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**MEMORY, DIS-LOCATION, VIOLENCE AND WOMEN IN THE
PARTITION LITERATURE OF PAKISTAN AND INDIA**

By

FURRUKH ABBAS KHAN

A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Postcolonial Studies

**School of English
UNIVERSITY OF KENT AT CANTERBURY
25th June, 2002**

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ABSTRACT

MEMORY, DIS-LOCATION, VIOLENCE AND WOMEN IN THE PARTITION LITERATURE OF PAKISTAN AND INDIA

A dissertation presented to the Department of Postcolonial Studies

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of

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Furrukh Abbas Khan

The trauma of the Partition of India, declared on the 14th August 1947, has left an indelible mark on the psyche of people who witnessed it, and more specifically those who were unfortunate enough to actually experience the horrors that accompanied it. The literature which followed this holocaust has generally admitted that the three communities (Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs) involved in this collective madness suffered in comparatively similar circumstances and they each bear a certain degree of responsibility of their community's actions.

The emphasis of my project has been to analyse the violence which tore open this multi-ethnic and multi-religious society, and then, to go beyond and concentrate on the issues of 'Dis-Location,' Flight and Migration which took place as a direct result of Partition. Even after fifty years, this event continues to play a dominant and unmistakable role in the lives of people not only in the subcontinent but also of those in the Diaspora.

Violence played a consequential role in the formation of Pakistan. In this dissertation, I have tried to explicate not only the metanarrative, but more importantly the marginalised or 'silenced' stories of Partition. Women, in particular, were targeted by the men of the three warring communities to bear the brunt of communal violence. I have also focused on the patriarchal notions of 'space' in which women are inscribed and their direct connection with the construction of a Nation as a State. I have also worked on the literature of Partition written by women to demonstrate a different set of priorities and mind-set than literature written by men.

As most of the 14 million people who crossed the border from either side were illiterate, their stories are remembered and passed on through oral narratives. I travelled to Pakistan and collected stories from a number of survivors and examined the workings of memory, violence, remembrance and the politics of 'Orality'.

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This dissertation has been completed with the help of a wonderful group of people with whom I have been very fortunate to interact. First of all, I would like to say that the person truly responsible for helping me in so many ways has been my long suffering and ever patient Prof. Lyn Innes, whose wisdom, invaluable suggestions and judicious comments have guided me through very difficult times. I would also like to thank Dr. Abdulrazak Gurnah and Prof. Thomas Docherty of the Department of English.

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I acknowledge with gratitude and humility the many survivors who had enough trust in me to talk about their emotionally traumatic and highly personal experiences.

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INTRODUCTION

Since 1997, the fiftieth anniversary of the Partition of the Indian subcontinent, there has been a resurgence of popular as well as academic interest to unfold, disentangle and understand the events, while trying to produce new readings and positions vis a vis both countries' populations' present conditions and the process of remembering (or not forgetting). The Partition, like other national man-made catastrophes, compels the victims, perpetrators of violence and the general community to re-examine their actions and roles in what took place and demands complex answers that require individual and communal soul searching. This crucial event continues to raise questions regarding the moral and ethical dilemmas of mankind as well as the need for a frank and rather direct examination of issues such as representation, memory, violence, dis-location and time. As time increases the distance between ourselves, our worlds, and the events of Partition, the national tragedy of the Indian subcontinent, and many survivors, bystanders, and perpetrators, are no longer alive; only Memory remains, as well as archives and private histories which have not been integrated into the public or national discourse. The intensified pursuit of Memory, in its many possible forms, appears to be the ultimate way of relating to that event whose shadow continues to arouse impassioned emotions about that period in the personal and collective lives of both countries.

This dissertation originally started when I studied and wrote about the novels by Bapsi Sidhwa. Her work struck a resonance, as the issues dramatised in her novels are not only to do with contemporary society in Pakistan, they also link the social and cultural conditions present in the country to the recent past. The most significant event in Pakistan's history is the Partition of India and the resultant creation of the two countries in August 1947. Three most significant changes seem to occur at the same time: the end of colonialism, the division of India, and the creation of a new country. As these events occurred

simultaneously, the change over to a new 'system' was wrought with such violence as had never been experienced in Indian history, and has never been repeated since.

Partition was accompanied by the largest human migration in the history of mankind. During a period of less than three months in 1947, over 14 million people are believed to have moved from one geographical location that they had called 'home' to another. This mass dis-location was carried out under intense pressure as the departing British colonial government concentrated more on their departure than on the violence that had started to take place in different parts of the Indian subcontinent. The newly emerging countries were not ready for the sheer numbers of people crossing borders from one country to the other.

The fiction written by Sidhwa was a reiteration of stories that I had heard while growing up in rural Punjab in Pakistan. For a long time, these stories had been locked in some unconscious part of my thinking; reading Sidhwa's work brought them to the fore. As I had not come across any books by Pakistani authors dealing with the narratives of Partition, their stories somehow did not seem to have the same importance as other issues and questions of and about Pakistani society. Somehow, it seemed that the present could be understood and talked about without any serious attention paid to the construction of a problematic narrative of the country's recent past. That narrative, as presented by Sidhwa was what I had tried to analyse in my M.A. dissertation.

However, I felt that it was still very important to expand and explicate the issues surrounding the formation of Pakistan and how different authors have articulated it. I was oblivious of the impending difficulties that awaited me as I faced the simultaneous difficulty of distinguishing between the contents of literature, which was my academic obligation, and the personal intricacy I felt when I tried to differentiate between the two commitments.

Whereas the academic discipline required that I be able to write and discuss the issues that were raised in both the written and oral literatures of Partition, the personal feelings were burdened with a tremendous sense of failure, because of the futility of trying to capture the horror of pain through one's writing. This sense of disappointment became even more acute when I had put in writing what I had wanted to say. It took a considerable amount of time and soul searching to make a distinction between the academic obligations and the private expectations. It was only after I had admitted to myself that it was just not possible to capture violence through language and that all I could do was to make a serious effort to somehow present a credible narrative for the academic (and hence Public) audience, that I then carried out the struggle to achieve some kind of balanced understanding for a personal sense of satisfaction.

It should be noted that this dissertation is by no means an extensive survey of all the Partition literature that has been inspired by this event. There is a considerable body of literature that has been left out, written in various regional languages by people who were also displaced by Partition, such as that written in Bengali, Pushto and Sindhi among others. The primary focus of this thesis is on selected narratives written around the experiences of subjects in both sides of Punjab. The main reason for choosing this particular region is because most of the physical movement of people occurred here, and most importantly, the scale of violence and dis-location experienced in this region was more widespread and brutal than in any other part of the subcontinent. This was also the region that boasted a successful co-existence of people from the three main religious groups, namely, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, in rural and urban areas. The rapidity and the brutality with which this social and cultural co-existence had broken up caught almost everyone by surprise and the feelings of hurt and anger continue to persist till this day.

