anti-Islamic, calling the Shias as idolaters. Zahra reacts to this by admonishing him, while Zahid retorts that what he said was true. Laila and Asad come to his defence and state:

“You haven’t a monopoly of hate and self-righteousness, Zahid,” I said.

“He has learned the lesson the English teach us,” said Asad. “Hate each other—love us.” (56)

Zahid confesses that he had heard rumours of a riot that will take place during Muharram and Zahra dismisses it as ‘schoolboy talk’. Asad’s response encapsulates British policy in India when he cynically observes:

Asad said, “Maybe because there haven’t been any for too long, not even Hindu-Muslim ones. Something must be done to prove that the British are here to enforce law and order, and stop us killing each other.” (56)

The communal riot is a narrative, which the British used, to define the outbursts that occurred every now and then in India. In this regard, Gyanendra Pandey opines:

In a colonialist reading of history that had become dominant by the end of the nineteenth century, ‘communalism’ was seen as the special mark of the Indian section of the ‘Orient’. This particular reading of Indian history was distinguished not only by its periodization in terms of the European experience (‘ancient’, ‘medieval’, ‘modern’), nor simply by its use of communal—more specifically, religious—categories to differentiate these periods of Indian history (or, at least, the first two of them: the ‘Hindu’ and the ‘Muslim’). This historical reconstruction was characterized also by an emptying out of all history—in terms of the specific variations of time, place, class, issue—from the political experience of the people, and the identification of religion (or the religious community) as the moving force of all Indian politics. The communal riot narrative served to substantiate this reading of history. (94-95)

In *Tamas*, there is an episode in Chapter 4 where Richard (the Deputy Commissioner) and his wife Liza go for an early morning ride, Richard, a history buff, holds forth about the region. He is intently focused as he narrates:

“The inhabitants of this area too have been living here since times immemorial. Have you noticed their features? A broad forehead, brownish tint in the colour of their eyes. They all belong to the same racial stock.”

“How can they be of the same racial stock, Richard, when invaders from all over, as you say, have been here?”

“This is precisely the mistake some people make,” Richard said vehemently, as though trying to prove some pet theory of his. “The first wave of migrants who came from Central Asia three or four thousand years ago and the bands of invaders who came two thousand years or so later, both belonged to the same racial stock. The former were known as Aryans and the latter Muslims. But both had the same roots.”

“The people here too must know all this.”

“The people know only what we tell them.” After a little pause he added, “Most people have no knowledge of their history. They only live it.” (40-41)

Thus, Pandey’s claim that the British divested political events of their history is verified by this account. That Indian history was re-written by the British to suit their purposes also becomes amply clear. *River of Fire* is devoted extensively to the 1857 Uprising where the Muslim rulers and their Hindu feudatories together wreck havoc on the British forces. That British narratives trumped in positing the local populace as villains, while their own perfidy was whitewashed, sums up this section of the story—which is in a conversational mode between Nawab Khammam and Gautam Nilambar Dutt at the turn of the nineteenth century. This section of the narrative has Hyder deride the idea of Hindu-Muslim conflict as existing from invading times, and instead, point a finger at the British who activated the religious debate in Queen Victoria’s Proclamation that makes the claim for Christianity as the only true religion. If religion became an active player in the politics of the British in India, it is largely because of the colonial enterprise of proselytization/evangelization. If the British, represented by Richard in *Tamas*, are guilty of accusing Indians of being ahistorical—in the sense that they only perform their lives which are constructed around quotidian routines without the benefit of the larger historical process governing their lives; the British too are guilty of writing that history in terms of mere trade reports and government memos in their pursuit of a career in the Orient through piracy.

*Sunlight on a Broken Column* has a reference to ‘the British attitude of disengagement’ which is elaborated in *Tamas*. When the riots have been contained, the Deputy Commissioner visits the refugee camp. He is at once surrounded by survivors ready to assist in the relief work, at which point, Manohar Lal shoots off his mouth accusing Richard and the people he interacted with thus: “[A]ll the toadies have gathered here. Flatterers, sycophants all! I am not in the habit of mincing matters. I tell a fellow to his face what I think of him. Where was the government when the tension in the city was mounting? Couldn’t the curfew be clamped at that time? Where was the Sahib Bahadur then and what was he doing? We talk straight, at

a fellow's face [...]” (306). He gets into an argument with Bakshiji, the leader of the Prabhat pheris, to whom he cites chapter and verse of the ills that assail the Congress. Before the argument can run away with itself, a friend draws Manohar Lal away, leaving Bhakshiji thinking along these lines, “This is the role the British have all along played—they first bring about a riot and then quell it; they starve the people first and then give them bread; they render them homeless and then begin to provide shelter to them.” (307)

The knife is turned deeply when Richard reaches back home and is confronted with the scene of Liza passed out in drunken stupor on the sofa. She is conversing with Richard through an alcohol-induced mist and the irony hits bull's eye for the reader wonders who is actually drunk:

“I have too much work on hand these days, Liza, you must understand. The Grain Market in the city has been burnt down, and no fewer than a hundred and three villages razed to the ground.’

“One hundred and three villages, and I know nothing about it? Did I sleep that long? Richard, you should have woken me up and told me. Such big events occurred and you did not tell me about them.’

When Richard directs her to go back to sleep since he had pressing work to attend to, Liza asks:

“So many villages burnt down, Richard, and you still have work to do? What more is there for you to do?” (312)

Richard wonders whether Liza is mocking him or whether it is the alcohol talking. He finds his marriage tiresome but is forced to work at it to keep up appearances as it is crucial for a man in his position seeking higher rungs to climb up in the career ladder. Hence, he braces himself to continue the façade and with forced enthusiasm hatches the plan of a drive, invitingly:

“Listen, Liza,’ he said enthusiastically, ‘I have to go to Sayedpur tomorrow, to get a disinfectant sprayed into a well in which many women and children jumped to their death. Why don't you come along too? It is a lovely drive. From there we can proceed to Taxila. We can have a look at the museum there—it is a unique museum. What do you say? The entire area is very lovely.’

Liza expresses her disinclination to participate in Richard's plan as she would have had to witness scenes that she could neither fathom nor stomach, he persists in trying to coax her by waxing eloquent about the lark he had heard just the other day. Liza is unable to comprehend this insensitivity in Richard and wonders whether he fails to see the macabre aspect of their situation. She questions him thus:

“What sort of a person are you, Richard that in such places too you can see new kinds of birds and listen to the warbling of the lark?”

“What is so strange about it, Liza? A person in the Civil Service develops the quality of mental detachment. If we were to get emotionally involved over every incident, administration would not go on for a single day.”

“Not even when a hundred and three villages are burnt down?”

“Richard paused a little and then said, ‘Not even then. This is not my country, Liza, nor are these people my countrymen.’” (313-314)

The bifurcation of India into India and Pakistan led to immense violence on both sides of the border. The strife was communal in nature: the Hindus and Muslims did their worst to each other; more particularly, the women of both the communities bore the brunt of the event. Just as there was territorial division, women too became the site upon which was carved the betrayal of territory. The baying for blood led to bloodletting, especially of women. The horrors of the violence are categorized by Menon and Bhasin thus: ‘[...] violence; abduction and recovery; widowhood; women’s rehabilitation; rebuilding; and belonging.’ ( )

In Chapter 8 of *Tamas* Sahni describes the invisible chords that tie the village together in the following words:

‘Every activity gave the impression of having combined to create an inner harmony to which the heart of the town throbbed. It was to the same rhythm that people were born, grew up and became old, that generations came and went. This rhythm or symphony was the creation of centuries of communal living, of the inhabitants having come together in harmony. One would think that every activity was like a chord in a musical instrument, and if one string snapped the instrument would produce only jarring notes.’ (115)

It is this *jugalbandi* that seemed to flow in the social rhythms of neighbourhoods and villages, towns and cities, with all the people having a set pattern that fed their lives with relative stability. Of course this is not to say that there were no inter-community tensions—which happened very often around the major festive celebrations that could become occasions for mischief as the passions were already heightened. More often than not, these occasions passed off rather peaceably owing to the co-operation of the various communities and the alertness of the community elders and the administration that took care to ensure that nothing untoward marred these processions. These were often akin to the ebb and flow of the tides in human relationships. The intimacy of inter-dependence of neighbours and trade relations led to a peaceable co-existence that sustained itself on the basis of fellowship and respect. The two-nation theory put

undue pressure on this core stabilizing factor and sowed the seeds of fear and distrust where once there existed a healthy respect and camaraderie. As the decision to sunder the country in two gained momentum, so did the anxiety and fear peak. Neighbourhoods where one community was in a minority did not appear safe anymore and people slowly began to look for options to move and be with their own kith and kin. Those moving away were random at best, but it soon became a concerted flood that led to an upheaval among the populations.

Even a cursory reading of Partition novels brings to fore the idea of Muslim majority areas being ruled in power sharing equations within the Hindu majoritarian India. When it was not to be, Muslims' growing sense feeling neglected, powered the need for concrete support to the notion of an Islamic state; yet there were Muslims who preferred loyalty to the homeland than an abstract affiliation to a religious state. This led to ripples not only within families and neighbourhoods; but also in the outlays of village, town and state. The ripple effect cut across class and creed, profession and status; it had a cascading effect as people moved house and hearth to safety and security. The movement so destabilized the existing set up as to cause untold misery and created a vacuum that allowed opportunists and posers alike to thrive and profit from their unethical ways. The fear and anxiety was allayed with the human tendency that it is happening to someone else, that they were safe. But the random violence became a strategic maneuver; the stability of centuries gave way to the rumour-fuelled attempts to flee to safety.

At the outset, the violence was random and sporadic. Some writers focus attention on the violence in toto; but more often than not, the scale of violence is brought to the reader's notice through evidence and impact to which the protagonists are exposed within their vicinity. In *Toba Tek Singh*, the story is sited in post-Partition times, yet it questions the sanity of the communal intents with reference to the exchange programme. The communal violence is only hinted at in second person in both *River of Fire* and *Sunlight on a Broken Column*. While *River of Fire* depicts the breakdown of the composite culture that was integral to the Indian polity; *Sunlight on a Broken Column* delineates the class inversion that seamlessly takes place on account of the changes in the political direction post Partition. *River of Fire* portrays the schism in loyalty where the heart and body is tied to India while the body is no longer Indian but alien—a foreigner whose loyalty is suspect and whose presence must be

monitored through visas and reporting to the police—like Kamal, who is born an Indian and is forced into exile thereby becoming a refugee. *Sunlight on a Broken Column* shows the split within the family itself—Kemal and Saleem are brothers: Kemal chooses to remain in India, while Saleem opts to move to Pakistan. When Saleem and Nadira visit India after two years, they feel like they are back home as their friends treat them just the same. It is only when they are at the Club indulging in reminiscences that they become aware of a Sikh man at the bar paying close attention to their conversation. When Saleem in his incorrigible way says the T-word that their sense of camaraderie belies as evinced in the following conversation when they are shaken from their sense of old world filial relations:

“I drink to you, Ranjit, as an exemplar of that tradition (hospitality),” Saleem joked. “I am glad you are effete enough to forget your political affiliations, to say, ‘Welcome, friend’ and not ‘Go back, Traitor!’”  
‘A serious note broke into Ranjit’s vice, ‘I would say that to a traitor even if he were my best friend.’”  
The blue turban twisted right round, and a voice thick with hate and anger said, “They’re all bloody traitors—every bloody Muslim—deep in their bloody hearts.”  
(301-302)

While these three novels deal with the seismic aftershocks of Partition, the other novels don’t shy away from describing the riots as they unfolded. The anatomy of a riot is sought to be explicated in these books inclusive of the aftermath of this collision. *Tamas* is a story that unfolds the manner in which a riot unfolds. The divide in the Congress-League politics is felt in the remotest villages.

In the midst of this chaos is the incident of Shah Nawaz who shows admirable loyalty to his friend from boyhood days, Lalaji. He defies the gloom and fear to visit Lalaji who lives in a Muslim locality. He goes to Lalaji’s ancestral home to retrieve the jewellery, but he kicks their servant Mikhi for no reason, who falls and is dead. This tells the tale of the riot: where one has had cordial relations with each other, one saves them even despite oneself, but others are susceptible to victimization. Sahni paints the grim picture of how the violence spreads: members from each community warn their friends, assist them and save them too, simply because the bonds go back a long way. The looting and murder spread with the younger hot-headed members who have yet to develop such bonds. Even Ranvir and his friends spearhead and monitor the retaliation against the Muslims. The violence is never one-sided and each side is

consumed with their hate; the vituperative violence flares and burns all alike like the Grain Market fire.

While the elders of the communities attempt to negotiate a deal using intermediaries, the violence spreads and the youth gangs tear into strangers. Iqbal Singh, Harnam's son, is chased, stoned and caught. He is tortured till he agrees to say the Kalma and convert. His Sikh appearance is modified by the barber to seem like the Muslim and he is embraced by his tormentors. The Jarnail took it upon himself to set on a one man mission to put an end to the riots. He went through the myriad lanes, appealing for peace and when he was thus appealing, someone from behind him hit his head with a lathi cracking it open. Mir Dad was the Muslim counterpart of the Jarnail. A sample of his conversation provides a point in case:

'In the butchers' lane, though the shops were closed, three butchers sat on the projections of their shops, having a heated argument with Mir Dad.

'You shut up. The Englishman was nowhere around. In the city so many Musalmans have been done to death; their bodies are still lying in the lanes. Were they killed by the Englishmen?'

'Try to understand,' said Mir Dad, with a wave of his hand, 'If Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims are united, the position of the Englishman becomes weak. If we keep fighting among ourselves, he remains strong.'

'It was the same hackneyed argument which these people had heard before. In the prevailing situation, it would cut no ice with them.

'Go and massage your head with almond oil,' the fat butcher said. 'How has the firanghi harmed us? The Hindus and Muslims have been at daggers drawn all along. A kafir is a kafir until he accepts the "faith" he is an enemy. To kill a kafir is a virtuous act.'

'Listen, uncle,' Mir Dad said. 'Who is the ruler?'

'Of course it is the Englishman, who else?'

'And whose is the army?'

'Of the Englishman.'

'Then, he can't stop us from fighting?'

'He can, but he does not want to interfere in our religious matters. The Englishman is justice-loving.'

'Which means that we should kill one another while he would call it a religious matter and keep watching it as a spectator. What sort of ruler is he?'' (240-241)

The volunteers of the Communist Party waded into the midst of the riots to stave it off. There was bloodshed everywhere. While everyone was of the opinion that the violence would be from within the village itself, it came from the marauders attacking from outside the village. The killing is frenzied and whoever comes in the way of the fanatics is done to death. Women, children, the old, the physically impaired—all fell

to the sword of the vengeful. In the word of Sahni: 'This confrontation too was looked upon as a link to the chain of earlier confrontations in history. The 'warriors' had their feet in the twentieth century while their minds were in medieval times' (273). The fighting continued for two days and nights. Many of the dead were dead because of a case of mistaken identity. Two incidents come to the fore when men gathered on the terrace of Sheikh Ghulam Rasul's house were narrating their exploits: the plight of a Hindu girl who is raped till even after she is quite dead and the killing of a woman for no other reason than an expression of power. Slowly, the looting and arson ceased. Daybreak brought in its wake crows, kites and vultures over the village and in particular, to the well. The marauders had left with their booty, leaving in their footpath evidence of disaster. As the fat butcher's son was pouring kerosene down the Gurudwara windows, the low drone of an aeroplane signaling the entry of the Englishman is hailed by all alike with the blind faith that, 'There would be no more disturbances. The news of the riots had reached the right ears, the ears of the firanghi; no shot would be fired now, nor a house set on fire.' (296)

The tragic irony of the situation is brought to the fore in the loud shout of Kishen Singh, astride the Gurudwara rooftop, "Had you come a couple of days earlier, we would not have suffered so. But it is still OK Sahib" (297). The sight of the aeroplane brings a sense of peace and calm. People stepped out of their homes; others went back to their homes to check on their jewellery and goods. Each community got down to cleaning their respective places of worship. Curfew was clamped and people felt safe enough to venture about their daily chores. Hospitals were tending to the wounded, the dead were being disposed. The manner in which the Deputy Commissioner took charge of the situation, the message was clear: the government would not tolerate the situation. Rumour of the co-option of the public bodies revived the spirit of voluntary service. The Deputy Commissioner persuaded the public minded citizens to work tirelessly and assured them about the rations and supplies. He briefed the prominent citizens as to the proposed relief work to be undertaken by the government while taking in the reactions these measures met. In his analysis is a kernel that hints at the 'collaborator' that allow the British to keep their hand on the pulse of the people's sentiments and how useful he becomes to the administration.