The sheer extent of the horror of violence during Partition seems so overwhelming that it has precluded any serious discussion of historical and literary implications of national and personal discourse surrounding this event. The events of Partition, which arouse so much immediate and potent discussion

among all the communities involved, are, ironically, the reasons for the lack of critical work other than the memory of the violence itself. Every individual's narrative centres around a sense of loss, of dis-location and ultimately of violence. Whoever experienced one or more of these emotions considers himself/herself to be a victim, and that, by implication, characterises individuals or whole 'Other' communities as villains. The literature in many cases reflected this view of narratives steeped in stereotypes that furthered opinions already prevalent in their respective communities. That in return became some kind of a validation of individual, communal and ultimately, the national views about their own past and roles that others might have played in their misfortune. The rigidity of beliefs concerning the total brutality and total innocence of different religious groups is also mentioned in some of the novels, but oftentimes it is artificial, ineffectual and thus reveals the true strength of the anger and bitterness that still dominates the lives of those who write about that event. Such characterisation becomes inadequate because the generalisations are simplistic and comparatively easy to peddle and achieve very little apart from strengthening the mutual distrust and hatred that the religious communities, namely Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs have for one another. Such generalisations also preclude any necessary attempts to understand the need to divorce the actions of individuals from their religious affiliations. The eventual outcome of collective representation results in creating a forced deviation of holding individuals accountable for their actions rather than blaming a particular religious community.

Another way, in which anger is manifested, especially from the Indian authors, is through the female body and sexuality. This will be discussed in greater detail in the chapter dealing with the novels of Khushwant Singh and Chaman Nahal. Because the emphasis is so much on the belief that whatever one individual or community is saying is the truth, there is another aspect of the Partition literature which somehow 'proves' these stories to be true. This particular stance has empathetically been that of documentation, that is, stories of what the authors might have witnessed or might have heard from sources that made them believable. Some of the stories might have also have been

written because they seemed to fit the stereotypes of the 'Other' that were already in authors' minds. Information and beliefs such as these form the basis of true-stories and narratives, which have been internalised by authors, even though they might not have experienced them themselves. These 'true-stories' are not really 'true' because writing, as a discipline, is unable to capture, as will be discussed in this dissertation, the private, fragmented, oral narratives which very rarely follow coherent linear order but are passed off as such because they are presented in the form of a novel or stories. However, the highly personal and emotive subject matter of these narratives often seems to pre-empt any discussion of their validity or questioning of their subjectivity. Stories such as these are taken on their face value by readers from the author's own community and dismissed as outright lies by others. Thus the chasm of fundamental differences remains even after more than fifty years.

Partisan narratives appeal to a particular group of readers for whom they provide a reinforcement of certain parochial ideas and beliefs about the 'Other' community. Such a group deliberately or inadvertently fails to take into account the pain and suffering of others, as they are so consumed by their own grief. The result is an inevitable polarisation of those who had suffered terrible violence and yet they continue to interact with just those who share their hatred of the 'Other'. There needs to be a move away from presenting events of Partition from a simplistic perspective to reveal a comparatively realistic, more problematic and ultimately more tolerant view from which readers may view their own and the 'Other' community.

There have been efforts by critics, almost exclusively from India, to carry out theoretical readings of the literature of Partition; however, such moves are severely criticised by most of those who lived through this experience. On the other hand, Theory somehow is felt to tamper with the factuality of events, thus questioning those who suffered the violence of that period. Theory's mediation between the stories of Partition and their understating for academic purposes has raised a number of difficult and painful questions that, in turn, have deterred intellectuals from pursuing this form of enquiry. However, if one expects to

develop a more problematic version of the discourse of Partition, then it is imperative that critics use a contextualised theoretical framework that is simultaneously being used for other forms of literature which deal with collective trauma, dis-location and violence.

This dissertation is about the different national and personal issues surrounding the process of Partition, how it actually took place, the memory of it in the minds of those who experienced the events, and how its influence manifests itself in the contemporary society and literature of Pakistan. The national and the personal histories of the nation are often at variance and I seek to examine obvious as well as subtle differences that may exist. These differences highlight the struggle for dominance in projecting the metanarrative of a nation. Another important question concerns the mechanics of memory and how traumatic events are recalled in public and private narratives after a period of more than fifty years.

The dissertation will examine the politics of the writers of the Indian subcontinent in regard to their writing about the Partition. Because of the amount of violence, many narratives present impassioned responses to the events most of the writers had seen or heard about. Violence and the resulting hatred of the 'Other' communities are barely concealed in these novels. Yet some of these stories have achieved a cult status, and one of my aims would be to examine them beyond the rather simplistic analysis offered by a number of critics. The comfortable positions of novels such as *Train to Pakistan* and *Azadi* need to be examined more critically for these and other such novels continue to set precedents for upcoming novels about Partition. As has been pointed out earlier, because of the immediacy of these novels, one needs to understand the fundamentals on which the basic structures of these novels are built. The biases, which might not be apparent in the first reading of these books, will be discussed in order to establish and understand the mode of the fiction written about this event. In so doing, one of the aims will be to see if one might be able to identify some kind of pattern which might exist in writing about Partition. The idea would be to notice how other communities; violence and instances of dis-

location are portrayed in the novels immediately after the Partition and in those written after reflection of a number of years. The major themes dealt with in the fiction of Partition will also be examined to develop a better understanding of the tension which arose between different religious communities and which continues to dominate the relations between the countries.

Partition and the questions of violence form an indestructible bond of suspicion and hatred between Muslims on one side and Hindus and Sikhs on the other. Even though these events occurred more than fifty years ago, their memories still continue to haunt many of those who witnessed these atrocities. Each of the religious communities harbours deep and divisive opinion about the 'Others', and it is something which seems to have hardened with the passage of time. One of the reasons could be some of the highly biased literature which completely failed to look to the future with some kind of optimism or which examined the past as more problematic than just that of different religious communities living in perfect harmony. During the course of this dissertation, an attempt will be made to highlight the various forms of violence that took place during the Partition. Acts of collective and individual violence were used by almost everyone as an excuse to justify equally vicious acts of their own. In order to assume a higher moral ground, each group and individuals claimed their acts to be defensive or retaliatory. The violence that each person or a group carried out was considered to be necessary because it was carried out against a group which had threatened either the socio-economic hierarchy, or had initiated certain actions which had damaging effects on one's cultural beliefs, or because one's relatives were harmed, or lastly, because it was felt that one's religion was being wiped out and so one had to stand up to meet aggression with aggression.