'There was also one of 'our own' intelligence men, who was both a Congress activist and a functionary of the Socialist Party. This man might be vociferous in raising

slogans, swear at the government and even use abusive language' (305). These two sentences are evidence enough of the British ability to target the weakest link and use them as their intermediaries to stoke communal fires or to bank them. The collaborators are the spineless weasels through whom the British managed to keep the communities at each other's throats and away from suspecting the British hand in any of these episodes. The British were able to practice their policy of disengagement by engaging the services of such willing collaborators and thus deflect the blame for the internecine hostilities on the affective historic relations between Hindus and Muslims.

Thus, the riot weakens the community spirit by sowing the seeds of distrust and fear while giving strength to the British position. In the entire narration, the only real do-gooders are the Communist Party workers who venture into the riot stricken areas to contain the communal conflagration. This mien finds responding echoes in Yashpal's *This Is Not That Dawn*. In both the novels, while the Party cadre attempts to inflame them against the British, they are in the forefront to speak for, rally for and work for peaceful relations between Hindus and Muslims. Both the authors are critical of both the Congress and League leaders and leadership. Interestingly, though the Communists believe in and preach the violence of revolution in the overthrow of an exploitative ruler, they are portrayed as the sole path to amity in the midst of Hindu-Muslim animosity by elevating ideology over religious divide.

*Tamas* is a concentrated rendition of the making of a riot; its bloody progression and tragic aftermath. Within the span of 352 pages, the story tells the riot narrative central to the British rule in India. Pandey is scathing in his criticism of nationalist historiography which he believes is accepting of the colonizer's version without investigation or interpretation. Pandey observes:

[T]he most striking feature of the colonial writing under discussion and also perhaps the least investigated, in part because it has passed without great change into nationalist writings and a good deal of recent historiography. This is the reduction of Indian history to the history of the state. In colonialist writings, a distinction was first made between the history of the local society—wild, chaotic, liable to unexpected explosions—and the history of the state. ... But above all these writings it was the new colonial state that stood out in contrast to the primitive, pre-political, one might even say proto-historic, character of the local society. (115)

*Tamas*, in many ways, proves Pandey's argument in its narrative zenith. The British representatives abjure all knowledge of the mounting tensions and refrain from active

participation in any preventive measures. Pandey accuses the British of re-writing Indian history by subsuming the community experiences within their own statist writings wherein a new master narrative is imposed on Indian history whereby the Hindu-Muslim relations become the core of the whole of the Indian past at least in northern India. In Pandey's words:

An outstanding feature of this discourse is its distancing of 'us' and 'them'. In the communal riot narrative, as in colonialist discourse more generally, 'rioting', 'bigotry', 'criminality' are of a piece—the marks of an inferior people and a people without a history. Naturally, even the violence of the subject population is distinguished from the often unacknowledged but, in any case, 'controlled', 'rational' and 'legitimate' violence of the colonial state. 'Native' violence has parallels with the violence of the eighteenth-, and even nineteenth century, European mob—hungry, displaced, turbulent—which also on occasion turns to rioting. (Happily, as said, Europe was fast 'civilizing' its lower classes.) But the violence of the 'native' has other, specifically Oriental, characteristics. It is a helpless, instinctive violence, it takes the form of 'convulsions' and, in India, these are more often than not related to the centuries' politics of the indigenous community. That is the Indian past. In the twentieth century a new name would be found for the past: that name was 'communalism. (132)

That *Tamas* is a narrative of this communalism is obvious and that the credit for this creation rests solely upon the British is underscored. What this ignores is the local narratives that eulogize the Hindu-Muslim bonds in practice and discourse. Hyder and Hosain site their narrative in feudal Lucknow and represent the respect and loyalty each community felt for the other.

#### **4.3.5 The Train as a Metaphor of Violence**

'But those days of youthful and ardent campaigning had ended very differently for Zahid, his most zealous lieutenant. Full of bright hope and triumph Zahid had boarded the train on the thirteenth day of August which was to take him to the realization of his dreams, on the eve of the birth of the country for which he had lived and worked. When it had reached its destination not a man, woman or child was found alive.' (*Sunlight on a Broken Column*) Trains were rather innocuous means of mass transportation but became sinister with the passengers being indiscriminately slaughtered while roving marauders exacted their pound of flesh for the betrayal. The train became a trope for the sealing of fate and is the cue that prompts the eponymous title of Kushwant Singh's narrative, *Train to Pakistan*. The train contained within it the seeds of hatred and vitiation as enacted by hordes of roving gangs intent upon

exacting vendetta. The people traversing via trains were the middle and lower middle class people bound for places where their co-religionists were present in large numbers in search of that elusive ideal of ‘safety in numbers’ and instead became a statistic in their attempt to go over to the other country.

The train was moving at a very slow speed after leaving Ambala station...The speed of the mail train was quite slow, but it still did not stop at small stations, as usual. On all such stations, large crowds of Muslims, their meager belongings tied up with jute cord, were waiting for trains to carry them away.

‘The morning was well advanced when the train halted at Sirhind station. The platform was deserted, except for soldiers standing on guard with fixed bayonets. An ominous stillness seemed to pervade every corner. There were piebald splotches of wet brown and black on the platform that appeared to be blood. On one side of the station, beside the fence, lay several corpses. From behind the station came the sound of distant shouts and cries. Only mail sacks were loaded and unloaded, and the train departed.

‘It had gone only a short distance past the signal post. Scattered houses could still be seen on the other side of the barbed wire stretched along the tracks. The wheels of the train ground to a halt with a metallic screech. The sound of gunshots came from close by, and of bullets hitting the side of the carriages. A group of people with swords, spears, machetes and guns in their hands, jumped over the barbed wire and charged at the train [...] (419)

The violence is random and horrific—anyone could become a victim—there was neither sense nor logic in these forays. The entire motive seemed to hinge upon inflicting maximum damage and instill fear in the hearts of the hapless travelers. These sporadic sorties fuelled fear and kept the travelers on tenterhooks. There was no mercy and any plea for mercy was quelled unequivocally. Much of the violence was in retaliation for what had been done and the rest was a looting to feather their own nests. In this melee, any young woman was game for the marauders who abducted them, raped them and then auctioned them off to the highest bidder for a paltry sum. There is a spectacle on parade with stories of loss and the brutal humiliation of women at the hands of these rogues. The language used to describe and detail women is lewd and pithy. No attempt is made to couch the words into patterns of nuanced decorum. Thus thugs and goons roamed the vicinity of rail stretches to visit horrific violence upon the passengers. Many of the passengers were already burdened by tragedy: having had to give up their land, belongings, wealth and even lost family members in the tussle to escape. Their ordeal was not over yet, but had these looters re-visit them to inflict further tragedy. Two telling lines at the end of the scene

described above depict the nightmarish situation people were embroiled in. 'Nearly half the compartment had been emptied. No one had the courage to fight back.' (420) and 'The children sat in stunned silence' (421) speak volumes about the insanity that prevailed. Human decency and care for the well-being of the weak and infirm were sacrificed with nary a qualm. A street lingo of barter and commerce held sway. The thirst for revenge and settling scores made up a litany of sins of omission and commission on both sides of the border. The dead and displaced on both sides continued to pile while both the governments went into overdrive trying to staunch the bloodshed and mayhem. And trains that symbolized safe and cheap passage became tropes for the cheapness of life and metaphorically represented free hearse vans.

In *Train to Pakistan* when the village is subjected to continuous rainfall, the river Sutlej is inundated and the villagers fear that the dam would be breached. The lambardar mounts all night vigil parties to report the status of the river. While staying awake through the night, the men hear cries for help coming over the river. They are unsure of the direction and in the light of the hurricane lamp and flashlights, they couldn't see much and question each other about the nature of what they heard: was the sound human or that of jackals? The bloated body of a cow is sighted along with straw and bundles of clothing which precipitate talks of flooding up-river.

While the villagers debated the state of the train and whether the sounds they heard were human or animal, daylight broke over the horizon and put a definitive end to their argument as the swollen river carried with it the dead animal and human bodies along its turbid waters.

“Some villages must have been flooded at night,” said the lambardar gravely.

“Who yokes bulls to carts at night?” asked one of his companions.

“Yes, that is true. Why should the bullocks be yoked?”

More human forms could be seen coming through the arches of the bridge. They rebounded off the piers, paused, pirouetted at the whirlpools, and then came bouncing down the river. The men moved up towards the bridge to see some corpses which had drifted near the bank.

They stood and stared.

‘Lambardar, they were not drowned. They were murdered.’ (150-151)

The first description of the bodies floating on the river is replaced with another description even more gruesome as the villagers see the evidence of mass murder in the wounded bodies of men, women and children. The villagers go back to the village grappling with the sights they had just witnessed and wrangling with doubts about

whether they should tell the others or not. The news of the floating bodies is shouted off rooftops but the people are focused on the train.

‘There was a new interest at the station, with promise of worse horrors than the last one. There was no doubt in anyone’s mind what the train contained. They were sure that the soldiers would come for oil and wood. They had no more oil to spare and the wood they had left was too damp to burn. But the soldiers did not come. Instead, a bulldozer arrived from somewhere. It began dragging its lower jaw into the ground just outside the station on the Mano Majra side. It went along, eating up the earth, chewing it, casting it aside. It did this for several hours, until there was a rectangular trench almost fifty yards long with mounds of earth on either side. Then it paused for a break. The soldiers and policemen who had been idly watching the bulldozer at work were called to order and marched back to the platform. They came back in twos carrying canvas stretchers. They tipped the stretchers into the pit and went back to the train for more. This went on all day till sunset. Then the bulldozer woke up again. It opened its jaws and ate up the earth it had thrown out before and vomited it into the trench till it was level with the ground. The place looked like the scar of a healed-up wound. Two soldiers were left to guard the grave from the depredations of jackals and badgers.’” (152)

The villagers’ faith is shattered. The people who mourned the exile of their Muslim tenants were the same who were willing to avenge the murder of Sikhs. The sight of the trains with hacked bodies of men, women and children and the river Sutlej carrying afloat animal and human carcasses had rendered the villagers helpless and subdued. They were unable to comprehend the insensate violence of the times. Their quiet co-existence had been forever sundered. What is apparent is that people who knew each other refrained from indulging in violence and instead tried to ensure the safety of their fellow brethren. The roving gangs of thugs and goons from outside incite people and generate hostility. In such circumstances, the thinking capacity of the individual is diminished and the mob mentality holds sway.

### **4.3 The Trauma of Violence**

Trauma, as defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary, may be physical as in an injury to living tissue caused by an extrinsic agent or affecting the mind like a disordered psychic or behavioural state resulting from severe mental or emotional stress or physical injury. The second explanation suits the current purpose best. Trauma, by extension, can also be the haunting memory of a past tragic experience that implodes in the present. Trauma Studies, in the West, developed along the line of the experiences that soldiers faced in active combat. The symptoms were collated to assume the form of a prognosis—that of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or PTSD. The two World Wars provided ample fodder to further investigate this issue; and the

Holocaust narratives gave a fillip to Trauma Studies by centralizing the victim-survivor.

Trauma then is an event that can be caused by an external agency to impact and implode the internal well-being of the victim; and what is important in this context is that both the extrinsic and intrinsic mechanisms that support well-being falls short in the coping process. This goes on to expose clearly that response to trauma is individual and localized within the cultural group one belongs to. Sandra L. Bloom in 'Trauma Theory Abbreviated' categorically states, 'A traumatic experience impacts the entire person-the way we think, the way we learn, the way we remember things, the way we feel about ourselves, the way we feel about other people, and the way we make sense of the world are all profoundly altered by traumatic experience.' (2)

#### **4.3.1 Trauma and Remembering**

The biological origin and response to trauma is implicated in the basic instinct to stimulus itself: fight or flight. This individual response is then socialized in the form of attachment to other human beings for mutual protection. This reciprocity is a double-edged sword: it initiates fair play while also exacerbating revengeful tendencies. Trauma occurs in cases of extreme helplessness to defend oneself. Constant exposure to concentrated levels of trauma and uncertainty reduces the response of victims to cope with traumatic situations and they are often in danger of losing their instinctive and intuitive ability to read the signs of danger. Another point to be noted here is that in circumstances that assail our defenselessness, there is no scope for pre-meditated thought to put escape plans into place while assessing their feasibility as also their consequentialist aftermath and mostly act impulsively and reflexively to get out of the situation. Brown captures the condition pithily: 'In such situations people demonstrate poor judgement and poor impulse control. The mind is geared towards action and often the action taken will be violent. Many victims have long-term problems with various aspects of thinking. An intolerance of mistakes, denial of personal difficulties, anger as a problem-solving strategy, hypervigilance, and absolutistic thinking are other problematic thought patterns that have been identified' (5).

Remembering trauma upturns the 'normal' manner in which memories are negotiated. Learning proceeds in verbal and non-verbal ways, and the verbal and non-verbal

seamlessly integrate to negotiate the way for humans in all circumstances. Except trauma—when trauma overwhelms and numbs the mind, it dramatically alters this tandem negotiation and the brain freezes from allowing the experience a verbal ‘reality’. The trauma is etched in terms of the senses to deeply imprint itself on the innermost recesses of the mind. This inability to verbalize the traumatic experience enforces an exile from the memory—an atrophied amnesia that creates a liminal awareness of the traumatic event but is utterly helpless in confronting it in thought or words.

This subcutaneity of trauma traps the victim in flashbacks of reliving it, dissociation, compulsive trauma addiction and reenactment of the traumatic experience. The way through which trauma needs to be worked out is from a change in identification perspective—from what is ‘wrong’ to what is ‘happening’. According to Brown, this shift in perspective depersonalizes the event and creates space for positive intervention. Victims then become survivors and many such survivors make it their life’s goal to take the enervating violence and refashion it into positive good for the victims themselves and, by association, to others as well. This does in no way negate conflict, but assures a more positive coping strategy and recuperation to integrate within the social groups is promoted.

#### **4.3.2 Trauma Theory**

Cathy Caruth in her Introduction to *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* highlights the pivotal role of trauma in inter-disciplinary fields i.e. psychoanalysis, sociology, history, and even literature; yet she claims that the more it is studied, the more diaphanous it becomes, thereby mounting a challenge as to the tools of representing trauma. The difficulty of defining trauma is proposed, in Caruth’s words as, ‘The pathology consists, rather, solely in the *structure of its experience* or reception: the event is not assimilated or experienced fully at the time, but only belatedly, in its repeated *possession* of the one who experiences it’ (4-5). This explanation forces one to consider the notionalty of time: the event does occur in at a particular time; but, for the victim-survivor, recollection of that time is permanently fractured because of the numbing shock that allows the experience to seep into consciousness ‘belatedly’. This belatedness represents the pervasive feeling of being haunted/ possessed that point to an “absence” in the process of registering in both place and time.

Caruth compels a re-look at trauma as a point of “departure”—where the rupture in its experience and comprehension—also become the entry point to negotiate a spectrum of possibilities in not only the experience per se but also the new ways of comprehension required. The repetitiveness inherent in the experience of trauma impels not mere self-witnessing but also in relation to others thereby pushing for ways to survive the trauma. Caruth indicates the way out from isolation when she concludes with the following words,

‘This speaking and this listening—a speaking and a listening *from the site of trauma*—does not rely, I would suggest, on what we simply know of each other, but on what we don’t yet know of our own traumatic pasts. In a catastrophic age, that is, trauma itself may provide the very link between cultures: not as a simple understanding of the pasts of others but rather, within the traumas of contemporary history, as our ability to listen through the departures we have all taken from ourselves.’ (ibid, 11)

Elissa Marder in her essay titled “Trauma and Literary Studies: Some “Enabling Questions”” finds literature itself as the ideal vehicle to mediate the “departures”, when she opines, ‘Indeed, what is literature if not one of the most important ways available to us both to endure what Caruth calls “the departures we have all taken from ourselves” to reach others by speaking through those very departures? Literature is one of the ways we tell one another about aspects of human experience that cannot be contained by ordinary modes of expression and that may even exceed human understanding.’ (3) Caruth’s book *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* advocates the literary explorations of trauma to encourage readers to access traumatic experience by relying keenly on listening to the text and subtext, what is said and what is left unsaid. It goes beyond describing trauma as pathology and induces a look at the unknowable in both action and language, however chimerical it may be. Shoshana Felman proffers the explanation in *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and Literature* by speaking of the notion of trauma as not encrypted in the past but as an on-going, ‘evolving’ and recurring process which co-opts the present. Its claim to truth is the persuasive appeal to the public to lend a willing ear to the stories of ‘witnesses and survivors’; and again like Caruth emphasizes the incompleteness of the re-recovery. In her book *The Juridical Unconscious*, Felman presents the notion of ‘literary justice’ as opposed to ‘legal

justice’: she distinguishes the two in the radically opposing attitude to ‘closure’—the legal meaning is an ending, whereas the literary representation denies this finality of closure to trauma and hence does it justice.