One of the terms that stands out in the upcoming chapters is that of Communalism. Put simply, communalism is the 'collective antagonism organised around religious, linguistic, and/or ethnic identities' (Ludden, p.12). It refers to the panoply of forces – political and familial, national and local – that lead to violence directed against targeted communities. It is a phenomenon

which exists, even dormant, in most culturally and religiously mixed societies, however it rises up and envelops the imagination with great alacrity whenever tensions boil over. It is also supposed to manifest itself by political or religious leadership which aims to exploit any uneasiness which might be between communities. Communalism is exploitatively used as an effective tool to bring together a particular group, belonging to a religious, ethnic or political ideology, against its 'other' as it was done during the Partition, and is currently taking place in Gujarat.

The second of the terms that will be frequently used is 'violence'. Most people agree that 'violence' is difficult to define. Several scholars define the term according to their particular fields of study. Psychologists and psychiatrists study the concept in the area of behavioural sciences in order to describe physiological aspects of human aggression. Historians analyse causes and effects of violence events within a particular society. Sociologists concentrate on studying violence as it occurs between people. In the context of this dissertation, the focus is more on violence as it occurred on religious and national differences. In 'Violence and Philosophy', Jean-Marie Domenach articulates that when scholars define violence, they rely on certain historical, geographical or ideological point of view. He adds:

What we call 'violence' gradually came to be understood from three main points of view: (a) the psychological aspect, an explosion of force assuming an irrational and often murderous form; (b) the ethical aspect, an attack on the property and liberty of others, and (c) the use of force to seize power or to misappropriate it for illicit ends (Domenach, p. 28).

In a 'Critique of Violence,' Walter Benjamin makes a different kind of distinction between what he considers to be the two main approaches to violence: natural law and positive law. 'Natural law' regards violence as a vital natural means. In other words, 'violence is a product of nature, as it were a raw material, the use of which is in no[†] problematical, unless force is misused for unjust ends.' On the other hand, 'positive law' opposes itself to natural law as it considers violence a product of history. Benjamin contends that forms of violence are usually distinguishable according to whether or not a particular type of violence is sanctioned or non-sanctioned, legitimate or illegitimate (Benjamin,

p.278). In other words, though various violent acts occur similarly, their interpretation may vary, depending on whether or not a particular community rationalizes or condemns them.

Violence on a massive scale requiring large sections of society to undertake - or be complicit in - the massacres is invariably about the intimate other: one's former neighbors or even friends - one of us - is now the enemy, one of them. This appears to be the case in all those historical events defined in legal terms as genocide. Leo Kuper offers a broad definition of genocide:

As deliberate acts committed with intent to destroy a national, racial, religious, or political group on grounds of the national or racial origin, religious belief, or political opinion of its members (Kuper, p. 32).

Genocide is, in some respects, the story of violence through which stories of particularity and group identity gain expression. The acts of violence that were observed during the Partition were carried out because that was considered to be one of the most potent ways to manifest the central desire to mark the difference between self and other. It is also important to note that the violence of genocidal conflict is almost always construed as something out there, beyond both the territorial and ontological border. This phenomenon came to the fore during the interviews with survivors of Partition and it will be discussed in greater detail later on.

Another term that describes the events of the Partition is Ethnic Cleansing. It is a process in which one ethnic group expels civilians of other ethnic groups from towns and villages it 'conquers' in order to create ethnically pure enclaves for members of their ethnic group. The term "ethnic cleansing" generally entails the systematic and forced removal of members of an ethnic group from their communities to change the ethnic composition of a region. In case of the Partition of 1947, the 'definition' stated above can also be applied, with a difference, instead of ethnic, the 'cleansing' was based on religious identity.

The expression *to clean the territory* is directed against enemies, and it is used mostly in the final phase of a conflict in order to take total control of the said territory. This policy can occur and have terrible consequences in all territories with mixed populations, especially in attempts to redefine frontiers and rights over given territories as was the case of India in 1947. There is a new logic of conflict that relies on violent actions against 'enemy's' population on a large scale. Examples of this logic and policy abound today (the extreme case being Rwanda).

Ethnic cleansing has formed the basic core of a number of civil and military conflicts. This practice follows a certain method; first comes the 'terror', in which the dominant community demonstrates to those it wants to get rid off, that there is a constant threat, real and imagined of physical and psychological violence directed against them. There is an 'appearance' of this policy; long caravans of refugees, desecration and destruction of places of worship, loss of economic sustenance, are some of the ways in which ethnic cleansing manifests itself on 'surface.' Lastly, there is a 'purpose,' which is to ensure - through killing, sexual assaults, kidnapping, destruction, threat and humiliation - that no return is possible.

The massive scale on which violence and mass deportation occurs during ethnic cleansing, is not something that just happened in the Partition, it is a practice that has been used repeatedly, and in most cases, with devastating effectiveness to create places of 'bleak ethnic homogeneity.' Roger Cohen, a journalist who covered the Balkan conflict, cites some of the examples of ethnic cleansing which are public knowledge, yet there are many more instances of which there is no public record. According to Cohen:

Greeks out of Turkey; Turks out of Greece; Serbs out of the Fascist Croatia of 1941 - 1945, Jews out of Hitler's Europe; ethnic Germans out of postwar Czechoslovakia; Palestinians from Occupied territories (Cohen, p. 136).

The brief definitions mentioned above provide useful insights into different approaches to the concept of violence. While it is difficult to find a unique definition of it, it is easier to recognise its numerous manifestations. In this dissertation, rather than focus on the problematic search for a unique and satisfying definition of the term 'violence,' I will examine specific incidents in which it has been articulated in the context of literature of Partition.

As there were numerous cases of sexual violence towards the women of all communities, the reasons behind this particular phenomenon will also be explored. Nationalism and communalism were the two most significant ideologies during this period, and both of them placed women at the very heart of their discourses and actions. The women who suffered during this violence were often considered to be social outcasts by their communities and, in a number of cases, by their families. It was because of such treatment of these women victims that it was deemed acceptable for the women to kill themselves or to be killed off by their relatives in order for them to escape from being abducted or sexually molested by men from the other communities. My dissertation seeks to develop a better understanding of the motives behind such beliefs and actions directed against women during the times of violence.

As it has been noted earlier, over fourteen million people were displaced from their original homes. This forms the second most significant theme of the novels and narratives of Partition. These are stories of sudden individual and communal movements where most of the people who were forced to leave their homes never thought that they would be gone for a long time. In fact, almost all of them were never to see the place of their birth again, and so fiction such as *Aag Ka Darya (River of Fire)* explores themes of how the events in the public sphere end up dominating the private lives and decisions of individuals. These issues of forced dis-location and exile raise a host of questions, and one needs to comprehend the factors which resulted in such mass movement from one country to the other. In examining the circumstances that resulted in this shift of loyalties, one undoubtedly needs to look much more critically at the factors responsible for ethnic cleansing as well as the aftermath of such collective

actions. The trauma of forced dis-location is still felt by the survivors of that period. The alienation that many felt as they arrived in new countries, the resultant yearning and the futile attempts at returning are featured in a number of novels. The chasm between expectation and reality (especially in the case of Pakistan) was acutely felt by a number of those who had made a choice or were forced to flee to settle here. These people, yearned for a separate homeland where it was expected that they would have better economic, social, and most importantly, religious ideologies and opportunities. Upon the discovery of the failure of such hopes, a number of them looked back at the homeland they had willingly or forcibly left behind in most cases never to return. During the course of this dissertation, I will explore the implications of the feeling of certain writers from Pakistan; namely that they had embarked upon an exile from which they were never to return.

As has happened in a number of postcolonial nations, the struggle or an ideology focuses so much on ridding itself of the yoke of colonialism that there is very little if any planning for the community or the nation once that independence has been achieved. As the goal of self-determination is considered to be so singularly important, nothing else is deemed worthy enough to warrant too much serious attention. As a result, there is often a deep sense of disappointment and bitterness that is experienced by a number of people who might have taken part in this struggle. This sense of failure is especially true in the case of Pakistan and is explored by writers who consider the modern history of their country to be a betrayal of their dreams.

The first chapter of this dissertation will provide a historical background to Partition. It will concentrate on the key political and social movements, which eventually resulted in the creation of Pakistan as a separate State. The roles of key political leaders of this time, namely Jinnah, Nehru, Gandhi and Mountbatten will be examined to see how each might have willingly or inadvertently contributed to creating a political atmosphere where Partition became inevitable. The two political parties leading the struggle for a free India were the Indian National Congress (INC, or Congress) and Muslim League

(League). One needs to examine why and where the differences in their ultimate goals appeared and what the leadership of each party did to achieve some sort of consensus. A number of Indian authors discussed in this dissertation have pointed the finger of blame at the Muslims as the cause of all the violence and continue to brand the League a communalist party. This claim will also be examined to try to understand the reasoning behind it and indeed if there is any basis for such a charge. Another ethno-religious party, which played a significant role during political movement of this time, was the Akali Party, the most influential political party of the Sikhs. Particular attention will be paid to the role of this party, and especially its leader, Master Tara Singh. As this chapter focuses more on a very elitist view of this history of Partition, that is, on the individuals who happen to lead their political parties, questions will be asked as to the merits and disadvantages of this particular form of political discourse of Partition.

In the process of this dissertation, significant space will be devoted to questions of 'memory', how it is defined in this particular case, and the factors which influence memory when it is of a particularly traumatic and painful experience. As there are not many survivors left from that time, a significant amount of effort needs to be undertaken by individuals as well as the State to record and catalogue their narratives which can later be included into the national discourse of the Partition. I spent over a month interviewing people from the villages along the dividing line of Partition. Most of the refugees coming over from India crossed over from this particular area of *Tehsil* of Shakargarh. My interviews were with people in and around this particular area. Almost all of the subjects have had no formal education and thus belong to a social class that does not exercise enough influence over the national discourse to have its voice included in it. Since this was the first time that most of these 'subjects' had been contacted by an 'outsider', one needed to be very careful and not press unnecessarily about details which might be too personal or painful to recall. When asked, everyone without exception told me that I was the first 'outsider' who had come to talk to them about what they saw and experienced during the Partition. A number of these did not want to talk about their experience,

especially after more than fifty years had passed; others were quite suspicious of my motives in conducting these interviews. However, I was able to talk to a number of people and one of the chapters deals with their narratives of Partition. Among some of the questions raised and examined in the chapter concerning the issues of memory will be: How does memory retain and recall hurtful events in one's life? What are the 'politics' of memory and its articulation? How 'truthful' are the events being described? How is one to view the minor discrepancies? How do stories change when they are told to 'outsiders'? What are the factors that one needs to examine when 'private' stories are discussed in the 'public' domain, and how does the discourse change? Can one draw on the theoretical base used to analyse other personal and collective painful events, events such as the Holocaust, the genocide in Rwanda and the ethnic cleansing in Bosnia? One is also left with questions such as; Are any two violent events ever comparable? Lastly, the most significant questions will be concerned with the difficulty involved in capturing the horror of violence in words.

Although my concern was to focus more on the events of Partition than the politics of the writer, from the very beginning it became very obvious that, in certain cases, it was impossible not to pay attention to them. As most of the fiction about Partition has come from India, I have analysed the presentation of Muslim communities in the writings of Indian authors. It should be noted that the novels concerned refer to more or less the same geographical area and events of the narrative take place round about the same time on the two sides of the Punjab. The novels used for this purpose are Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* and Chaman Nahal's *Azadi (Independence)*. Both are considered to be 'unbiased' and 'fair' by a large majority of the general public as well as literary commentators. As the events during the Partition cannot really be understood without due regard to the gender relations, one would hope to see if there are any significant differences in the manner in which male and female Muslim characters are described in these novels. One also needs to examine the relations, which are shown to exist between these communities, before and

during the Partition, for it should shed some light on the sudden deterioration during this period.

Most of the literature about Partition has been written in Urdu, which is the national language of Pakistan. The literary criticism of Urdu is substantially different from the Western mode of criticism, which I have been trained in. Because of the fact that it is written in Urdu, most of it is not readily available to those working on this topic in the West. I feel that the use of current Postcolonial literary theory can add an ignored and thus a unique perspective to this particular genre. Such a step has advantages for both sides, as it gives Urdu literature a much more international and broader readership; on the other hand, it allows a person to explore the similarities and the uniqueness of Urdu literature. Quratulain Hyder is one of the first people in the subcontinent to use the now commonly used and talked about style of magic realism. For most of the Western audience, Salman Rushdie is considered to be the first proponent of this particular form of fiction from the subcontinent. This is clearly not the case, for Hyder's novel was written in the 1960's.

The inclusion of Urdu literature in this dissertation provides a much broader perspective on the literature written on Partition. One is able to examine the differences and similarities in which the issues of pain, dis-location and violence are examined by authors writing in different mediums. Whereas most of the literature written in English is situated around the time of Partition, literature written in Urdu provides a more realistic popular account of the history and the events which led to the eventual break-up of India and resulted in bloodshed on such a large scale. This literature addresses people from a variety of social and economic classes, as will be discussed in Abdullah Hussain's *Udhas Naslain (Lost Generations)*. In the literature written in English, like Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice Candy Man*, the outbreak of communal violence is presented as something that has suddenly seized the whole country. Because the past is seen in quite a simplistic manner, an event such as the Partition, with all its brutality, could never be imagined as if to suggest that there was rarely a conflict between different religious communities. Such a naïve and one-dimensional view is not

shared by the Urdu novelists discussed in this dissertation as they trace the history of the growing rift between various communities. They may have been surprised by the brutality of violence, but it is never presented as an unforeseen event. One is made aware, especially in the novels of Qurratulain Hyder and Abdullah Hussain, of the difficulties faced by members of different religious groups as serious violence did flare up at times, as it could in any heterogeneous community. Because of this detailed examination, it becomes quite difficult to paint people in certain stereotypical characteristics. Their novels examine individuals and communities during different time-periods and the community's responses to various unforeseen events, such as the advent of World War II, in Abdullah Hussain's *Udhas Naslain*, where the religious differences are put aside because of the authority of the British and the collective danger faced during the War.