### **4.3.3 Trauma Theory and Colonialism**

The Western theories of Trauma spearheaded by Caruth and Felman came under fire for their lack of acknowledgement of the political vicissitudes that are the source of trauma. In particular, critics like Michael Rothberg corral Trauma Theory for its excessive Americanism and Eurocentricism in that it generated its theories from the Holocaust experience. This event-based and individualistic model was arraigned as it couldn’t be used as truss work to hang the colonial and racial trauma without first decolonizing Trauma Theory itself. The Holocaust belonged to a specific historical period, had clearly classified victims and perpetrators, and hence it was easier to peg responsibility.

This is not the case with long term sustained subjugation of a people leading to trauma originating in colonialism. One way to achieve this is viewed as the situating of social and political histories of the subjugated groups alongside the dominant groups. History is the context of loss of homeland, experience of exile and violence. Caruth et al continue to bank on the continued impact of trauma and therefore foreground the ‘victim’; a position which is untenable in the postcolonial discourse with its recuperation and resilience emphasizing the ‘survivor’ over the ‘victim’ status. The former is relegated as it focuses on the melancholy and crippling state of trauma as against the more rejuvenative approach of the writers where the traumatic ‘wound’ is presented and re-presented, but ultimately, the denouement deals with affirmative action through healing and growth. Irene Visser in her essay titled ‘Decolonizing Trauma Theory: Retrospect and Prospects’ claims,

‘Postcolonial literature provides many examples that support the claim that trauma itself instigates a strong need for narrative in order to come to terms with the aftermath of colonial wounding...Narrativization is empowering to individuals and their communities, and is in fact crucial to cultural survival’ (8).

In the Indian context, Partition Literature continues to narrativise the spectrum of colonial trauma. The historical context when paired with the sociological exigencies reveals the making of traumatic experience and the aporia these create in individuals

and communities. That this is a generational enterprise is a given; and, in order to excavate the wound, one must traverse the trajectory of not only subjugation but the complicity that allowed the perpetuation of subjugation. Trauma theory indeed needs to incorporate the localized systems of knowledge, beliefs and ways of life to allow for a more comprehensive look at trauma. In this regard, all Partition Literature is a representation of trauma: the first phase of Partition Literature dealt in stark depiction of trauma—social and personal—in a realistic vein. The present study concentrates exclusively on the physical and psychological trauma depicted in the first phase of Partition Literature. The ills are hung out for all to see and the after effects are clearly neither depicted with coyness nor cloaking of the reality per se.

The past is a real, not merely a temporal space; but a memorial space of belonging to a physical space and a socio-economic space. The politics of forging new identities in newly independent nations often works on the premise of the ability for large scale self- and/or collectively imposed amnesia. Yet the politics of forgetting is to be questioned as privileging of hierarchy takes place in the cause of the endeavour or its implementation. The intense process of generating an antagonistic other, the vituperative prejudice against this monster, the violent conflict that sees itself represented in the segregation of population assuming majority and minority status; engaging fear, the re-mapping of territory and its bifurcation as the only solution for b/ordering to settle permanently an apparently every day, escalating and irreconcilable conflict: are the modes deployed to create the politics of Partition. Remembering is a process fraught with pitfalls; exile and resettlement, for many, meant a new opportunity to pull themselves up by their bootstraps and create a life aspired to. Often, the very premise of their suffering is the bargaining chip for repatriation; their memory then becomes the very mode for material repatriation and much manipulation occurred in this regard. As wave after wave of refugees came, they moved into the homes of those who had moved on to the other country; in this settler rights belonged to those who came first and those who came later had mostly squatting rights. Remembering then is imbued with negotiation of the present reality for a better future and scores of people brought with them testimonials to prove the veracity of their participation and incarceration during the freedom movement; while the genuinely displaced poor with no papers to prove their credentials were pushed further into the periphery. This jostling for physical space with their memory of trauma is evident in

*This Is Not That Dawn*. How genuine or otherwise is the memory of the trauma used to barter for better prospects is known only to those who actually made claims and leveraged an upwardly mobile possibility based on their ‘tragedy’. Thus, it is apparent that history meets people in the ways they remember the past and the modes they use to commemorate that past.

History, as the repository of the fluid past, is often viewed from the watershed of several cataclysmic events. The creation of a standard official version and the cultural remembering of the same events run parallel to each other. Hence, the received narrative of Partition is embedded within the larger conscious memory of the nation; whereas, the actual remembered stories are deeply personal and are rendered in consequentialist terms.

#### **4.3.4 Trauma as Identity Crisis**

This thesis purports to concentrate on the initial response to Partition, the trauma reflected in the primary texts either directly depict the experience and delineate the trauma setting in as caused by their unsettling experiences or indirectly suggest the trauma felt/seen through the characters’ experiences so as to only hint at the horror of the events. *Toba Tek Singh* sites the narrative within the confines of the asylum where the inmates are already in a delicate frame of mind. The news of the exchange only serves to unsettle them further and the actual exchange evokes violent responses culminating in Bishen Singh aka Toba Tek Singh’s death. *Pinjar* commences with Pooro’s abduction as settling an old family score to see the erosion of her identity. The marriage of Pooro to Rashida was shorn off its ritual pomp and social ceremony associated with it across cultures and communities. This was essential to settle old scores in the phase of existing hostilities that prevented a ‘normal’ negotiation but was a retributive judgement enacted by Rashida amidst political turmoil. But it is the tattooing of her new identity on her forearm that splits forever her identity between Hindu Pooro and Muslim Hamida.

‘From that day “Hamida” was not only inscribed on her skin in dark green letters but everyone began to call her by that name.

In her dreams, when she met her old friends and played in her parents’ home, everyone still called her Pooro. At other times she was Hamida. It was a double life: Hamida by day, Pooro by night. In reality, she was neither one nor the other; she was just a skeleton, without a shape or a name.’ ( )

Her pregnancy is viewed with distaste—as an alien invasion, but with the birth of her son, Pooro makes peace with her past and adjusts to her changed circumstances. What is noteworthy is her admirable empathy for life's outcasts whom she empathizes with and strives to help. Whether it was Kammo or the mad woman who suddenly bursts on the humdrum life of the village, Pooro befriends both—Kammo succumbs to threats and keeps away, while Pooro discovers the death of the madwoman in childbirth. She adopts the baby and nurses it as if her own.

Pooro is distraught when the Hindu community snatches the baby on the grounds that the woman who delivered the baby was a Hindu; but when the baby refuses to attend to their ministrations and is near death, they hand the baby back to Pooro. Then she hides the stray woman who seeks shelter in their sugarcane fields and treats her like her own daughter. When she hears news of a refugee convoy, she sends the girl back with her former fiancé after having extracted the promise that she would be returned to her family. From her former fiancé she also learns of the abduction of his sister. She, in turn, pledges to find her whereabouts and let them know. She confesses all her actions to Rashida and persuades him to assist her in tracing Lajo's whereabouts. Rashida learns that she was left behind in her village itself and is now kept as a wife in a Muslim household. His investigations come to a standstill as he cannot invade the domestic space without arousing suspicion. Pooro takes over as a *khes* seller and indeed manages to locate her. On the pretext of bringing Lajo an amulet to ward off evil, she wins the trust of her mother-in-law. She tells Lajo to be ready to be kidnapped by Rashida and her assurance works wonders in Lajo's disposition. Lajo is 'abducted' by Rashida and she is looked after tenderly by Pooro. She even ventures back to Lajo's in-laws place, braving the risk of being spotted and confirms that no one suspected her role in the episode. The Recovery programme of the government bestows a promising window to smuggle Lajo back to her family. Pooro's own abduction by Rashida and her family's helplessness and rejection in the face of social pressures does not embitter her. She hasn't totally wiped out the memory of her parents and fiancé; in fact she goes in search for news of Ram Chand when she accompanies Rashida's cousin's mother for treatment in a village close to Rattowal. The first meeting ends in her crying and his wanting to be of help; in the second meeting, he confronts her and asks if she is Pooro and she declares Pooro dead and walks away without once turning back. When Rashida brings news of their harvest

being set to fire and rumour of her brother's involvement, Pooro is torn between pride in her brother and the sadness that they are out of her reach. In the refugee camp, she is eager for news about her family.

Rashida had met Ram Chand and had convinced him of meeting in five days at Lahore so as not to raise undue suspicion about Lajo. He also wanted Pooro to have the opportunity of the brother who was but a babe when she was abducted. When they meet, they embrace and cry for the 'what might have been' and Pooro extracts the promise that whatever happened to Lajo in her wrongful abduction and confinement will not be held against her; that she will be treated with respect and honour. Rashida magnanimously overlooks her brother's act of arson in burning their harvest as reparation for his sister's abduction. Pooro also gently disengages from her brother's embrace and reiterates, "When Lajo is welcomed back in her house, then you can take it that Pooro has also returned to you. My home is now in Pakistan.' (80) The journey of Pooro is her attempt to doctor her own self. After her abduction, she is held captive for a fortnight in which Rashida does not harm her in any way. Her escape to her family is a cry to be enfolded in the safety of her own people. She is a captive of divided loyalties. The Baisakh celebration pulsates with memories of how they celebrated the festival. Each time old memories push forth, Pooro is taken hold of a loathing of her changed circumstances. The loathing gives way to acceptance of her lot with the birth of her son. The Partition happens a good fifteen years later and fifteen years is a long time for the ebb and flow of memory to be anything but peripheral occurrences.

#### **4.3.5 Trauma and Survival**

Yet, the incident of searching for Ram Chand is Pooro's way of trying to figure out why he made no attempt to find her and do right by her. The denouement clearly allows for realization that when she was abducted, it was a solitary case and social pressure overrode ethicality; whereas during Partition, abduction and rape, prostitution, forced conversion and marriage were more the norm than the exception. Hence, families bowed to the extraordinary circumstances and sought to recover their daughters and daughter-in-laws. Pritam argues strongly in favour of acceptance and it appears as though their past was overlooked as a onetime solution to their victimization where the family and the victim were equally helpless to do anything to

prevent the violence. For Pooro, she is filled with a zeal to restore and finds restitution as a mission as a salve to her own betrayal when she concedes, ““Whether one is a Hindu girl or a Muslim one, whoever reaches her destination, she carries along my soul also.”” (80) Pritam ends the narrative on a note of ‘repair’; though in no way is it a ‘happily ever after’ state. It makes way for a re-view of the helplessness of the victims, their lack of agency, the social practices that allow women to be easily violated; her status is equated to that of property whence they can be objectified and abused in order to hurt the male pride and honour.

The trauma narrative in *This Is Not That Dawn* tears apart the veil that shadowed the harsh realities of Partition and instead throws light on not only on the insensate violence but also offers no easy solutions. Tara and Kanak are both victims in different senses of the term violence and Yashpal does not actively seek repair; instead, he empowers his women protagonists with resistance to an outmoded belief system that permits women the status of mere victuals. Banti, as is already discussed earlier in this chapter, survives the brutality only with the hope of reunion and reconciliation with her marital family, especially her son. Even in this instance, the violence within the family is oppressive and negates the woman’s need to connect emotively. Her purity is questionable as she had been separated at the time of siege and has only arrived months later. This interim period is a dark and unknown time of helplessness; where the remaining members of the family cobble together a life with prevarications offered for the absentees. They have not made any attempt at locating Banti or the other women members of the family whom they have conveniently buried with the past in another place, which is now another country. Despite the strong appeals by the leaders of the two countries, the reunions often were denied and left bereft of any filial support.

The cynosure of *This Is Not That Dawn* ought to be the passages that tell and re-tell the stories of those ordinary women abducted, violated and abused, now stuck in an aangan with neither access to the basic amenities nor to the outside world. They bathe and relieve themselves in the aangan itself in front of each other with very little to offer by way of privacy. Even the clothes on their back don’t quite cover them. When Tara awakened in the aangan, she realizes that she’s been abandoned by the two thugs with a group of other hapless women.

‘Ever since the dreadful experiences of her wedding night, Tara’s sleep had been fitful and troubled. At Hafizji’s house she often had strange and terrifying nightmares about being dragged by the hands and feet, and about crying out for help while fighting to defend herself. Breaking out of sleep, she would lie in a cold sweat of terror.’ (444)

The women told Tara of the horrors of their trauma: the violence and abuse endured, the near animal-like existence they endured, the endless anxiety of what had befallen their families and the eternal waiting. The women kept their connections through a repetition of the stories about their families: ‘The women sat close together, and began telling their same old stories’ (458). After sleeping off the afternoon, the women were back at their chatting, repeating the stories about their families’ (459). While the other women clung passionately to their religious rituals and practiced the same, Tara is tormented by doubt: Gad had clearly turned his back on them, yet they persisted in their belief. Tara wonders why these women clung to the calamitous past at the cost of the future.

Though religion was the final fatality to the unified country ideal, the argument is hushed up. Religion is emphasized as a private affair and the British in their dealings too took pains to enforce this notion as an excuse to permit violence through their inaction. Religion is a major player in the sequence of events; litterateurs eviscerate the violence engendered by religious intolerance, yet writers rarely question the role of religion: the heightening of religious sentiment over the deficit of trust in everyday relationships. Men are imbued in religious fervor and fanatical acts of violence are sanctioned as if enjoined by the Divinity itself. Women are the Judas goats who are victimized and shredded off their dignity and self-respect; while simultaneously heroically uplifted for acts of self-inflicted violence that sanctifies the religious status and community honour. That women can have a life of their own and do have a right to lead their lives in accordance to their own individual choice is viewed as a western influenced custom. Tara complains about being shut up indefinitely and tries to provoke the other women to think of escape.

The women concur; yet they feel safe in their confinement. The extent of the horrors that they had experienced may be gauged in their willing captivity. Here they are assured of something to eat whilst left undisturbed. Their mind is already disturbed; but the relative safety of the aangan, locked from the outside is their shelter from their bruised and ruptured selves. Their fear is genuine and approaches terror at the

prospect of having to venture beyond the aangan and to fend for themselves. Using mythological metaphors and likening their collective circumstance to ‘a fruit plucked from the tree’ which cannot be re-attached, they yearn for the shelter of their marital families but fear that they will be denied this deepest longing. They worry of being prostituted and hope either to die—either through divine intervention or by attempting suicide—before such a predicament befalls them. They are captives of their fate and find succor in it; rebellion demands too much volition and courage, which have been drained out of them through the vicious experiences each of them had undergone.

The women cling to their routines to have a grasp on some semblance of normalcy. That they were violated and suffered untold abuses is a given, yet they carry within the deepest recesses of their mind the hope of rescue from the hell hole they find themselves stuck in. Tara has no such illusions of rescue and firmly believes that God is an unreliable agent in his random acts that perpetuate horrific cruelty and His plans are both inscrutable and inexplicable. She would rather use her limited agency to break free and end it all than await being rescued from her fate by men who may have in store a fate worse than the endless waiting and inhuman existence led by them in the aangan. This is justified a few pages away when Durga is dragged away by the old woman to be sold into prostitution. Banti’s belief that her fate owes to the cowardice of her male folk who use her as a ticket to safe passage does not prompt any ill will; she continues her daily routine in the hope of being united with her young son. These unfortunate women feed on the dregs of hope of being rescued from their hellish existence and that since circumstances conspired to render them helpless, the situation would turn tables and everything would be righted again. Despite their straight talk evincing the prevalent social strictures, there is a teeny hope that things will be different for them. Their rescue by the Indian Recovery team and the subsequent belying of hope in Banti’s case testifies to Tara’s practical approach. The women keep the social decorum but the men folk are oblivious and either have no qualms for their plight or have moved on having interred all shameful reminders in the past. Tara’s denial of marriage or any other tragedy that befell her, viewed as a coping strategy, is revealed as a survival strategy. Her marriage and rape is of no interest to anyone, especially her, because it circumscribed her existence and denied her control over decisions that affected her the most. These events impress upon her the need to consciously layer life to fit in while simultaneously to have a modicum of power to

control and direct her own life. Tara is absolutely right in equating powerlessness with their helplessness. Having experienced it first hand, Tara takes sufficient and conscious steps to ensure that she will never be in such a position of utterly ceding control over her life and limb ever again. Her experiences revive in her a zeal to provide opportunities to right wrongs as in the case of Sheelo. The sharp and strong ethicality that guides Tara's actions spring from the depths of despair she had undergone at the hands of men in circumstances not of her making. Tara's faith in choice and exercising agency as a path to happiness is shorn off the safety net of social mores and expectations in traditionally assigned roles.

Even though she is aware that her desire to escape the overwhelming social credo has landed her to jump from the frying pan to the fire, Tara reposes her faith in the power of free will and choice as affirmative action against the conformity of waiting to be rescued so as to appear within the confines of the very social mores that put them in this untenable position in the first place. The women's faith in God and their men folk was misplaced as the unfolding action goes on to prove. Tara resculpts a new identity with 'vital' pieces of information missing to ensure that she will not be coerced into strait jackets that will render her helpless and violate her helplessness. Her innate sense of right and wrong is founded on her sense of fair play rather than religion. Such an ethicality that bypasses the socio-religious doctrines of the time is a leap of faith; but Tara single handedly changes her fortune and assists others to transform their lives too. Kanak, both privileged and well supported, is the perfect foil for Tara: Tara appears weak and hapless in the face of Kanak's will to live her life in accordance with her choices. Kanak's choices are blind-sided by her own willfulness; whereas, Tara's are informed by her experience of utter and total helplessness. While Kanak seeks to shape her life in accordance with her desires and choices, Tara proceeds to reinvent a life that in no way resembles her previous one. Both the protagonists are educated and show strong independent streaks: but while Tara plots and plans her life to control the outcomes, Kanak's choices and decisions appear to spring from a need to live life unfettered by her family. Both the characters seek to live their lives in defiance of family: Tara denies her family because she perceived that they didn't understand her and support her, she blames them for her 'fate'; while Kanak, defies her family as too supportive to the extent of stifling her and cocooning her. For Tara, the violence and abuse of Partition puts her on the path to salvation and

her marriage to Dr. Nath is a marriage of minds; on the other hand, Kanak is enamored of Puri's writing and mistakes the author's content for the author himself. Kanak's romanticism and her family's perceived affront set her up for re-looking life from a more grounded position.

#### **4.3.6 Trauma and the State**

The sense of the past as is apprehended from the state's narrative version is one of a distant past, an object of scrutiny for an intellectual study. There is appreciable detachment between the event and its relevance in the present. The details of the event are to be found in the tomes of paper work, the speeches delivered by the various leaders, minutes of meetings, bureaucratic paperwork prepared in meticulous observance of legalese and government direction, the parliamentary debates on the various issues regarding Partition and all of these lie in archives and sieving through this humungous paperwork is a project of magnanimous proportions. Each process of filtering of this database leads to highly distilled and crystallized information; but the fear persists that some fact or data has been subsumed by intellectual prejudice or social bias. Another important factor is that a lot of the extant paperwork is classified information and is in the government's custody. As and when such papers are declassified, new information would surface and throw new light on what is already known. Thus, to know the event in its entirety and wholeness is a chimerical thought. The social memory that forms another continuum is in stark contrast to official versions and is personalized in response to 'what had happened' and, depending on the generational aspect, were either victims/survivors or inherited this memory. Victim voices are being recorded by social scientists in the form of oral histories. The past is current in the present in such a telling of the story of Partition. Partition narratives look at inheritance and legacy of the past through the memorialization of the event. The state views this event at the level of an intellectual discussion where both inheritance and legacy are objectified. The social memory encompassed in literary narratives challenge the objectification of Partition legacy by raising questions of the moral and ethical nature of not only recognition but also responsibility. The writers probed the causality of the violent retribution that ensued while simultaneously describing the strategies employed in reconciliation of the past. This event defied the casting of identity by an avowal of public oblivion.

Political memory is usually constructed by elites, to convey minimum content and symbolic reductionism. Organized remembering and forgetting are tools for shaping a resemblance of citizens in order to make individuals feel attached to the collective frame of the nation.’ History often embodies a silo effect in that it is a repository of the knowledge of the past. The physical repository of such a knowledge lies in the library, archive and museum. Thus, the objects representing history neither form part of active memory nor do they gather dust to lie forever forgotten; but hold out the promise of being there for the future generations interested in its contents.

Memory, on the other hand, is a cultural construct that lies just below in the social plane, where individuals grapple with the changed notions of space and time. There is also the very subjective aspect of remembering, burying, selecting, recounting, and forgetting of such memories. The cultural artifacts of such memorialization are ever present in literary texts, painting, sculpture and monuments. The serialization of memory is comprehended as a legitimate ritual cleansing necessary to purge the violence of the past to move towards reconciliation and closure. Essentially, it is the fear of erasure that prompts the instinct to recover what lies deeply buried in memory.

The immediate aftermath shows the shock and disbelief that attends such horrific violence. The politics of experiencing and witnessing often overlap. The social norms of accepted behaviour and acts associated with shame come into play. The perpetrators want to forget that they were both alive and participated in or remained as passive actors in this mayhem. The victims want to bury their experiences for they associate shame with what had happened to them. In these interstices, the state steps in to assuage memory of violence enacted and experienced, the general narrative dwells on the events impervious to individual pain and suffering. Cultural memory reposed in its artifacts recoup this loss by rendering the invisible porous. When the state’s narration follows a linear time span, cultural memory is diachronic—whirling between the past and the present—in fluid continuation, recollection is either triggered, filtered, remembered or forgotten.

The ‘biological finitude’ of individual lives circumcises the role of individual memory. The historical continuity defies the death of individual memory in favour of the collective memory as a social framework underpins a collective consciousness. ‘[...] four dimensions through which generational conflict underpins the politics of

meaning formation in a given culturally coherent setting. This background is the context in which memory appears as carriers of meaning, as they structure perceptions of time, link individual consciousness to the collective group experiences in an inter-generational fabric of memory, and create symbolic universes.’ (Wydra Harald 2013) The linear notionality of history makes for an objectified and verifiable meaning. The cultural meaning is subjective and subversive in its diachronic transition to before Partition and after Partition that seamlessly traverses the terrains of nostalgia, dismay, regret, pain, displacement, loss, violence, reconciliation, rupture along political, social, historical, spatial and temporal frames.

The euphoria of attaining the much vaunted and awaited independence from foreign rule was laced with the bitter violence of Partition. The elation soon turned to bewilderment and betrayal. Ismat Chughtai laments: ‘What a tragedy that they divided freedom into two parts and handed the parts to the people, saying “Pakistan is for the Pakistanis and Hindustan for the Hindustanis.” But when the accounts were settled it became apparent that the bigwigs of Hindustan and Pakistan got everything while those who were empty-handed before Partition remained empty-handed still.’ (447)

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

The Holocaust has been collected, documented, recorded, narrativised, fictionalized, filmed, memorialized so much so that it has become the benchmark in analyzing, assessing and theorizing about many other genocides, wars and pogroms of orchestrated violence. This is true of Partition Studies too where vocabulary associated with the Holocaust is deployed to re-engage with an event that has largely escaped public memorializing. The auto-narrative impulse in oral history is shored up to add weight to an event/issue that has been often summed up as momentary insanity and brushed aside as not worthy of re-opening old wounds for they would serve no purpose other than to incite violence and thirst for retributive justice.

Yet, Partition Literature, auto-narratives, oral histories, witness accounts, journalistic pieces not only capture the pain and senselessness of the moment; but have frozen the fragment that now serves as the impetus to engage with the event. The chief event i.e. independence, is completely overshadowed by Partition. The birth of the two newly-minted countries of India and Pakistan is eclipsed by the violence and brutality of Partition. While the freedom struggle is linearly time-lined in history books with

events, dates, dramatis personae, Partition is best under-presented as it is an uncomfortable reminder of the not so non-violent means by which freedom was served.

While historiographers and social historians alike arraign and indict Partition historiography, Partition Literature has frozen the frames of the upheaval for posterity. The silencing of the brutality, death and mayhem by the state imposed amnesia is forced and unethical. This can be viewed as patriarchal excess—with the state assaying the role of mai-baap sarkar to the victims—when the state intervenes to re-structure the events that played out, especially the peaks and troughs of this crescendo-like build up to the finale. This convenient forgetting puts the state in the dock for *culpable homicide*—for murdering, dismembering and scattering the memories of Partition.

Memory is a word associated with the past and any theorization of memory calls into question the ways in which the past is both recalled and reviewed, thereby having implications for historiography. Maurice Halbwachs' theorization of memory of having a 'collective social' function opened avenues that allowed for the evaluation of memory as a social construct. Thus, memory was implicated in the social relationality of experience. Memories resisted crystalline frames and instead were noted to be unduly open to both manipulation and revisionary attempts. What tied these two aspects of memory was its plausibility of being forgotten.

The human need for belonging spliced together with common lore is socially mediated. This social theorization of memory has progressed to assume the trajectory of cultural memory. Memory then is not so much a re-construction of the past as investing meanings into events. Memory is also suggestive of a plurality of sources and a diversity of interpretation: when collective memory entrenches and metamorphoses into cultural memory, it poses a challenge to the received notion of historiography viz. the tendency to raise the event to mythic levels or to paralyze into inaction under the weight of its baggage. A sanitized version of the past is employed by the state to reinforce and popularize an edited programme to vet out painful and discomfiting aspects of the past.

Literature is the fertile ground that embeds memory into narrative forms. In doing so, Partition Literature conflates the 'haunting' aspect of that memory into the very past

being recontoured by the present. Critiquing Partition Literature has to resist this temptation and instead focus on retrieving a suppressed/repressed past. Suppression/repression are exercises in shielding from the horrific past, but what it also entails is a willful forgetting that does grave injustice to that very past in permitting the horrors to seep into amnesia and its consequent assimilation into statist historiography that deletes the inconvenient horror to re-frame a non-violent freedom.

All the novels under study propel their fictive worlds into assimilative modes except *Toba Tek Singh* which ends in the finality of death. The threat is omnipresent and the writers make no bones about it. Ruptures are suffered and quietly endured by the individuals; others experience their ruptures in absences: in the reticence to talk about their experiences, in the resistance to admitting their victimization, in the opposition to voice the violation that tinges it in colours of shame, in the compulsion to valorize suicide, in the attempt to induce amnesia to ward off memory for it burdens the present with guilt and complicity.

Yet another aspect that must be urgently realized is that burying the past does not in any way negate its impact on either the present or the future. Unless the past is confronted, it will continue to lurk menacingly and haunt indefinitely. Obliterating the past offers no guarantee that the past won't repeat itself. Tara's knowledge of her family's survival and well-being does not prompt a reunion; rather, she deliberately seeks the anonymity of distance to carve a new life. That new life is with a man from the past, Dr. Prem Nath. Tara is thus selective of the past she wishes to bury and/or resurrect. For Pooro, on the other hand, the past is her nemesis, one she confronts each time she encounters a victim. It is in her power of empathy and her will to intervene to mitigate the hapless victims' circumstances that Pooro is able to assuage her own ever-present sense of loss.

Tara's family have swallowed Somraj's version of her death as this was not contradicted by Puri who was aware of Tara's whereabouts. After Somraj's meeting with Tara, both Puri and he conspire with Sood to call into question the integrity of Dr. Nath and Tara for they are persistent thorns in the path to their political clout. Tara's experience of violence sensitizes her to the plight of others and she uses her good offices to assist the less fortunate with a foothold to a better life. Though Puri

witnessed the horrors of Partition, his sense of helplessness is converted into a greedy, grasping at power to secure his own survival as against helping others.

On the other hand in *Pinjar*, Rashida colludes with Pooro on her mission to minister to the wounds of the strays she collects as expiation for his brutal act of abduction that cuts Pooro off from the bosom of her family. *Tamas* re-visits a riot and eviscerates the making of a riot—the cold-blooded machinations and the detached manipulation that lead to a very avoidable catastrophe. Human lives and relations become pawns in the larger game of politics over religion, leaving all communities handicapped and the British holding the upper hand owing to the trust deficit between the communities carefully cultivated by them as it would not serve their interests.

*Toba Tek Singh* deals with the problematic question of identity i.e. shouldn't the place of one's birth and adulthood define the individual as against religion and nation? Surely Manto is right in stating that such an 'imposed' identity is equivalent to death as such strait jackets represent constrictions that ensure the erasure of the very vitality of the homeland. The cataclysmic event of Partition continues to impact social relations and frames identity in oppositional terms of 'us' versus 'them'. Muslims who chose to remain behind continue to be called upon to prove their loyalty to the nation. Non-Muslims who stayed back had a different future: their place was already certified by their very belonging to the place. The place accorded to them depended on their caste and their position in the social hierarchy of the freedom movement. If their status was sufficiently high, they were rewarded with plum positions in the government machinery. If they occupied the bottom rungs, they continued to be marginalized.

Trauma, in most Partition Literature, is subcutaneous, constantly rupturing the skin in painful lesions that resists containment and testify to the oscillating of memory to before and after Partition. The trauma is skin deep—not in terms of the depth of its impact or its residual place—but it's easy ability to be never far away from where it mounts ruptures on the everyday normalizing tendency to forget. Partition Literature takes up the case for remembering Partition as opposed to forgetting trauma.

The legacy of Partition is often described as an amputation; the ruptures caused akin to the ways in which the ghost limb makes its presence felt in spite of its certain absence. Therefore, Partition Literature is the narrativizing of the shame and abuse

within the frames of cultural trauma. The fragmentation of families, the almost instantaneous reversal of social status, the violent reprisals experienced generates in the affected communities a hyper-vigilant state. From the pre-Partition position of cordial and integrated relations, Partition has ushered in closed communities through the intense and insidious process of othering.

The Partition texts chosen for this examination reveal inter-dependent community networks practicing tolerance and filial co-existence, and the current the secular credentials of the state appear manufactured and imposed from above. The horrific violence and abuse frames the 'us' versus 'them' binary in oppositional terms to incite violence and a need to settle old scores. Dissociation from the shame and anger of these memories is not an answer. The mind is not a tablet that can be wiped clean of unpleasant and discomfiting memories unless as a strategy to survive through the suppression/repression of those memories. That cultural trauma is constructed as a counter-history to willful forgetting is certified in keeping the event 'alive'. Exclusion of the violence in received notions of the past diminishes and deducts the validity of their pain and suffering.

By making a pathology out of the non-agency is a tendency to dishonour their sacrifice. Remembering the violence and trauma is essential to emancipating the victims and saluting the grit and determination to survive in the face of the vilest of odds. More than the then governments' attempts at recovering victims and actively pursuing assimilistic goals within the larger scheme of repatriating exiles lay the challenge to psychologically recover the voices of trauma and integrate them in the larger narrative to remove the stigma of shame associated with these memories. The transformative power of such a position will yield a more nuanced reading by engaging in an ethical inclusion of the victim/survivor.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter Five is the concluding chapter of this study. It will be thus helpful to review the aims and objectives of this research work along with the hypotheses to assess whether the stated objectives have been met and whether the analyses bear out its hypotheses. Thus, this Chapter briefly adjudicates the first four chapters to summarize the aims and findings to enable a justification of the work undertaken not merely to justify this effort but also to assess its modest contribution to the body of research in the area of Partition Studies. The research in this area has seen a peak in the domains sought to be opened and new theories and texts being brought under its aegis. That Partition occurred seventy years ago and that it is old hat is not the feeling one gets from the copious amount of theses, books, research papers, art work, museum artefacts, movies—the interest is tremendous and abiding because it is our common legacy, a painful one at that, which needs to be confronted and accepted.

It is an indelible fact that freedom was accompanied by Partition and its horrors cannot be wished away no matter how the event may be twisted and turned. This study strove to uncover the truth as discovered in the primary as well as secondary texts to allow for the rage and sorrow to merge into an acknowledgement of the bitter truth. It has remained alert and wary of the perils of feeding delusions about the past that could result in burying the past and thereby, betray all those who suffered and died in the mayhem. Focused on the objective that their stories should not be allowed to vanish because they may not fit in with the putative idealized version, this study has chosen to speak of the harsh reality over the convincingly golden silence.

Every book on India's freedom struggle faithfully culminates with her *tryst with destiny*<sup>1</sup>. Yet, that *tryst* orchestrated in an ascending crescendo, transcending the troughs and peaks of the struggle is an exclusivist appropriation which only highlights high politics. This *tryst* leaves most intelligent, curious and sensitive readers with a feeling of incompleteness, an intangible sense of being adrift. This discomfiture is dealt with in the literary representations whose overarching theme is the truncation of

the sub-continent into India and Pakistan. Thus literary outpouring—novels, dramas, short fiction, auto-narratives, diary writing, poetry, even the pained journalistic pieces—complete this particular jigsaw puzzle.

Though the jigsaw puzzle is being put together by Partition Studies, the canvas is vast, the tapestry is thickly layered, and this compilation is a mammoth project which leaves one wondering whether it will remain a perennial project with no end in sight. Why is this high voltage focus trained on this topic? Why this seemingly endless quest for investigation and documentation? The answer lies elsewhere: the pervasive sense of loss, betrayal and silence hauntingly evoke a sense of injustice, torn between *batwara* and *azadi*. Time honoured generally accepted norms form the principle of natural justice. The social ramifications of punishment are often dictated by the conscience which encapsulates moral values and widely shared sensibilities. Crime and punishment have an entrenched linearity in the socio-communal frame of reference, literally a cause-effect relationship. The delivery of justice in case of transgressions involves the victim's right to redressal and the oppressor's right to defense; the refereeing of which would be by an objective person not related to the transgression for an impartial hearing acting rationally and in good faith.

Such a procedure delivers closure by tying up all the loose ends and a sense of justice done prevails. Partition's loose ends lie in the lack of accountability in order to fix responsibility for this dastardly act. Who is to be blamed for Partition? The colonial administration who acquiesced to cleaving the country? The Hindu Mahasabha and the majoritarian population who rode the wave of nationalism? The Muslim League who propagated the idea of a separate Muslim Nation state? The British who brought swathes of land under one central power using the divide and rule policy? The leadership spearheading the freedom movement who failed to keep the sub-continent whole? The provincial functionaries who played petty politics? The brown sahibs: brown on the outside and white on the inside—who executed the travesty of the transfer of power? The lack of foresight, the undue haste and the utter lack of preparedness to handle the consequences of the transfer of power by the viceroys invested with overseeing a smooth and painless exit? Such and a host of other questions still await an answer.