On the other hand, works by authors such as Rajinder Singh Bedi's *Lajwanti*, Qudrat-Ullah Shahaab's *Ya Khuda (Oh God!)* and Khadija Mastoor's *Aangan (The Courtyard)* view the relationship between and within communities as they are faced with the social upheaval taking place around them. These novels will be discussed in greater detail in the dissertation, focusing on the effects that public violence might have on the private lives and relationships between individuals (mainly women) in the private sphere. In *Lajwanti*'s case, we see the kind of reception she is offered by her own husband on her return from Pakistan. She had been abducted, but she is made to feel that because she has been sexually molested, she somehow is complicit in what has happened. *Ya Khuda* is the story about an appalling captivity and a harrowing journey of a Muslim woman who had been abducted by Sikhs and had been repeatedly raped by them over a period of months. Her brutal confinement ends after she has become heavily pregnant and is then handed over to the Police to be transferred to Pakistan. Once she has reached the new country, her ordeal of sexual exploitation continues at the hands of Pakistani men. Mastoor's *Aangan* focuses on the private lives in a Muslim household as the political and social changes take hold in the public domain.

In discussing these works, questions will be asked as to the differences in the form of violence directed towards different genders and how people (especially women) respond to them. What are the recourses open to them? Why and how are they often partly blamed for physical and sexual violence directed towards them? Do women writers have a fundamentally different approach to the events of Partition and the way women are presented in this genre?

One writer, considered by both Pakistanis and Indians to be someone truly able to capture the pain and emotion of the events of Partition was Saadat Hassan Manto. His short stories, written in the immediate aftermath of the violence, were brutal as well as pithy in their content and effect. Manto was one writer, among a group of very few others, who consistently focused more on the human nature of his characters rather than their religious affiliation. In his writing, Manto never seemed to shy away from physical or sexual violence that different people carried out on others; if there was criticism, it was of these characters rather than their religions. Because of his graphic descriptions, Manto was often accused, by other writers as well as the conservative media, of sensationalism, and was often branded as someone who paid too much attention to sexuality. However, these were charges that revealed more about those making them than Manto and his work. Questions raised about Manto and his work will be discussed in the chapter on him, to determine how and why his writings have struck a particular chord with the reading public of the whole subcontinent.

This dissertation hopes to raise some issues which might help provide an alternative voice in the discourse of Partition. It is hoped that by creating a more problematic discourse of Partition, which involves more than one community's perspective, this would result in a more balanced beginning of a dialogue to understand the reasons and the lessons of the violent past that is shared by both countries. As the violence is viewed with slightly more complexity, it is hoped that emphasis would shift from collective blame and victimisation branded by all the communities. There is an urgent and a practical need for a

more realistic approach to share the responsibility that each community played in the violence and ethnic-cleansing during the Partition. It is imperative that people in different communities ask themselves before they blame others, why is it that no one has ever been tried on criminal charges in both countries. What are the implications of such collective amnesia of a community's own crimes and incessant exaggeration of the responsibility of others? What has each community done with the anger and pain experienced by so many during that time? What has been done about the women who were abducted and raped, and how have they been received by their respective societies? What does these women's treatment reveal about the differences in the ideology and reality of the society's view about the position and place of women?

One hopes that in raising and trying to answer some and more of these questions, the reader will become aware of the extent of tragedy which befell the subcontinent. It is also expected that one learns to look more critically, not just at others' but at one's own community. More than fifty years after the pain and trauma of Partition, it is indeed time to develop some sort of an understanding where the shared goal should be to look to the future. Another collective objective should be to bring the marginalised narratives into public discourse, for it is in them that one can actually see the common strands of pain and hope that can be used by different communities. The eventual aim of this dissertation is to help move the debate of Partition forward, but in such a way that one has understood the weight of the past and the desire to have a much more open and comprehensive dialogue than has been carried out in the past.

Chapter 1

Historiography of the Partition

Historiography, according to R. Winks, has a number of definitions; it has been considered to be 'the art of depicting historical controversy' or 'viewed as the study of trends in interpretation.' The study of, and the scholars of Partition continue to grapple with new evidence and renderings of Partition. Winks continues with his definition of historiography, which according to him:

[D]eals with the evolving or changing interpretations of history of the British Empire, with the legacy of historical writing, and today's perspectives on previous scholarship. It is concerned with the ways that history of British Imperialism has been written from one generation of historians to the next (Winks, p. viii).

Partition's genesis is in the British colonial rule over India, and thus, any study of what took place in 1947, has to be studied in conjunction with presence and policies of the colonialists.

As both India and Pakistan were celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of their independence in 1997, Bangladesh did not participate in any such festivities. Instead, the nation as a whole was mourning the twentieth anniversary of the assassination of the founder of Bangladesh, Sheikh Mujibur Rehman. Tai Yong Tan and Gyanesh Kudaisya, in their well-researched study provide reasoning behind these actions:

Official nationalist discourse (of Bangladesh) discounts 14th August either as a day of no historic significance for Bangladesh or as a 'false dawn'. It advances the view that when British colonial rule ended, the people of East Bengal did not experience freedom. The establishment of Pakistan did not bring about emancipation, as Punjabi civil-military *elites* came to dominate the nation and 'only the masters changed'. (Tan & Kudaisya, p.5)

For the Bangladeshis (who were called East Pakistanis before their second independence), 'independence' amounted to little more than a change in the religious affiliation of those who now ruled over them, who happened to

be Muslims, but apart from that, there was nothing in common between them. Pakistanis were perceived, and rightly so, as people of a different linguistic, cultural and ethnic group who did not share the aspirations of the Bangladeshis.

These political and ideological differences had surfaced very soon after the Indian subcontinent was divided into two countries. In 1952, the language agitation movement started which put up a strong opposition to the ruling hegemony of Urdu-speaking West Pakistan. This ideology gained momentum and won widespread support among the ordinary Bangladeshis who wanted complete freedom to decide the destiny of their nation. West Pakistan sent in the army to quell this nationalist uprising. A bitter and bloody civil war ensued, and in 1971, Bangladesh was created. In relation to the nationalist discourse, Tan and Kudaisya conclude that:

The Bangladeshi case is an extraordinary example of how a new nation, in its recent past, has reinvented its national identity and, in doing so, has invested a historic event with an entirely new set of meanings (Tan & Kudaisya, p.5)

For the Bangladeshis', Partition does not have the same meaning it does for India. They view this event as carving up India into two parts; on the other hand, they do not share Pakistanis' enthusiasm for this event, for whom it meant freedom from colonialists and Hindus. They continue to regard Partition as one of the collective experiences they had to undergo before gaining their independence.