The sense of injustice, alluded to earlier, emanates from the immutable fact that the common people paid the price for the sins of commission and omission of the chief architects of Partition. The scenes of rioting and mayhem, the vulnerability of women and children, the creation of the refugee, the migration led recasting of local demographics, the communal vigilantism—all find their ways into the pages of Partition Literature. The expression of agony and anguish by the affected by the concerned is seen by the affected as mere tokenism of vested interests to the firsthand experience of Partition. The need to fix responsibility and to find the culprit underlies each parley into Partition Studies. Sufficient camouflage is deployed to allay the blame game; yet, that deep seated sense of injustice and the futility of the violence that followed pervade all of Partition Literature. Yet, a major camouflage is the deft weaving and re-weaving of history and fiction. If anything, it unfolds an additional, vital dimension for analysis i.e. the experience of the subject—individual motive, action and response.

### **5.1 HISTORICIZING FICTION/FICTIONALIZING HISTORY**

Partition Literature transcends discipline specific compartments to merge several disciplinary areas in the multiple re-inventions in each re-telling. This multivocality not only necessitates a closer look at *representation* as a central strategy to engage with the historical past, but also the **listing of the observations** made as a result of such a revisioning.

- a) While the novels are expository in nature, the ways in which history is layered in the dialogue, description, characterization, themes and images, it offers multiple keys to interrogate and comprehend not only the historical reality that is dealt with but also the exact nature of that representation.
- b) Authors represent the ordinary individual's take on the events as opposed to the national narrative; the individual viewpoint is sometimes favoured over the historical truth, sometimes the impact of the event is described from a cross-cultural diasporic outlook and yet other times the victim's lament comes to the fore in recounting the past.
- c) The methods employed to exhaust these possibilities range from the stark realism of fidelity to facts to the magic realism and the phantasmagoric; each

structuring reality using metaphor, simile, irony, satire, parody and morbid humour to make their point.

- d) Simultaneous juxtaposition of the master history alongside the imaginative reconstruction makes all these works concise political critiques in the foregrounding or the subversion of the deifying quality in historical grand narratives. Fictional representation then throws the gauntlet at the objectivist *truth* of history writing and through intense focus and engagement carves a space for the suppressed/excluded voices to vocalize their experience.
- e) To put it metaphorically, the writer then is a pugilist in the ring of history competing against the *official* stance with a pluralistic rendering that belies the *official* truth. This revision of history and story, between so called facts and fiction effectively problematizes reality as is known and accepted. The authors fictionalize history by punching holes in the established historiography and/or by partially distorting the event by taking liberties in the way they have depicted history. The earmarked event is a tightly bound silo of territoriality, almost insular, for the outside world does not breach this formation.
- f) The neutral position of historians is debunked in favour of the active participation in the event being chronicled. The bubble wrapped reality of the past is steeped in the notion of the knowledge of the present impinging and influencing the re-accounting of the past. The dual inter- and counter-influence between time past and time present, between form and content lies in exploring the dynamics of individual identity that is inextricably woven with the past.
- g) The identification with the singular linear narrative of history is a means to bring under control the diversity by expanding its writ/impact over the plural to divide and subsume it.

These observations lead on to the following findings with regard to the palpable authorial motive and outcome behind the use of history-fiction interface in the primary texts under study:-

- a) Such an intercession is to preserve memory from the ravages of time: external (as mummified in historical narratives) and internal (what the individuals reminisce).

b) Memory and its recounting of the event is akin to holding a mirror that collects the shards of the personal, social, political and historical facets to collage the distortion in the stultified annals of history as against the self conscious and self reflexive distortions of imaginative representation.

c) These explorations re-conceive history and by coupling it with the personal arrive at the re-visioning of history itself.

d) Memory's shifting sands that create, experience, emote, value, judge, suppress, erase and recast personal history are sifted to demythify the monolithic historical narratives.

## **5.2 THE NEED FOR PARTITION STUDIES**

For all outward appearances and purposes Partition has remained a taboo; unmentionable and therefore, not a topic for public discourse. Perforce, this attitude arises not from the riot narrative but in the 'unspeakable' violence etched on the bodies of women. The secular credentials enshrined in the Constitution makes it a duty neither through speech or action create any disturbance that could ignite the banked communal fires. This gave a free hand to narrate the history of the freedom struggle and the creation of the nation in objectivist terms so as to *neutralize* the polemic debates that raged in homes and minds that were divided in the process. The sense of having been cheated and the feeling of betrayal of the ideals of communal harmony are the two immediate conclusions that are pervasive throughout current scholarship in this area of study.

The relegation of Partition to the margins of history served to concentrate the nationalistic fervor onto more constructive and less disruptive activities. This, however, did not staunch the grief and horror of the Partition from being told. Writers penned novels that expressed the very truths and sentiments that were being sought to be silenced. The intelligentsia debated and argued: this brought in desultory articles which added to the area of knowledge termed as Partition Studies that is today an umbrella term encompassing inter-disciplinary areas and approaches to Partition. It is with the Subaltern Studies conclave that Partition Studies received its sustained and alternative inquiries into the event, the processes that concretized the event, the violent aftermath and its repercussions. The Partition propelled a mass migration to

the axiomatic ‘safety in numbers’ idea which is seen as two-way: to and from across the border of the two newly independent nations of India and Pakistan.

Today, much of the scholarship in the area of Partition Studies concentrates on the diaspora and transnational experiences of this diaspora making it evident that the Partition was carried by the people who crossed borders to make a home far away from either India or Pakistan. It is, thus, imperative that history should teach the Partition to include wider and in depth discourses on Partition. It has to be a cornerstone of the study of Indian independence and its development as a nation for it still casts long shadows over the nation and its relations with its neighbours.

Partition defines ‘our’ history in many ways and modes: this needs to find expression and must be communicated in as many words to prevent another bitter harvest. As India wrestles with territorial borders and demands for cessation within, the need to tell the cautionary tale of Partition becomes urgent; it should not remain the ballast that continues to justify and validate the idiom of violence indulged in by non-state actors. The primary texts of this study have cumulatively undertaken just such an enterprise of bringing to the fore Partition’s ‘cautionary tale’, as the brief re-look at their thematic focus and authorial vision will demonstrate.

### 5.3 THE PRIMARY TEXTS

Fictive narratives—long and short—have been briefly recapitulated below to provide a flitting glimpse at their core themes and authorial vision in the context of the objectives of this study.

#### 5.3.1 *Pinjar* (1950)

Amrita Pritam’s *Pinjar* exposes the pre-Partition times of hostility and commences with the audacious act of abduction to settle family scores. The times of unrest are such that it shuts all doors for the victim to be accepted back in her home/community. **The only way out to her is the ‘sanctity of marriage’.** She is married to her abductor, converted to Islam and given a new name that demarcates her existence between her Hindu natal and Muslim marital identities. Pooro flounders in this rupture: **yet, she prefers to exercise her newly kindled empathy to assuage the suffering of other women victims** of unfortunate circumstances than allowing her distress to embitter her. It becomes **her life’s mission**, and though she does feel a

pang of injustice when abducted women are recovered by inter-government agencies to be returned to the haven of their families, she does her bit to ensure the safe passage of Lajo, her former fiancé's sister/ her sister-in-law back into safe custody. She extricates the promise that the families will treat Lajo with respect and consideration without holding her abduction against her. Significantly, though she is offered the opportunity to return with her family, she asserts her right to be with her husband and family. **Trust and acceptance of her reality finally assuages her conflicts of conscience.**

### 5.3.2 *Tamas* (1973)

Sahni's novel **traces the strategy that incites the villagers** who have lived in relative harmony **by manipulating their religious sentiments** to disrupt the social fabric through a riot. The carcass of the pig on the stairs leading to the mosque is the cause of distress to the Muslim community who **suspect the act to be the evil design** of the Hindus. The Hindu members of the Prabhat Pheri help clear the carcass but Bakshiji's comment on 'kites and vultures' presages the magnitude of violence and loss of human lives. The Congress and League delegation, aware of the serious consequences such an act would reap, represent their case to the British command to intervene and preclude just such an eventuality. Richard, already aware of the signs of tension, refuses to mediate the religious matter of the local communities. **The arrival of outside elements fans the fires of communal passions** into a conflagration. Lives are lost, property is looted and damaged, and a full scale riot engulfs not merely this village but those in the vicinity too are affected. That is the juncture when Richard steps in with the backing of the entire government machinery at his disposal to stem the tide of violence. **The mere presence of the British quells the contagion** and all are enjoined to put their shoulder to recovery and recuperation activities. The reader is drawn into the **secret knowledge of the identity of the culprit** who escapes detection. Ironically, he is seated right next to the driver of the bus that is to set out to rally the people for peace. This is a text that **tangentially refers to informants and colluders with colonial forces who sow the seeds of communal discontent for personal profit.**

### 5.3.3 *Jhootha Sach* (1958, 1960)

Yashpal's *Jhootha Sach* is a two volume tome: the first part **re-imagines the gali biraadari** of a Lahore bye-lane and the ties that hold them together. The build up to independence is palpable in the **fervor with which events are read and discussed**. The **participation of the youth in the politics** of the times is indicated in the mention of incarceration, rallies and debates. The **gradual erosion of the harmonious coexistence for the protracted violence** is achingly narrated. Families are evacuated, the women are either jail bait or meal tickets, and men lose their agency. The agency of those prone to violence is given free rein. The second installment meanders along the lives of Puri, Kanak and Tara who chart their lives in the post-independent and post-Partition stage. Between Puri's avarice-fuelled ambitions, Kanak's personal battle to make her own choices and Tara's disavowal of her family for a career that relieves distress is the **critique of the ideals that fuelled the freedom struggle transmogrifying into currency for election campaigns**. It also attacks democracy deteriorating into crony capitalism and the leadership into functionaries as narrated in the story of the nation rising from the ashes of Partition.

#### **5.3.4 *Train to Pakistan* (1956)**

Kushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* uses the trope of trains as the site of brutal mass violence in the murder of the fleeing refugees. It is a novel that re-creates the quintessential Indian village where religion, profession and wealth design its organization. This arrangement has been predominant that no one questions the rigidly established contours of affiliation. The villagers have lived for generations in much the same set up to really wonder or worry about the manner in which space is aligned in accordance with hierarchy. What is consciously attended to is the socio-cultural fabric that binds the villagers in relationships of utmost filial trust and respect, is abruptly sundered by the Partition and this rapport wherein the Muslims are transported to a refugee camp in anticipation of their final evacuation to Pakistan. This is public knowledge: while one set of outsiders persuade a gang of local thugs to pitch in to derail the train and then decimate the passengers, Jugga is another miscreant who sacrifices his life to ensure the safe passage of the train that is carrying not only the love of his life but also his unborn child. The involvement of the various dramatis personae **in the act of instigating and participating** in the actual violence reveal that very often **outlaws and the easily malleable** are party to both: **those who**

shied away from the violence were the people who refused to desecrate the bonds of love, affection, trust and respect.

### 5.3.5 *River of Fire* (1959)

Qurratulain Hyder's *River of Fire* is a spirited tale of the transience of rulers and their reigns; but **narrates the incandescent permanence of friendship**. The novel reads like a time-travel novel as the main protagonists emerge in different ages to **re-present the history of the land** in its many variants. What these characters share is an abiding love for each other through the Hindu-Buddhist epoch, the Turco-Iranian age and the Mughal-Colonial eon. The colonial-post colonial phase **ruptures bonds that survived several centuries**. The colonial enterprise is vilified for its rapacious nature cloaked in terms of trade. The organized loot of the colonialists and the **resistance to the colonial rule** inform large parts of the novel. The nationalism that is infected with religious bigotry insists on **staking a claim to loyalty to the land that is religiously divided**. The camaraderie still binds the friends together but the woof and weft of their intimate lives unspool and leave them as émigrés in London, subaltern in India and exiled in Pakistan.

### 5.3.6 *Toba Tek Singh* (1955)

Sadat Hasan Manto's *Toba Tek Singh* viciously attacks the two-nation theory in terms of insanity. The purported exchange of the inmates of an asylum along their religious affiliations by the two governments is the site for an abrasive analysis of the scale of derangement that the politics of schism engendered. The inhumane violence initiated by the government/rulers/leaders who take decisions for the people without inviting and taking note of their needs and desires is derided. The lack of choice/forced choices that push people into strait jackets is parodied in *Toba Tek Singh*. It is his love for his native village, Toba Tek Singh, that contributes to keep Bishen Singh somewhat anchored. The news of the transfer of asylum inmates wreaks havoc with their fragile and tenuous hold on reality. When Bishen Singh realizes that his village will remain behind in Pakistan, he loses control and takes up vigil in no man's land where he ultimately breathes his last before the formalities of the exchange are finalized. It narrates **the metaphor of insanity to represent the divided loyalties that divided minds, communities and territory**.

### 5.3.7 *The Ice Candy Man* (1988)

Bapsi Sidhwa's *The Ice Candy Man* is a narration of the violence that engulfed the Hindu, Sikh and Muslim communities and is told from the position of a powerful though minority community. The **child narrator's innocence offsets the ghastly tale of retributive justice that unfolds in the wake of Partition**. Ayah is the centre of her world and her passport to the world outside. She observes the flirtatious competitiveness where Ayah's desirability quotient is high. Then violence erupts and Ayah's religious affiliation draws the communal ire and she is raped and prostituted before being married by the Ice Candy Man. Ayah is rescued by the grandmother and the family assists her escape to Amritsar back to her family. This fills the Ice Candy Man with remorse and he rushes off in search of her. The book is **a witness account of the insensate violence that ripped the city of Lahore apart at the seams of the very friendships that held them together**.

### 5.3.8 *Sunlight on a Broken Column* (1961)

Attia Hussain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column* narrates **the batwara of the nation through the division of the family**. Laila's home, Ashiana, is a sprawling mansion that holds the extended family in ties of love and duty. The death of Baba Jan and the subsequent changes in the political climate of the day see the family separate and pledging loyalty to different ideals: Kemal defying convention to stay rooted to his homeland, while Saleem proffers his commitment to the new country of Pakistan. Asad devotes himself to the upliftment of the people, while Zahid surrenders to the enticement of the promised land only to be killed before he even sets sight upon this land of promise. In this divide of the family is allegorized the division of the homeland into two nations. **The family is cited as the centre of the community and its disintegration becomes a metaphor of the Partition**.

## 5.4 TERRITORY, TEMPORALITY AND PARTITION: OBSERVATIONS AND FINDINGS

In all these narrations, the central tropes are that of terrain and identity, religion and identity, family as the site to gauge the impact of the politics of the time and the violence as insanity. Each of the novels centralizes the land: the visual tour de force is

the human arrangement of the land in pockets of hierarchical designations. In the following discussion, the sub-themewise observations and findings are reported.

With reference to the above subtheme, the following observations have to be made:

- a) Physical space is designed to engrave the economic parameters in the airy spatiality of the well to do and the crowded suffocation of the poor sections of the populace. Public spaces that invite the commingling of all are tied to the built sacral spaces of the places of worship. The profound connect to the land is attributed to the fixity of lived experience; any excursions from home are to meet social needs of rituals viz. marriage, birth, death, pilgrimage and such.
- b) Partition is the imaginary line that framed two countries in its moment of triumph i.e. independence from colonial imperialism. The fact of this sundering has left the countries tied to the event to navigate the present and future from this point of recalled history and its attendant blame-game. The antagonism is kept alive and their future independent of the other is incapable of escaping the violence engendered at birth.
- c) Mano Manjra in *Train to Pakistan* is every village; the villages in *Pinjar* are all the same; the village in *Tamas* is a nondescript village; the bye lane in *This Is Not That Dawn* is akin to a small village in the proximity of houses and kinship; the asylum in *Toba Tek Singh* is a self-contained community much the same as a village; the setting in *River of Fire* is cosmopolitan but the relationships reflected are intimate, mirroring the village system of kinship; *The Ice Candy Man* features an urban setting but concentrates on the villages of the periphery; and finally, *Sunlight on a Broken Column* draws in the village within the urban epicenter when the family visits their ancestral village.

The above observations facilitate the subsequent findings:

- a) Migration of any kind is unknown and the knowledge of the place is internalized and is absorbed in the unconscious/instinctive map of the place already there in the mind.