For almost 20 years after the Partition, the writings about this event were dominated by those who had witnessed the formulations, decisions and the implementation of the policies that resulted in the division of the subcontinent. These writings were of an elite group of individuals, and they were in the forms of autobiographies, biographies or memoirs. These high ranking civil and military authors included, among others, Sir Malcolm Darling (*At Freedom's Door*, 1949) and Sir Francis Tucker (*While Memory Serves*, 1950). These writings concentrated on the role that they had played and the chaos they had observed.

The second phase of writings consisted of more detailed observations, though again from the 'important' individuals who had played consequential roles in the Partition of the subcontinent. One of the most well known books from this period was Alan Campbell-Johnson's *Mission with Mountbatten* (1951). It focused on the historic 'mission' that the last Viceroy had undertaken and had successfully executed. Other influential writers included V.P. Menon (*Transfer of Power in India*, 1954) and Penderel Moon (*Divide and Quit*, 1961). These writings were by individuals in senior advisory and administrative positions and each described his perspective on what had taken place and the role that they had played.

It was at around this time in the 1950s that Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's *India Wins Freedom* was published. He was one of the most influential Congress leaders, was also a Muslim, and his book was one of the first to criticise his party's hierarchy for the Partition of India. He said that some of the his closest colleagues had made what he called 'monumental' mistakes and had acted more out of self-interest than for the good of the Party or the country. He felt that some of the things he had to say about other Congress leaders, including Nehru, were so damaging that they would seriously undermine his ability to govern the country. Thus, he asked his publishers to withhold about 30 pages of his book, which were not published until 1988.

Another Muslim writer, Choudary Khaliqzaman, who belonged to the Muslim League and was in favour of the Partition, wrote *Pathway to Pakistan* (1961). He wrote that partition was the only way forward for the subcontinent because the Congress's policies were directed at disenfranchising the Muslims. If Muslims wanted to maintain their religious and cultural heritage, they had to have a separate homeland.

The decade of the 1970s saw the introduction of the writings of professional historians. This period was dominated by a seminal work edited by Sir Nicholas Mansergh, *Transfer of Power* (1970); a 12-volume collection of

about 7,500 official and semi-official documents. This collection came to have a fundamental impact on how Partition would be viewed and written about. The revisionist phase of historiography had begun with the availability of such a rich source of classified documents now freely available to individual researchers. This period saw a questioning of the decisions of the 'great men' involved in the Partition of India. Some of the historians who have led the way in developing this new strand of historiography include Gordon Johnson, Francis Robinson, Robin Moore, Ian Talbot, David Gilmartin, Anita Inder Singh and Ayesha Jalal. These commentators have focused their attentions on trying to "... answer the question of why the process of constitutional devolution was accompanied by communal discord which ultimately concluded in partition" (Tan & Kudaisya, p. 12).

Along with the historians' cross-questionings, the 1980s witnessed the establishment and development of Subaltern Studies in India. This pioneering group moved away from and queried the 'official' and elitist versions of history that was being propagated by the State. Instead of just focusing on the actions of the 'leaders', this group, under Ranajit Guha, chose to study the marginalised and silent masses, whose voices, till now, had not been deemed significant enough to be included in the State's version of history. The findings of this group had a profound effect on how Partition is now being re-examined and written about. Those working in this group include among others, Veena Das, David Arnold, Gyanendra Pandey, Gayatri Spivak and Gyan Prakash. This group has also brought out the differences in "memory" which exist in a country, based as it is on ethnic, social and religious affiliations. In Pakistan for example, the major ethnic groups, namely Punjabis, Sindhis, Pathans, Baluchis and Mohajirs have widely varying accounts of the events and significance of Partition. They do not just differ from one another; they are also at odds with the national metanarrative. Similar differences of opinion also surface if one examines the memories of ethnic groups like the Kashmiris, Sikhs and Bengalis in India.

This dissertation aims to follow this particular line of enquiry laid down by this group, with a more proclivity on the version of events from the Pakistani side of the divide.

II

The historical debate, according to Ian Talbot, "continues to be overwhelmingly elitist in tone, with few concessions to the concerns of the so-called 'new history' of the subaltern groups and 'post-structuralist' distrust of the universal narratives" (Talbot, 1999, p.253). Even though this trend has changed considerably in India, mainly due to the efforts and writings of the Subaltern Group, in Pakistan, unfortunately, no such widespread and concerted modification has occurred, with the notable exception of Ayesha Jalal's work; the history of Pakistan is continuously centred around the activities and achievements of 'great men'.

Two important historiographical developments have occurred since the 1970s. First, scholars such as Francis Robinson, Ian Talbot and David Gilmartin have intensified their research from the national to the mechanics of provincial politics. This shift in interest, according to Talbot, "has provided constructive insights into the evolution of support for the Pakistan movement in the provinces with Muslim majority". This new line of inquiry has shed new light on the dynamics of political and social changes that occurred and which eventually led to the creation of Pakistan. It has provided reasons and the outcome of some of the 'puzzles' which helped to transform Muslim League's political fortunes between 1937 and 1946. Secondly, there has been a revision of established views concerning the 'high politics' of the endgame of British rule. Jinnah's purposes in raising the Pakistan demand have been re-interpreted, as have the British and Congress motivations in accepting the Partition Plan (Talbot, 1999, p.254). The Cambridge school, as it became known, set about to challenge the hitherto accepted 'conventional assumptions' of the role that the Western educated leadership had played in defining and developing the course of nationalism as India moved towards ending the British colonial rule. The

scholars of this 'school' set in motion another development which was to provide further insight into the understanding of events which took place during that time, the focus was directed away from the All-India level and emphasis was instead laid more on the significance of colonial rule for the eventual establishment of a national Muslim political identity. Farzana Shiekh, whose work will be discussed in greater detail in this chapter, has furthered the debate on the unique relationship between Islam and political activity as interpreted by Indian Muslims. According to Talbot, Sheikh challenged:

...[T]he two widely held assumptions that Muslim separatism was inspired primarily by colonial definitions of Indian society and that the Pakistan demand was nothing more than a bid for power. In her view, the separatist platform was based on Islamically derived values of political consensus and legitimacy which increasingly conflicted with the liberal-democratic understanding as the British devolved power in India (Talbot, 1999, p.258).

One of the most significant developments in the study of the historiography of Pakistan to come out of the Cambridge School approach was the focus on regional/provincial studies. These new avenues went a long way to help open up the historical understanding of a variety of political, religious and personal forces, which reassigned the support of the rural masses towards the Muslim League. The Unionist Party of Punjab, for example, had reduced the League to a single seat party in the 1937 elections. The League leadership was aware that if they and their demand for Pakistan were to be taken seriously, they would have to win mass support of rural Punjab. How it was able to do that will be discussed in greater detail in this chapter.