- b) Partition is first a time and then a place. Partition is declared first and people are mobilized to ensure that territorial divisions favor them because religious populations became the razor's edge.
- c) The re-mapping effected territorial re-imagining, population transfers, identity crisis and violence.
- d) The impression that the territorial division would contain the exacerbation of religious affiliations and avert a human tragedy is belied in the forced migrations and magnitude of violence unleashed by each community on the other.
- e) The literature pans the leaders for their myopic vision and colossal ineptitude.
- f) Whether it is an imagined village or an urban setting, the values and morals upheld are those of the provincial kinship norms of the villages.
- g) There is a distinct privileging of hierarchy—both in the space and the relationships—that envelops and influences the flow and ebb alike of human relationships and incidents.
- h) The patriarchal social formations are implicit in the telling of the stories.

#### **5.4.1 Territory and Kinship**

Some significant observations in this context are as under:

- a) The kinship between communities that acknowledge difference as part of identity and not the whole of it is central to these narratives. This harmonious existence with its petty quarrels and largely generous-hearted communities is at the heart of the tales of Partition. The land is the homeland: it is sacred, loved and revered. 'A place for everyone and everyone in its place' is the comforting trope of these narrations.
- b) From the assumed immutability of the innocence of the masses to the scale of violence that engulfed them is an entire terrain of 'unknowability': the causes that ignited the violence and sustained it are blurred in its magnitude.

It has been possible to deduce the following findings from the above observations:

- a) The writers represent the violence with honesty; but use the trope of insanity to describe its spread.
- b) There is no innocence lost in the violence: patriarchal norms collapsed and the violence was a reaction to contain that loss of power and privilege.

#### **5.4.2 VIOLENCE OF PATRIARCHY: WOMEN AS TERRITORY**

Attention, in this context, is drawn to the following observations:

- a) The silence surrounding the violent enactment of loss of patriarchal moorings is a valid evidence of the face-saving exercise that it was. Both the nations and the affected families sought to cover up the ‘shame’ in silence. The violence enacted on the bodies of women is tinted in patriarchal terms of ‘honor’ and ‘shame’.
- b) The history in text books, the new ceremonies to inculcate nationalistic feelings in the celebration of national days and the instilling of reverence for the leaders proceed to push the unsavory participation/victimization of the violence of Partition to the recesses of memory and family lore.

The above points admit the following findings:

- a) a) The women’s bodies were another terrain on whose person were etched the retributive justice to ‘dishonor’ the other and avenge their loss of ‘honor’.
- b) The statist narratives colluded to further validate the silence and lull the public to dull the ache of burdened memory.

#### **5.4.3 VIOLENCE AND RELIGION**

The observations from the discourse on the theme of violence and religion in the texts are:

- a) The national movement was generated to evict the colonial imperialists. The fight for independence was the fight against the atrocities committed by the foreign yoke against the people. The freedom struggle meant the possibility of having a say in their future as a matter of right and not imposed by the British Raj. History is full of examples of the subjugation of a people to foreign rule.
- b) The primary texts do have characters representing the colonialists; but they are subordinated to the Indian protagonists. What is noteworthy in these narratives

is that the hate is reserved for and venom is spewed at each other i.e. the Hindu-Sikh versus the Muslims.

The observations discerned above make the following points possible:

- a) Nowhere in this picture is vituperation heaped on the imperialists. The colonialists do not matter.
- b) The fight for independence came down to the 'us' versus 'them' of religious orthodoxies that were just part of one's identity and didn't represent the whole of it.
- c) The colonial mobilization of religious bias served its purpose of sowing dissention and reaping Partition.

## **5.5 NEW HISTORICISM AND PARTITION LITERATURE: OBSERVATIONS AND FINDINGS**

Partition Literature is the re-imagining of Partition in literary narratives. The historical tumult is at the centre of the texts as they explore the impact of the event on the lives of ordinary people. New Historicism's central practice of juxtaposing the literary with texts of other disciplines of the same period allows for an intimate scrutiny of the literary texts via ruptures that allow for greater freedom to 'know' the period and its raging debates, major experiences and high voltage events to get as close to the age as is possible; while being mindful of reading the past in terms of the present. A major contribution of the application of New Historicism is the interrogation of the statist narratives through the literary representations. Such an attempt investigates meaning by identifying and locating the processes of signification to assess the aesthetic value of the texts. Texts no longer were seen as the work of genius in solitude but as a consumable product of its time, place and circumstance. The observations and findings from this approach are listed under the various segments representing the different subthemes below.

### **5.5.1 PARTITION STUDIES AND THE PRIVILEGE OF THE ELITES**

The reading of the primary texts afford the following observations:

- a) The leaders, their ideas, their actions and their lives are followed with exactitude and are exemplified; the masses are relegated to the status of

followers, their identity is merged so as to almost portray them as a lumpen mass. The objectivist discourses are uniform in content, have an overarching presence in the idolizing of the leaders: their ideas, their struggles, their sacrifices up to the final moment of triumph is depicted in an either-or binary.

- b) Partition unleashed violence: the perpetrators and the victims alike are the common people; the leaders are the proactive sources that appeal for peace and the validation of human dignity.

The following findings are based on these observations:

- a) Key notions and their informing the various movements—like Ahimsa and Satyagraha—are conceptualized by the leaders and intimately associated with the leaders; the violence is identified with the masses.
- b) The leaders traverse a moral upper hand of ideals while the followers are often viewed in conjunction with the unsavory fact of violence

### **5.5.2 PARTITION AND THE SUBALTERN**

The noteworthy observations herein are:

- a) The leaders are portrayed as visionaries who sacrificed privilege for nurturing and building the momentum of the freedom struggle. The sacrifice of the masses is negated by the Partition.
- b) The sheer myopia of the leadership is evident in not foreseeing such an eventuality and failing to put in place administrative measures to reduce, if not prevent, the violence.
- c) History, in the statist versions, traces the trajectory of the politics of the freedom movement; but it is the masses who lived the experience of loss—of home and land—to be forced into exile: both spatial and psychological.
- d) The masses went through the ordeal of privation, violence and rupture of lived everyday normality. The masses literally had a trial by fire and their baptism into citizens of the newly minted nations was through the flames of violence.
- e) The erosion of human dignity, trust and respect which were the touchstones of community life was the last straw that nailed the coffin.
- f) The freedom struggle was essentially about an idealized nation and the idolized leaders. The ethical fight—for freedom from colonial imperialists and

independence to chart their own destiny—was crafted through the notions of satya, ahimsa and satyagraha. The non-violent struggle is privileged over the revolutionary trope that vouchsafes violence in the overthrow of the imperialists. This non-violent struggle provided an opportunity for the British to confer independence upon India while leaving open an honorable exit clause for their retreat.

- g) The question that begs an answer is: ‘honor’ is accorded to the British colonialists but not to one’s own people? The leaders crowned the moment of independence by assuming positions of leadership; satya and ahimsa assured them power and pelf.

The findings that may be drawn from the above mentioned observations are as under:

- a) Partition Literature cumulatively makes for compelling impact studies: of people inspired by the leaders, their defiance of colonial power, their hardships and sacrifices, and the ultimate tragedy—they paid the price for independence.

- b) While the leaders thus consolidated their positions, the masses struggled to see in freedom a new dawn. Partition Literature establishes the common people as victims of the horrific violence.

### **5.5.3 THE SUBALTERN AS WOMEN**

In the above context, the observations are listed below:

- a) Families were torn asunder in Partition. People witnessed the scale of violence never seen before. The fury propelled participation through looting and arson, abduction and rape, mutilation and prostitution, forced marriage and coerced conversion; these acts of retributive justice was mostly enacted upon the bodies of women.
- b) The Recovery Programme of these hapless victims by the two governments is doubly distressing as it wrests the tentative acceptance of tenuous ‘normalcy’ to lead the women from rupture to disruption.

These observations yield the following findings:

- a) The private domestic space cossets women in honor and the public space dishonors them and shames them. Women are treated as property and the violence etched upon their bodies treats them as the 'othered' terrain.
- b) Women re-cover their honor as idealized agents of change; this effectively curbs their ability to generate agency and thereby survive.

#### **5.5.4 VIOLENCE AS EXPRESSION OF POWER**

With regard to this theme, and in the context of a New Historicist approach, this study has the following observations to offer:

- a) The New Historicist analysis divests statist history of its halo and instead points to the rarefied field it straddles and how selective its historiography is in favor of the leaders. Partition Literature, on the other hand, sensitively resonates with the subaltern pangs of love, loss and suffering.
- b) New Historicism interrogates text and history to derive the cultural markers that define the temporality of action.
- c) A green reading of Partition Literature reveals that fields were left to rot as the farmers fled to safety without harvesting their crop.
- d) New Historicism critically analyses the discursive power relations operative in the text and re-covers the politics of culture. The embedded resistance stresses a political reading of the texts to reveal the socio-political, economic and religious strands of the period that together form its cultural construct.
- e) Men externalize the conflict and violence, whereas women are forced to internalize them. Men enact spatio-psychic violence, women experience them. These binary oppositional terms had to be exploded to uncover and thereby recover the collusion of communities in objectifying women to mark the dispute of land and religious identity.
- f) There is a long history of violence and this history is largely anthropomorphic. Man's survival was critically impacted by threat perception from nature: predators, poisonous food and the elements. Man's civilizational enterprise is viewed as man's conquest of nature and today that very conquest is being studied as man's violence against nature. There is a reference in *River of Fire* where Mazumdar counters the colonialists, who boast of their supremacy owing to their victory at Plassey, that Plassey was a mango orchard

in full bloom. The destruction of that crop then will have impacted several lives and livelihoods.

From the above observations, and a fine-toothed combing of the texts, it is possible to find that—

- a) a) The Government's role falls short of expectations in relieving anxiety, remedying loss and supporting livelihoods. It is evident that freedom was achieved through the mobilization of the masses; yet the Partition induced and mobilized exodus neither organized nor sustained assistance for the refugees who had transplanted themselves.
- b) In the case of Partition Literature, the violence is clearly gendered, sexual and spatial. The response to traumatic remembering too is bordered along male myths on the one side as against the female reality.
- c) The desecration of land in the violence that flooded rivers with bodies—human and animal—and the trails of blood in the mass murders is a violation of the very norms that the land engendered.

### **5.5.5 NEW HISTORICISM AND SPATIALITY**

It is observed through a close reading of the primary texts, in the light of Spatial Critical perceptions that—

- a) The spatiality in Partition Literature traverses two planes: the abstract terrain of the nation and the concrete space of the homeland. The inter-play between the two is leveled off in an uneven fight for saving the homeland while staking their claim to nationality.
- b) The common ground is the fictionalizing of history while historicizing the fiction to effect a discourse that authorizes a challenge between linear and diachronic time by mounting an interface between statist historiography and personal narratives. The subaltern voices are heard in their bewilderment and agonized transition from the simplicity and harmony of their home and land by the violent loss of identity, home, land to become refugees and suffer exile.

The critique of the commissions of statist historiography, in the main, provokes disbelief of the heroic mode of narration and the elevation of the contribution of the

leaders. As the leaders walked the hallowed world of ideals, the people put their lives in the struggle to achieve the very ideals that were later betrayed by the leaders.

This, in turn, has helped to arrive at some findings tabled below:

- a) The omissions of statist historiography are the very features that characterize Partition Fiction: it records the violence and trauma glossed over by the statist narratives. It arrests the erasure of memory and candidly accounts for the violent birth of the two nations of India and Pakistan.
- b) This hierarchal top-down narrative is reversed in Partition Literature where the people take centre stage and the leaders are pushed to the periphery.

The class struggle comes through loud and clear in the texts under study that relate the witnesses to violence as the privileged sections of society of all communities; the violence was directly experienced by the subalterns who had no means to cushion their fall. This is by no means a blanket statement—there were exceptions—but, by and large, this fact holds true in the light of the reality depicted in the primary texts.

## **5.6 EXPLORING SPACE AND TIME: OBSERVATIONS AND FINDINGS**

This study's main parameters for exploration are spatial ones in relation to the temporal. The notion of space is interpreted in terms of force, production and process. The individual's conception of space includes both subjective space and intentional space. Edward Soja advances the notion of spatial justice whereby an inquiry into the notion of justice cannot be divested of the 'spatial turn'. The earlier identifications of space with the 'flat cartographic notions of space as container or stage of human activity' to study the impact of space in not only its generative capacity but also its influence on every important human activity that lead to progress and development and its obverse side of inequity in every form.

The time is the turmoil of the de facto Partition of the subcontinent at the exact moment of its independence. The one is realized at the cost of the other. This colossal rupture might have exactitude in chronological time, but the event pans out differently in the mindscape: time here oscillates between before and after Partition. The pre-time breaks in upon the mind through innocuous recollections of the mundane and the post-time refers to the anarchy and horrors experienced/witnessed/lived through. Time then is diachronic and defies the chronological ticking clock but swerves back and

forth in remembrance of what is left behind/lost and the reality of the blow dealt by ‘fate’. The observations and findings arrived at from the above perspectives are shared in the context of the subthemes below.

### **5.6.1 Partition and Spatiality**

It is observed from a spatial mapping of the textual world of experience that:

- a) The political organization of space is of grave concern for it underwrites the socio-historical concepts that have shaped and continue to shape the present. The space herein included the natural and built environment that represented the familiarity of home and its safe environs.
- b) The idea of borders as essential to contain conflagration instigated by difference: of race, gender, religion, creed and caste is the search for spatial configuration of the notion of justice/injustice.
- c) The colonial enterprise is accused of yoking vast and disparate terrain under one rule—of the British East India Company in the name of the British monarch—facilitated the English educated elite to think and imagine in terms of one nation. The research by Mishirul Hasan, Ayesha Jalal into the religious polarization of the ‘one nation’ ideal attributes it to the extremists in both the camps (Congress and League). The nation is carved onto the terrain. The reverence accorded to the land is upturned by the cementing of freedom on the very same land. When that freedom resulted in a line that drew a border, the porosity of the expanse of land was lost.

The findings in this segment are the following:

- a) A border plugged the porosity emphatically forming a barrier impeding movement and communication of the people who knew only the reality of their lived life patterns and were unsettled by the ferocious passions that reacted with violence.
- b) The ground reality could hardly be found ‘reflected (in) the consciousness of a community’<sup>v</sup> which continued to live as they had in close harmony in the way they had for ages.

- c) The fear and uncertainty led to mass migrations leaving behind the neighbours in search of fellow religionists to shore up their sense of safety in the face of stark apprehension.
- d) The colonial representatives maintained an aloof demeanor and had a condescending attitude to the native population.
- e) This sense of colonialist superiority is belied in some texts. For instance, *River of Fire* where Hyder exuberantly chronicles the wealth and pomp of the native royalty which the European royalty could not match. The incident of the relieved father of Sujata Debi gifting Cyril with the one of a kind books of Dara Shikoh's unparalleled works show up the British exploiting the generosity of the natives. There is evidence in the crown jewels, the museum artifacts, private personal collections and historical records of the wealth of India's glorious craftsmanship.

### **5.6.2 Spatiality and Identity Politics**

The observations ascertained in the context of this subtheme are presented below:

- a) Though the generally held notion that the British 'divide and rule' policy is the cause for the religious 'othering' is dismissed by critics like Hasan, others like von Tunzlemann invest credence in the manner in which the British administration defined populations on religious affiliations which came to be internalized.
- b) In the aftermath of the Uprising of 1857, the British used the data to promote total compartmentalization along religious lines to deftly stoke communal passions against each other than leave a possibility of the natives uniting to dethrone the British interests.
- c) The elite of both communities who had the advantage of English schooling began social reforms to disseminate progressive ideas among the people. A western education, especially if the education was received in England, exposed them to liberal ideas that eschewed the collective to focus on the individual. The ideas of nation, nationalism, nationality and freedom began to sway them and they in turn chose to speak and write about them so as to reach the masses through the vernacular press.

- d) The nurturing of one nation united against the British was done across several tiers of leadership: in the forefront was the Indian National Congress that attempted to separate religion from nationality; the leftists who believed that freedom could be achieved only through revolution; the underground movements; the rank and file of the Indian National Army and the peasant uprisings.
- e) Nation was the land that they called home; nationalism referred to the umbilical relationship to the motherland and nationality was defined as the identity framed in terms of belonging to the land i.e. they hailed from India, therefore they were Indians. These terms and conditions already there were easy to fit into: it was tailor made; people subscribed to and invested their efforts in this idea.
- f) As the movement for independence gained momentum, the Congress took centre-stage; they were acknowledged as the leaders with whom the British communicated; they became the representatives and spokespersons of the people.
- g) Though the Pakistan idea was floated as early as January 1931<sup>vi</sup>, its appropriation was concretized only in the 1939 Lucknow Resolution and the call for an independent Muslim state of Pakistan gained credence. This to be anointed state would be carved out of the singular subcontinent to include terrain that contained Muslim majority populations. This set off the process of mobilization of populations to tilt the terrain under consideration in their favor.
- h) Elections in the Punjab and the acutely religious overtones that campaigning took—with the sacral authorities exhorting and influencing the masses—became the turning point that precluded any turning back. The Radcliff Line was yet to be announced, when uncertainty and anxiety of the proposed division battered the masses and drove people to seek fellow members of similar religious persuasion in a bid to offset fear.