Ayesha Jalal's seminal study, *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan* (1985), has successfully challenged the long held view that Jinnah had advocated for Pakistan from the very beginning. She has, according to Talbot, 'controversially but authoritatively claimed that Jinnah's real political aim from 1940 onwards was for an equal say for Muslims in an All-India Union. Jalal's revisionist perspective has nevertheless had a lasting impact on how Jinnah and other political (Nehru and Gandhi) and colonial (Mountbatten) 'leaders' roles are being re-examined' (Talbot, 1999, p.

260).

Mountbatten's viceroyalty has long been intensely debated by the Pakistani commentators. His attitude was considered to be far from neutral when it came to dealings with Nehru and Jinnah. It is only recently that a number of Western researchers have also reached conclusions very similar to those of the Pakistani historians. His claims of total secrecy and neutrality in the deliberations of the Radcliffe Boundary Commission Award did not proceed with impartiality that Mountbatten had always maintained. Andrew Roberts has written about the role that Mountbatten played. Even though his work has been accused of lacking the cold and detached perspective of a number of academic historians, I believe that he, as it will be discussed in this chapter, adds a 'human' dimension to the understanding of Mountbatten, which is lacking in academic writing.

III

As both nations have gone past the half century mark since the Partition of India, there is a renewed academic interest in re-examining almost all the aspects, including social, political and religious factors which led to the creation of Pakistan. As a result of the dominant Indian academic influence, Pakistani perspectives on Partition have been somewhat marginalised. Thus, one feels that Pakistani historiography of the partition has to be re-articulated in order to arrive at a realistic and more problematic discourse of the causes, events and memory of what really happened. This dissertation will explicate narratives of individuals and communities that have been missing from the discourse of this event. This is not the first time that a particular perspective has been missing from a significant national and political event. Writing during the height of fascism, exiled Italian intellectual, Antonio Gramsci had noted the gaps in the history of an underclass. This is very true when one considers the history of Partition and how certain section's voices are never heard. According to Gramsci:

The history of subaltern groups is necessarily fragmented and episodic... Every trace of independent initiative on the part of subaltern groups should therefore be of incalculable value for the integral historian... this kind of history can only be dealt with monographically, and each monograph requires an immense quantity of material which is often hard to collect (Gramsci, pp.54-5).

These 'fragmented' voices are those versions that have been ignored or obscured by the 'official' narratives. It is ironic that these very individual narratives authenticate the metanarrative by making it more problematic. These 'hidden' accounts seem to be Gyanendra Pandey's focus when he observes that:

The narratives preserved by the state in archives and other public institutions - that is, the narratives most commonly used by historians - belong overwhelmingly to the ruling classes' need for security and control. Lodged in the records found in these institutions, however, are fragments (traces) of many lost (and usually irrecoverable) narratives, prised out by a predatory official or observer from earlier (often unknown) contexts and situated in others: the statement of a 'mute' subject under trial; rumours heard in the bazaar; slogans shouted by rebels or rioters... (Pandey, G., p.224).

It is with the help of these 'un-observed' events and thus far overlooked details, combined with written chronicles, that a much more complex and complete historiography of Pakistan's perspective of Partition needs to be constructed. This account of history would not necessarily endorse Pakistan's official version, and one needs to be aware of not following a simplistic counter-narrative to what has been written so far. There is an urgent need to have a history of Partition that takes into consideration the official as well as un-official accounts to reveal that true diversity of opinions about the various facets of this event. The linearity of metanarratives can no longer be taken to be a viable source of a credible representation of the events of Partition, since, because of their very nature, they exclude the very necessary perspectives that may contradict them. Whereas till now the historiography has had an impassioned yet an un-problematic Indian bias, its basic tenets are now being challenged by the current research being undertaken by a variety of researchers which includes individuals from a variety of backgrounds, ranging from academia to

journalism. There is an immediate need to create a much more realistic and a challenging narrative of Partition, as Andrew Roberts declares:

The story of the transfer of Power has until recently been written from an almost entirely pro-Congress, almost triumphalist, point of view. Scholars are only just starting to challenge this historical orthodoxy (Roberts, p.80).

The major segment of Partition's historiography has almost exclusively denied the Muslims any positive contribution in desiring and then achieving a separate homeland. A number of Indian writers seem to have neglected any historical research beyond the narrow and propagandist version of events put their way by the Indian National Congress's leadership. But now the time has come, as Asim Roy declares, for there to be a:

Strong and long-felt need for questioning some of the great old assumptions and myths enshrined in the orthodox historiography of British India's partition ... twin partition myths locked in a symbiotic relationship: 'The League for Partition' and 'the Congress for unity.' The traditional understanding of the political process leading to the partition has remained strongly rooted in these two 'unquestionable' popular assumptions, reinforced by a long and powerful tradition of academic sanctification (Roy, pp.102-3).

Such prejudiced attitude has consistently surfaced in the historiography of Partition to give credit to Congress for all the alleged attempts its leadership had made to prevent the 'un-patriotic' and 'subversive' Muslim League from vivisectioning sacred 'Mother India.' However, through re-examination of the roles that different political parties and their leaders played, it is not difficult to conclude that Congress leadership shares the bulk of the responsibility for the division of India. However, a large number of Indian historians continue not only to propagate but fervently believe in a version of events which has been proven to be spurious by the facts which have recently re-surfaced and have been examined in the writings of, among others, Ayesha Jalal and Ian Talbot.

A number of 'traditional' Indian historians, as will be discussed in this chapter, have waged an unrelenting campaign on vilifying the Muslim community in general and the Muslim League in particular for their role in the

partition of India. A number of fictional and non-fictional works related to the Partition from India have succeeded in constructing a narrow and biased recreation of events. In such versions of events, Muslims as a community and individuals appear as caricatures at their best. As a collective community, Muslims are framed in a stereotype that seems to be an extension of their portrayal in Orientalist European writings. Examples of such skewed representation of Muslims will be discussed in more detail in this chapter.

Indian (Muslim, Hindu and Sikh) political leaders had formed a united front and fought to win freedom for a single country. However, with the passage of time, a number of Muslim leaders felt that in a free India, the only change for the Muslims would be that instead of the British, they would have Hindu rulers. This concern was the basic driving force behind the formation, in 1906, of the Muslim League. The first and foremost objective of the League's formation was to provide a platform where the concerns and interests of the Muslims of India could be addressed. With the passage of time, as the political and social conditions changed, the League changed its objectives to establish a homeland for the Muslims of India, where they could practice and prosper in accordance to the tenets of Islam.

The Narration of the Partition

The narration of Partition's history, as indeed, of many other significant historical events is presented from different and contesting points of view. For Pakistanis, it was a deliverance from what they saw would be a control of their lives by the Hindu majority. Along with this domination would come the blatant and fundamental biases of the Hindus who, as a collective community, opposed the creation of Pakistan.