The findings drawn from the discussion of this thematic segment are indicated below:

- a) From the accepted premise that religion was only a singular though integral component of identity to the classification of the population on this ground prompted a separation along religious identity.

- b) The British policy of disengagement sought to consolidate their hold on the land and leave the inhabitants to battle it out amongst themselves. The bartering of religious segments as vote banks in the provincial elections negotiated a distinctly religious identity in consolidating political power structures.
- c) The ideas of nation, nationalism, nationality and freedom influenced the elite leadership and they were disseminated through the local leadership into the bhasha literatures or newspaper columns as also through speeches in native languages—to reach the masses.
- d) Thus, people began to question why their land should be ruled by foreigners; since the land was theirs, they should rule by right.
- e) The intransigence of the Congress leadership and the burgeoning fear of the erosion of Muslim identity within Hindu dominant India brought matters to a head.
- h) Eventually, the seeds of dissension were sown and the masses reaped the bitter harvest of the Partition. The two nation theory was accepted as the only solution and the winds of change gained speed. The large scale migration of the masses was subject to untold misery, suffering, and violence.

### **5.6.3 Spatiality and Violence**

This subtheme is discussed in the primary texts and engenders the following observations:

- a) Abetment to suicide and self-immolation of the female members of the family was reported, failing which the male members of the family murdered them to preclude religious contamination.
- b) The unexpected looting and arson also led to the abduction of women either as the spoils of the pillage or as hostages for the safe passage of the family. Women were plundered in every way conceivable and plunged into despair. Their senses were numbed and ruptured beyond repair. Their beliefs in ‘shame’ and ‘dishonor’ were so strong that many attempted suicide; others were used, abused and left to die; still others were prostituted. Some were converted and married by their abusers in a fit of remorse and some were recovered.

- c) The trauma of the lost homeland was acutely felt by the women who lost home, family, community and homeland. They were left bereft of all social kinship and norms to be buffeted by the storm of vengeance that treated women much the same as the land: as property that belonged to them.
- d) The land and people were laid waste by the excesses of the violent bloodthirstiness that engulfed all communities alike. The miles-long kafilas of humans winding their way across the dismantled spaces with meager possessions and herd/s reeking of poverty and disease was a ghastly specter. The emaciated and malodorous bodies with the flies buzzing around them inching slowly across roads was a phantasmal apparition whose impact was spine chilling and dreadful.
- e) That people who had little had to settle for even less with no guarantee of support to ensure their basic needs were met for subsistence is a crime against their humanity. The 'fate' meted out to them was both brutal and menacing, yet they looked to fate with resignation as they undertook the trudge that would seal their fate one way or the other. One day they were there like always and the next they were gone. And that is the shape of the loss: spaces whose contours had remained fixed were dismantled and the people dislocated.
- f) The silence left the fissures of dissociation intact; it split the mind in its normative existence of time, space and ethicality. The silence prolonged the distress through lack of either space for mourning or memorialization. The patriarchal response was to wipe the slate clean of the missing women of the family: they were presumed dead by them; declared dead for the benefit of others so as to evade questions as to their whereabouts; and as a last resort, lies were invented and reinforced to erase that chapter of their lives with finality.

These observations facilitate the below-reported findings:

- a) Women were plundered in every way conceivable and plunged into despair. Their senses were numbed and ruptured beyond repair.
- b) Nationhood for the masses meant loss of land and kinship, separation and disruption, hardship and misery, dislocation and exile, evacuees and refugees.

The material loss of land and home was tragic but loss of family in the uproar to disgrace, disappearance and death challenged all forms of morality and ethics.

- c) In the bargain, the subalterns—the illiterate and women—were the most affected. Their rights as individuals and as citizens were trampled upon; assistance was not forthcoming; alienated from their land and people—they had to depend on ‘fate’ to intervene for survival.
- d) The government machinery was ill-equipped for the assault and ambush that clinched independence. Meager data is available for those who left, fled, or were evacuated; estimations of loss of men and material were at best rough guesstimates.
- e) But the greatest misfortune is the dislocation of the mind—the turmoil induced a before-after metronomic movement of time, the mindscape shifting between a safe past under the weight of loss and abuse.
- f) Trauma continued to disturb and disrupt their existence. The denial of the past was the most common form of forgetting trauma.
- g) The silence left the fissures of dislocation intact; it split the mind in its normative existence of time, space and ethicality. Trauma continued to disturb and disrupt the existence of the victims. The denial of the past was the most common form of forgetting trauma that was adopted.

#### **5.6.4 Violence as Insanity**

The discourse related to this segment proffered the following observations:

- a) The metaphor of insanity is used to support the incomprehensible and widespread violence; it would be more accurate to represent it as metonymic of the violation of the land.
- b) The abduction and abuse of women emphasized their lack of agency, but the violation taught an important lesson viz. that women were forced to pick up the pieces of their life and move on in order to survive. This afforded them some semblance of self-reliance—for in the patriarchal scheme of things, the separation was equated with pollution and hence, women’s assimilation into the family was fraught with social discrimination which often denied them their place in the family.

The findings that can be deduced from these observations are:

- a) Patriarchy is implicated in the chaos of Partition violence—which even though sees mass murders (especially in the trope of trains laden with bodies)—through the gendered violence that overrode all other forms of violence.
- b) The gendered nature of Partition violence avenges a spatial injustice and represents in the enactment of and the recovery women a re-turn to the patriarchal moral order.
- c) While the saga of Partition is replete with the lack of agency of women as victims, post-violation these women were compelled to move on in life in order to survive. This afforded them some degree of self-reliance and perhaps agency, as in the case of Pooro in *Pinjar*, and Tara in *This Is Not That Dawn*.

## **5.7 THE SILENCE OF PARTITION**

This subtheme has prompted the following observations to surface:

- a) The silence is a patriarchal response to their culpability in the organized collective mayhem orchestrated to maximize damage to the other community thereby endangering the safety and honor of women. The culpability lay in the active and passive ways in which violence proceeded to use and abuse women.
- b) If the one community perceived women as the spoils of the loot to be pillaged as they pleased, then the recovery and return was a challenge as such women were deemed as ‘spoiled’. When women became the currency of humiliating the men of the other community, no thought was spared to the humiliation of women which dealt the body blow of social death upon these women. While Pooro in *Pinjar* chooses to remain behind, Tara is denied the same by the Indian official heading the recovery team when she agrees to meet Asad.
- c) Each side considered the other as the marauders who initiated the violence; each side perceived their role in the mayhem as martyrs; each side persuaded themselves that theirs was a response to violence; each side chose to believe that they were more victimized than perpetrators.
- d) In spatial terms the violence occurred in a space out there: this externalization of the space where violence was enacted fell outside the community and hence sanction was assumed. This is yet another attempt to close their eyes to the violence; its externalization an excuse to pretend that they had no role in it.

These findings can be reported in the context of the above discussion:

- a) The silence that kept the gendered violence from surfacing in the official versions of history is an egress to save face and to disown responsibility.
- b) The greatest accretion of blame goes to the Recovery Programme that attempted to return women to their menfolk: the re-turn of the women assuages masculine pride while simultaneously denying women any choice in the matter.
- c) Very few women (like Pooro and Tara) manage re-cover their agency and work to provide other women greater control over their lives. In the ability to carve their destiny lay their independence and not in subordination to the patriarchal social order.
- d) The displacement of masculine agency and guilt proceed along the classic psychological path of rationalization to lay the blame for their participation as well as the burden of their guilt at the feet of the men belonging to the other community.
- e) The externalization of violence in a space beyond the community becomes an excuse to pretend that they had no role in it.

### **5.7.1 Partition Literature as Voiced Trauma**

The reading of this subtheme in the select texts drives the following observations home:

- a) The overwhelming work undertaken under the aegis of Partition Studies point to the quest for justice: social, political, historical and spatial to answer the question of ‘why Partition Studies?’ the violence perpetrated immense violations that families lived with covertly; today these family histories demand an answer.
- b) Most traumatic incidents involving mass scale violence against communities demand the affixing of responsibility, to bring the perpetrators to book, demand the willingness to listen and record personal stories, to counter social norms that act as barriers to authenticate the misplaced sense of ‘shame’ and ‘dishonor’ and most tellingly, reparation for the wrongs suffered by the victim-survivors.

- c) The silence accorded to the events effectively extended the injustice beyond its periodicity. It proscribed the existence of those who were victimized and those who had to live with loss. The silence forbade an accountability that would hold up a mirror to their profuse dissimulation and profound guilt.
- d) The silence is neither a reference to stillness nor tranquility; it is a trope for muteness which is suggestive of an aphonic distress that actually signals suppression. The voice to express is silenced to deny the intense sexual violence that politics of schism assumed to claims of ‘reproductive heteronormativity as a source of legitimacy’ (12). This, in effect, was equated with women’s reproductive fecundity as vehicles of cultural transmission and the womb became the territory of unimaginable violation. The violation of the womb signifies the ‘spoils/spoilt’ tags that are both a warning and a salutary lesson.
- e) Sexual violence puts the men in the docks, the ‘shame’ and ‘dishonor’ associated with it vilifies patriarchy.

These observations attest the following findings:

- a) The silence surrounding Partition is symptomatic of the burden of ‘guilty secret’. If secret it must remain, then the secret should not be carried to the grave; rather, it must be told and retold to circulate in public consciousness ‘lest we forget’ the culpability of communities in communities.
- b) The memories need to be vented out, vetted by fact over the modes of recall that select and mediate the narration. The violence needs to be separated from the aggressor and the shame from the victims to act as circuit breakers in order to comprehend the event impartially.
- c) The emotive alignment of blame to the women impedes an open discussion thereby providing a loophole for the perpetrators to get away with their culpability. This neither affords an opportunity to right the re-presentations nor room to re-structure the blame/guilt.
- d) In vitiating the womb, the singular role of religious polarization assayed is highlighted where violence is the tool for the pollution of the purity staked in religious identity. The violence is individual and unparalleled; the silence is private and prodigious.

- e) From victimhood to the realization of their selfhood within the nation is the story of women's survival.

## **5.8 PARTITION VIOLENCE AND TRAUMA**

The discussion of this theme centers the following observations:

- a) Much has been said and written about the trauma experienced and its consequences. The trauma is not just any wound but operates as ruptures of and in the mind. The physical scars may heal but the wounded mind whirls circuitously to re-gain the lost equipoise. The jerking of memory between a past in recalled nostalgia and an ever-present trauma is central to Partition Studies.
- b) The trauma had ruptured the known norms internalized and under whose influence they enacted the materiality of their lives. The question of honor/dishonor and pride/shame were turned upside down in the violence that tore the communities inside out.

This observation testifies the following finding:

- a) Although the traumatic experience resides in the past and with each passing moment recedes further from the present, the 'presentiment' of trauma is never lost. It inadvertently sneaks in to explode the hard won semblance of normality.

### **5.8.1 Patriarchy and Violence**

Patriarchy owned honor and pride: their women came under these labels. The 'personage' or 'individuality' of women didn't matter; they were property to be owned. The younger the better—this statement underscores the sexualization of women's bodies was already there in the patriarchal culture. The outcome of these notions is detailed hereunder:

- a) Women had to conform to social expectations and norms decided by patriarchy. They covered up, were modest, many were married—yet they were raped and brutalized. They became the bounty for the men depraved enough to sell their bodies for a tidy sum. Women's breasts were cut off to prove their masculinity. They were paraded naked to be publicly shamed and humiliated.

They were forced into prostitution in a show of the male power over women's bodies. They were puppets in the hands of men owing to their physical frailty, emotional fragility and mental vulnerability.

- b) Masculine narratives assumed their valor and the justification was retaliatory at best like boys on the playground yelling, 'He started it first.' Men became bullies who were trying to best the men of the other communities through the victimization of women.
- c) Men nurture the land and harvest the crop; when the land is desecrated, can the desacralization of women be far behind? There is evidence that men too were traumatized e.g. young boys were party to women's mass suicides (*Tamas*). Adolescent boys were the target for conversion (*Tamas*). Fathers were traumatized by what happened to their daughters (Sakina in "Khol Do"). Men who raped were emasculated by the weight of their guilt ("Thanda Ghosht"). Men killed each other (*Tamas*, *Train to Pakistan*, *This Is Not That Dawn*). Feeling helpless to provide food and fearing a Muslim attack, a father kills his family and then himself (*Train to Pakistan*). A newlywed husband witnesses the rape of his wife (*Train to Pakistan*). When a Sikh couple are forced off their property just before the outbreak of the riot, the husband repeatedly tells his wife that he would kill her first and then shoot himself (*Tamas*).
- d) The male gaze and their lascivious comments send chills down the spine (*This Is Not That Dawn*). The expletives heaped on each other are distinctly misogynistic. 'Mothers' and 'sisters' are abused in these expletives. Such bad talk is guaranteed to rankle and draw out blood. Some men are drawn in to prove their 'manliness'.
- e) If at all it can be labeled as insanity, it is that the violence and abuse is rarely talked about or reported and hence goes unpunished. In the comity of nations, when nations act rogue, the other nations bring to bear upon the rogue nation economic sanctions that isolate them and coerce them to toe the line. Yet when there is mass rape, women are blamed for the rapes and the rapists go scot free.

The following findings are reiterated by the above observations:

- a) Used and abused—women had little/no say over what happened to them and their bodies.
- b) From the examples cited above, it is clear that men did not escape trauma. There is evidence that men too were traumatized.
- c) Trauma for men was in the loss of face and the questions asked about his virility; if the women of his family were violated, there would be gleeful sniggers of ‘whether he was man enough?’ This heckling would find an equal reaction in the retaliatory violence that the women of their families were subjected to.
- d) Respect for women, consideration and loyalty to the family are aspects of culture; yet, in the moment of violence, the bestiality gains the upper hand.
- e) Rape is about power and abuse; it is a weapon to intimidate and control by frightening you. It is violence and cannot be excused as insanity.

### **5.8.2 Women and Trauma**

An assessment of the primary texts provoke the following observations:

- a) What is worse is that they are blamed and isolated for bringing ‘shame’ and ‘dishonor’, and their voice is muzzled, because if it is not reported, then it never did happen. They lose their claim to a place in the family, community, religion or society.
- b) Partition Literature throws up inexplicable incidents of ‘mad women’ wandering the lanes while laughing hysterically (*Pinjar*), having lost their rudder totally. This is the truth: that violence against women wherein their bodies were brutalized by multiple rapes, their mind ruptured by the ‘shame’ and ‘disgrace’—that women did ‘go round the bend’ with the glut of experienced violence.

These observations shape the following findings:

- a) The silencing prevents access to help that would assist healing and recovery; instead, they are burdened with social guilt and social death.
- b) The sanction and sanctity associated with women’s suicide is an indicator of the misogyny of patriarchal social norms.

### 5.8.3 Trauma and Memory

The examination of the select primary texts head the following observations:

- a) Traumatic memory is a niggling rupture that needles the mind. The denial is the first response because the mind can neither register the act nor cope with it. The shock numbs the mind. Then fear kicks in which further disorients the mind whose 'flight or fight' response shuts down and whose feeling of powerlessness and helplessness further perpetuates the degradation.
- b) The rapists in mass rapes exploit the very helplessness of women and the victims look to them to preclude any unexpected attacks from other male predators (*This Is Not That Dawn*). The disorientation is obvious: they fear their abusers, yet it is a bad case of 'better the devil you know than the devil you don't'.

The two observations made above amounts to the following findings:

- a) The abuse is total when the brutal act is repeated and silence colludes to hide it. It is almost like the Stockholm syndrome where victims of hijacking come to perceive their hijackers as their saviours and defend them.
- b) Partition Literature is an indictment of the coercive violence inherent in patriarchy and the battering and brutalization of women is recorded in empathic support 'lest we forget'.

### 5.8.4 Silence as Forgetting

This context flags the following observations:

- a) The crux of the issue is the moral credentials of the non-violent freedom struggle cannot justify the battery of violence that came in its wake. Though the state goes to great lengths to celebrate its freedom and inoculate the masses against the nightmares of Partition, the collective memory recalls and remembers the Partition over and above independence.
- b) The depredations of patriarchy have only been called out in Partition Literature and oral histories.
- c) Research work today is painstakingly and cogently archiving the individual experiences of violence and trauma to form a repository of narratives that

challenge officialdom's culpability in perpetuating the heroic mythification of leaders while the experiences of the subalterns, particularly women, is overlooked/expunged.

The observations substantiate the following findings:

- a) The misogyny of the state and its patriarchal structure are bolstered as the generations that experienced/witnessed the trauma of Partition are slowly shrinking.
- b) The silence that represented the secret of violence will be silenced by their graves if their stories do not see light of day.

### **5.8.5 Partition Literature as Memorial Space**

Observations that underscore this subtheme are:

- a) Their stories are not fictions of imagination but reflections of personal histories. Personal histories are doomed because of the inconsistencies and unreliability of memories that are often selected and mediated in the process of narration.
- b) It affords the individual experiences a de facto space to be that problematizes the fixed, linear and selective historiographic narrative that has been popularized to assume the mechanism for entrenching received notions about the origins of the nation, nationality and nationalism.
- c) The niggling question remains: if statist historiography can choose and select their sources to project the linearity of historical accounts, why tar memory for its selection and mediation?

The following findings are supported by the above discussion:

- a) Statist history erodes the personal narratives in favor of official accounts which are accorded the hallowed status of factuality as it is based on facts and figures, data and from written sources.
- b) Partition Literature usurps the official stance and posits personal and familial narratives at the centre; this challenges their marginalization in historiography.
- c) Partition Literature, through the personalizing of the experience of how these categories came about, interrogates the exclusionist terms and classifications

that border the debates and perforce offers an alternative discourse that counter-balances the lopsided view of statist narratives.

## **5.9 PARTITION LITERATURE AS NARRATIVES OF SURVIVAL**

Partition Literature does not make for an easy or comfortable read: they draw the reader to witness history from the individual's experience of it and challenge the reader to find the ethical balance sheet. Partition Literature is forged in the foundry of real time power politics. It records violence as a tool to intimidate and coerce; to dominate and suppress; and to privilege power over ethics. The gendered violence is symptomatic of the misogyny of culture. While women bartered and battered by this violence were officially silenced to save face—both the nation and family is complicit in this—and were denied the resources of space-time-assistance for mourning and healing, Partition Literature stands as a counterpoint to define their debasement as also their courage in the face of political, social, economic and cultural handicaps. The battered body and the ruptured mind form the crutches of their survival. On this backdrop the following observations and findings are documented in sequence in the context of the relevant subthemes.

### **5.9.1 From Victimhood to Survivor**

The observations with regard to the above issue are:

- a) The texts like *Tamas*, *Train to Pakistan* and *The Ice Candy Man* portray the victimhood of rape; such dead victims attest their victimization and give it credence. Their brutalization is believed because either they died in the assault or they committed suicide to spare themselves further agony. In both these scenarios, the victims' credulity is attested to in their death.
- b) *Pinjar*, *River of Fire* and *Sunlight on a Broken Column* reveal the horrors through the discussions of the protagonists. *Toba Tek Singh* is a short story and is a scathing attack on the idiocy of the truncation of the land into two nations along the lines of religious identity. The length precludes invoking any discourse on the brutalization of women. On the day of the exchange of the inmates at the Wagha border post, Manto mentions in passing that the same fate attended women asylum inmates and their trauma was even more acute.

- c) The survival of women is depicted in *Pinjar* and *This Is Not That Dawn*; Pooro was abducted and Tara was raped. Both the characters are manifestly operating on the survivor mode. Pooro is able to survive because Rashida's guilt makes him repent and support Pooro's efforts to empathize; rescue and support women in dire circumstances. In Tara's narration is manifest the idea of the true grit of a survivor.
- d) In the first instance, victims are often forgotten and left to fend for themselves; the latter however are aware of this fact and prefer to chart their life by relying on the inner resources of strength and preventing a return to their prior vulnerability.

The observations reinforce the following findings:

- a) This re-casting from 'victim' to 'survivor' is a deliberate strategy to focus attention on the resourcefulness of women rather than glorify their frailty and helplessness. Tara's narrative is defined by her taking control of her life and her agency is on display in the decisions she takes to ensure both her safety and sanity. This is evidence to women's resilience.
- b) While the label of 'victim' evokes pity, that of 'survivor' merits attention.

### **5.9.2 Trauma and Survival**

The observations in this segment direct attention to the plight of the victim-survivors:

- a) The social histories that lock on to women's victimization and survival are a testimony to the women's trauma. The rupture is tackled by relying on themselves and assisting the recuperation of other victims as represented by Pooro in *Pinjar*. The sheer indifference to their plight fills one with disbelief.
- b) The 'survivor' label is today used liberally to refer to a wide range of pull back stories: stories that narrate crises, how they survived their tragic fate and their claim to 'survivor' status is clinched. This label is accorded to individuals who overcome life threatening diseases, accidents, personal tragedies and win over the adverse circumstances to move forward with positivity and achievement. These labels are worn with pride and they become instant inspirational role models.

- c) In spite of surviving a battery of brutalization, the label 'survivor' still bears social condemnation and stigma is attached to it. This is all the more galling because the perpetrators of this heinous crime escape the noose of the law.
- d) Not only are they left to deal with the shock and disorientation, such an onus depoliticizes the equation of power and violence inherent in the act. The shaming is public despite laws to preclude disclosure of identity; there is, in the immediate vicinity of space and kinship, an ossified victimhood conferred on the victim.

The observations boldly posit the following findings:

- a) While the rest of the survivors have risen to the challenge of re-directing and re-building their lives, 'survivor' is not a badge of honor for the survivors of violence; they are identified with the horror of sexual violence even as they pay the non-material and, therefore, are burdened by this invisible cost.
- b) Even as the 'survivor' label gains greater currency in association with victims of sexual abuse, two cautionary warnings must be heeded in these narratives of survival— firstly, that in the overt reliance on women's resourcefulness places the onus of triumphing over the situation on the victims. This indicates the systemic sanction of violence because of the complete lack of systemic backup through the social structures that promote healing through empathy and a stake in their well-being. The second alarming fact is that this emphasis on individual ability to recuperate makes for a glaring lack of social support.
- c) This engenders in them a quiet desperation and a sense of loss of personal freedoms. They are pushed into living their days and develop a hardiness and resilience born out of the depths of despair.

### **5.9.3 Partition Literature as Representations of Survival**

The textual reading brings to the fore the following observations:

- a) The texts analyzed are re-imaginings and re-creations of Partition violence. Auto-narrative components are re-structured within the narrative and selected from the collective experience.
- b) Partition Literature cannot be slotted under survivor narratives as the subject-victims are protagonists in fictive narratives and are not firsthand accounts of personal histories.
- c) The occurrence of such violence is not under doubt/debate, rather the response to the events of violence and trauma is.
- d) The process of recuperation is a long and hazardous one that is physically, emotionally, psychologically and spiritually exhausting. The healing and return to normal is nominal, even superficial.
- e) The forgetting will inevitably happen as time passes by. This would hold true even for the families directly impacted by the violence as those who witnessed and/or experienced the violence will decline in numbers and slowly but surely disappear.
- f) If ever such a time was to descend upon the nation, then that would be the ultimate disrespect and dissolution of the very reason for being.

The precise observations in this context indicate the following findings:

- a) A significant achievement of Partition narratives is the carving and creating a niche for the personal histories of abuse to be highlighted through fictionalizing the histories.
- b) The silence that froze the experience within the frames of the familial interrogates the function of memory. The personal denial is the immediate reaction to the abuse experienced followed by externalizing the event into something that happened to someone else.
- c) The contribution of Partition Literature establishes a social space that re-invents the experience and allows that memory to fester so as to intercept its erasure from public memory with the widening chronological distance from the actual event.
- d) Memorials would provide the physical space for ritual healing. The need to make sense of the violence and trauma requires immense stores of courage and kindness for the victim-survivors and families living with loss and trauma.

- e) Public spaces to commemorate and memorialize are living testimonies to the violence that communities faced. Such spaces perform a ritual catharsis for those directly affected and the future generations who will inherit the consequences of the violence.
- f) Unless the current generations are sensitive to this historical burden, the demand for public spaces that resonates the pain and agony of memory will go unheard, unheeded and therefore deemed not worthy of 'knowing'. This issue is fraught with questions of ethicality.

### **5.10 DELIMITATIONS**

Literature using realism to deal with Partition trauma has elements of auto-narrative. The texts chosen for this study have re-creations of real incidents like riot and mass suicide as depicted in *Tamas*, the cityscape of Lahore in *This Is Not That Dawn* and the life of Taluqdars as in *Sunlight on a Broken Column* or they re-imagine violence like the trains as mobile hearse vans in *Train to Pakistan*, the gendered violence in all the texts, the forced exile and the making of refugees. The rising tide of rumors could not compete with the reality of the violence. Such was the scale and scope of violence that it left desolation and disorientation in its trail.

Many studies today focus on magic realism and diaspora in Partition Studies. This study chose to research the early fictive narratives in the aftermath of Partition that used stark realism as the mode to transfer biographic notes to derive virtuoso performances that baldly depict the events in their ugly messiness. Neither technique nor distance can substitute/supersede the 'raw gash that oozes' authenticity of these early narratives. This is not to deny or subordinate these narratives their authenticity, it only furthers the idea that these narratives engage the reader in subtle ways vis à vis Partition, its attendant violence and consequences. The writing during the aftermath is more 'in your face' in its fidelity to the minutiae of experience as it occurred, serving the bitter truth as is which leaves the reader alarmed and shaken from his complacent acceptance of the statist palliative historiography.

### **5.11 SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

The Holocaust Studies is the gold standard in examining and assessing violence and trauma even in Partition Studies. These are genuine survivor experiences that

narrativise personal and social experience from the close of the World War II. It is an on-going multi-media project that honor and keep alive the memory of survivors. This is also an explicitly European experience and application of the parameters of Holocaust Studies may involve a Euro-centric approach. Research in Partition Studies could provide a unique native idiom in the evaluation of the violence and trauma.

Translation Studies is another area that would yield fecund scope in this area of study. Most of the early narratives are in Bhasha Literatures. Research can involve translation itself or studies between original source language texts with their English counterparts. Sometimes the same text has multiple renderings owing to competing translations. This offers another sphere of research. The parameters of translation, transmutation and transcreation can be brought under study.

There are various genres of Partition Literature: poetry, short fiction, novel, drama, film, television serials, pamphlets, speeches, interviews, first person accounts, journalistic reports, biographies and autobiographies of the leaders, diaries et al. These can be analyzed by applying various theoretical frameworks. Inter-disciplinary Studies as also Comparative Studies would lead to enriching areas of research.

New research in this area ushers in other states and their differential experiences of Partition. Research papers also analyze the statist violence meted to refugees in their exclusion and further distancing from the centre to the periphery. Partition experiences of Bengal, Bihar and the Sindh are new aspects of regional experiences of Partition that have emerged in recent times. This is yet another area that provides opportunity to study the multivocality of Partition.

Research in this area must continue: it is imperative that the explorations in this area should persevere to impede the occlusion of memory. If the memory of dislocation and trauma is to be transcended then the space from acknowledgement to acceptance must be traversed. The legacy of independence must include the narratives of Partition; then and only then will the tide turn in favor of a measured reading of the twin events. Such an eventuality is appealing inasmuch as it frees the past of its 'either-or' dilemma and this then would become an enduring legacy in time for having shed the guilt.

## **5.12 RECAPITULATING THE HYPOTHESES OF THIS STUDY**

1. That history need not reside within the pages of history but can be revisited via media the literary narratives that fictionalize history.
2. The **literary representations** can explore Partition history as **its alternative re-readings to broaden the scope of re-thinking that Event**. Furthermore, despite being a **creative enterprise a literary representation can be a political statement/indictment** as it juxtaposes the objectivity of known data with the subjective individual experience—motive, action, outcome and response.
3. That Partition Fiction can offer valuable **insights into the impact of history** on ordinary lives by **subsuming the grand narrative(s) into the stream of the marginalized voices** to help understand the **agency of the local in supporting/opposing** the events leading to Partition.
4. Partition narratives **can help establish how the territorial dispute is central** to the Event including **the violence and trauma that followed**. However, it **may also provide a closure through reviving memory and revisiting trauma**.
5. In fine, Partition Fiction is **not a mere re-telling of history in an imaginative framework**. It can be an **interrogation of the known paradigm**, to rethink and arrive at an **alternative reading/perception** of history, by foregrounding people's **voices, experiences and perspectives** to recover the Partition not just submerged in its pathos, but grappling with its ethos and ethnos.

The entire discourse of this thesis was undertaken in the context of the above summed up Hypotheses of the present research work titled '**Dismantled Spaces, Dislocated Nationalities: Transcending Memory: With special reference to select Partition Literature of India and Pakistan**'. It is expected that this study with its elaborate introduction—to Partition, to the need for Partition Studies and to the core aspects of Partition as dwelt in the primary texts—has borne out the focal points of the Hypothesis. The study therefore, makes bold to say that within its stated scope and capacity, this thesis establishes the Hypotheses on which it was based; and by mobilizing arguments, citing counter-argument as well as critical views where felt necessary, it has foregrounded various perspectives gleaned from detailed textual analysis and illustrations duly substantiated by suitable theoretic insights. In fine, the thesis has borne out the veracity of the above summation of the Hypothesis of the study. The core conclusions are stated in the concluding segment below.

### **5.13 TYING THE LOOSE ENDS**

The truncation of the subcontinent into two independent nations becomes the starting point of both India's and Pakistan's modern histories without any acknowledgement of the unity of the land before then. Partition narratives counterbalance the elite linear statist narratives and divest them of their fixity which calcifies the received notions of the historiography of the events preceding and following in hallowed terms.

The silence surrounding Partition is rent apart and the underbelly of freedom is exposed in these narratives. The writers, through their narratives, preserve an alternate account to the statist version. The printed fictive narratives persist in preserving the memory of the violence and mayhem that largely affected the masses, while the privileged elite experienced it vicariously. The violations are catalogued and their impact on the social, political, economic, psychological and cultural planes is explored.

Partition literature is the site for spaces for mourning in progress. They assuage the victim-survivor's burden of guilt by confronting the perpetrators; the guilt is displaced from the one to the other. The narratives become the space to stage traumatic memory produced by convicting the competitive spaces complicit in the narrativization of Partition violence. The re-presentation of history through an imaginative simulation that re-writes and re-tells the past, re-works the memorialization process itself. This aids the search for reparation to mitigate the sense of injustice done and suffered.

The choice to ignore the element of reparation is indulged in at grave peril for it dissipates the validity of memory as either irrelevant or non-existent. The politics of remembering serves different political agendas leading to competing interpretations. This should not dissuade the reader/researcher from attempting to interrogate the constructed debates around this historical fact. Both countries are equally guilty of not coming to terms with the ugly underside of freedom; their public discourses are state sponsored. These lopsided interpretations have informed identity and identity politics across both the sides of the border.

The sites of violence in Punjab are b/orderred and flag the memory of violence within complicit cultures. The early narratives of Partition stage a mimetic realism signifying the conflation of recalled traumatic memory with the past itself. Despite the differences in the way history is interpreted in statist and literary narratives, both sides

use the selectivity of memory to produce parallel versions of exploitation and resistance.

The remembering of the past in the present is coterminous within the bounds of Partition Literature; wherein their elision provides space for the conflation of received notions and memorialization. Both spheres code multiple voices and perspectives that ascertain the fact that Partition is yet to be accorded a fully inclusive 'national' status. The passivity of the statist narration provokes Partition Literature to interpellate the contemporary remembering subject. Through this master stroke, Partition Literature encompasses the multi-vocal venting of self, memory and trauma to represent a layered—and potentially a healing—reading of the Partition.

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<sup>i</sup> Mishirul Hasan makes reference to this in two instances: 1. In his Introduction to an anthology on Partition Writings curated by him titled 'India Partitioned- The Other Face of Freedom' (1), 2. In the Introduction to 'India's Partition-Process, Strategy, Mobilization' edited by him (6-7).

<sup>ii</sup> Timothy Brennan in 'On the national longing for form' concludes thus, 'so the study of contemporary fiction, above all in these neocolonial contexts, is always a comment on the responsible practice of interpreting the images of today – how to place them, how to give them perspective, how to discuss the way they reflect a submerged history while turning it into a contemporary, instantaneous shadow.' (67)

<sup>iii</sup> Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Nationalism and the Imagination*, where she recalls the violence as a child and defines it as 'It was a politically mobilized violence—the country was going to be divided and so, people with whom we have lived forever, for centuries, in conflictual coexistence, suddenly became enemies.

<sup>iv</sup> Alok Bhalla, *Partition Dialogues-Memories of A Lost Home*, records the human tragedy of the dreams turned to ashes situation where the dreams of the leaders were mere travesty paid for by the people in that "[...] they are merely poor players trapped in civil, political, and religious nightmares enacted to satisfy the egotism of some and the powerful ambitions of others." (6)

<sup>v</sup> Mishirul Hasan in 'Introduction' to *India's Partition-Process, Strategy and Mobilization* categorically denies that even at the peak of the struggle, the idea of a Muslim state did not have even a tacit acknowledgement of Muslim majority/mass assent. Instead, he advances that the entire campaign was merely to counterbalance the Congress avowed 'secular nationalism' (1)

<sup>vi</sup> Mishirul Hasan ed., *India Partitioned- The Other Face of Freedom*, Vol I, 'Introduction', 'Rehmat Ali's 'Pakistan scheme,, published in Cambridge in January 1933, caused much political embarrassment back home and was summarily dismissed as 'chimerical' and 'impracticable'.', p15.