The Indian academy followed at the heels of the official Congress policies in regards to Pakistan and the Muslim League leadership. Thus 'academic' works began to consolidate and attempted to give a guise of objectivity to Congress's policies. One such book is by Lal Bahadur, called *The Muslim League: Its*

History, Activities & Achievements. In this book, the only 'outside source' Bahadur seems to have consulted is the *Indian National Congress Report of the General Secretaries, November, 1946 - December, 1948*. He seems to have been so profoundly influenced by this 'Report' that it is often difficult to differentiate his ideas from those espoused by the Congress. Mr. Bahadur fails to re-examine the gross generalisations he seems to indulge in, and has no difficulty in determining the political parties, which according to him are at fault:

The British Government found Indian Musalmans ready to indulge in anti-patriotic activities..."The 'Divide and Rule' policy of the British Government and the two nation theory of the Muslim League had engendered the spirit of communal hatred and antagonism which it was not easy to liquidate." In fact, both the Muslim community as a whole and the British Government were responsible for India's Partition. (Bahadur, p.334).

In his rush to judgement, Bahadur is completely oblivious to the fact that one of the leaders of Congress was Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, and that there were numerous Muslim provincial parties, the most influential of which was the Unionist Party of Punjab, which were opposed to the Partition. He is still willing to give some benefit to the British Government, but the Muslims deserve no such concessions:

No Imperialism has ever worked anywhere in a spirit of welfare to the State it dominates. On this score, the position of the British Government in India is, to some extent, defensible and when, in the last resort, they relinquished their hold over the country (whatever their former misdeeds), they showed magnanimity of high order. Ever the Devil deserves its due, but the Musalmans had no such justification except of self-interest and, hence, theirs was, in a way, the major responsibility for the Partition of India (Bahadur, p.334-335).

After his exoneration of the British, Bahadur proceeds to lay the entire blame on the Muslims for the Partition. Bahadur delves into one more fantastic scenario, which offers an insight into the paranoia of a certain section of Indians:

But even the Partition is not without advantage. Had India remained a united whole, the Musalmans would have surely dominated and would have shared in the amenities of life, more than their due. Right traditions would have never developed as at every step special claims of the

Musalmans would have been advanced. They could have taken root only if homage were not paid to Muslim appeasement... It was choosing between the two evils - Muslim domination over the whole of the country and vivisection of Mother India - and in accepting the later position, perhaps a better evil was chosen (Bahadur, p. 345).

Bahadur, and a number of Indian writers, who follow such an unprobolomatic line of argument to this day, continue to view Partition and the vicious circle of violence which led to it largely as the responsibility of the Muslims. They totally exonerate the Congress leadership of any wrongdoing or just gloss over the details that might incriminate its dominant role in the events of Partition. As G.W. Choudhury puts it, Partition 'began the bitterest quarrel between the two communities. For the Muslims it was a struggle for survival; for the Hindus it was to avoid ' vivisection of the motherland' (Choudhury, p.3).

Choudhury also outlines the contemporary state of hostilities between the two countries as a direct continuation of Indians' heavy-handed treatment of the idea of Pakistan. He comments that:

Many Indians seem to regard the creation of Pakistan as a tragic mistake that might still be corrected. Many Pakistanis have real fears about India's ultimate aim of reuniting the subcontinent. The fundamental cause of the animosity between India and Pakistan, many Pakistanis feel, is basically India's unwillingness to respect Pakistan as a sovereign state, to accept the reality of her existence (Choudhury, p.7).

The mode of politically skewed discourse presented in Bahadur's book is echoed again in the writings of some contemporary historians of Partition, such as N. S. Gehlot. In his essay, 'Communalism and Partition Politics: Who should be held Responsible,' Gehlot sets out to examine the highly awaited thirty pages from Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad's book, *India Wins Freedom*. Azad had felt that what he had to say about the Congress leadership was so damaging that it would have created political and social upheaval in India. When the missing pages were eventually published, it became apparent the extent to which Congress leadership, and Nehru in particular contributed through their erroneous political and personal decisions to a situation where Partition became the only viable alternative to the communal anarchy that had engulfed the whole

region. From the outset, Gehlot is at pains to point out that Nehru and Sardar Patel were among the most significant contributors in the making of India. Having already reached his conclusions, he makes every effort to cast doubts on the personal accounts of Azad, a man who was in the forefront of the whole political struggle. For Gehlot:

It is a matter of deep regard [sic] that, inspite of having a vast reservoir of source-materials, the book of Maulana Azad casts doubts on great national leaders after forty years. It is widely believed that the Maulana evidently wrote this book, or rather dictated it from his memory, in collaboration with Prof. Humayun Kabir and the study therefore, suffers from many flaws and errors of fact as well as judgement ... [D]uring the last years of his life when his health had badly shattered and his memory had miserably failed (Gehlot, p.169-70).

Gehlot's deductions are an example of the desire of some Indian writers to be invective towards anything that might contradict their own account of Partition. In conclusion, he ends up condemning the man he is trying so desperately to defend. Nehru had himself said that one of the reasons he and the Congress accepted partition was because they had become too tired of the whole political struggle. Gehlot denounces Azad for saying what Nehru had said:

It is a baseless allegation that Sardar Patel and Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru agreed to the partition of India because they were avid for power and they had tired (sic) of their being involved into the national struggle against the British Empire (Gehlot, p.170).

Gehlot continues his rather personal attacks not only on Azad's character, but goes further to include Pakistan and Jinnah in them. In accordance with his outburst against Azad, Gehlot quite easily slips into the same treatment of Jinnah:

The rise of certain factors, like personal ego, leadership and ambition to become the governor-general of Pakistan etc. crept into his personality, which made him mad for power and encouraged him to support the autocracy (Gehlot, p.174).

In opposition to power-hungry and autocratic Jinnah, he presents the other side of his Manichean analysis when talking about Nehru:

We all are, therefore, fortunate that Pt. Nehru ruled India for eighteen years and strengthened the foundations of Indian democracy. He became the patriarch, the father figure for us (Gehlot, p.177).

Gehlot concludes his essay on Maulana Azad, one of the most important men in modern Indian history, by saying that the latter's version of events, because it lays some of the blame of Partition on Nehru and Patel, is 'baseless and irrational, and these allegations seemingly represent the biased and frustrated views of the Maulana (Gehlot, p.177). In doing such an injustice to the memory of Azad, Gehlot seems, more than anything else, to provide a mirror for the reader in which his own personal convictions and biases are clearly revealed.

Pakistan became a rallying point for the majority of Muslims, especially in Northern India because, as Keith Callard states, the Muslims "...were not prepared to accept independence from British rule within the framework of a united India, where the Hindus would be in a majority" (Callard, p.5). Callard weakens his own argument as he fails to explore the complexity of events which finally caused the break-up of India. It was a much more problematic issue, as the events preceding the elections of 1937 so clearly revealed.

The Birth of Muslim Nationalism

As the British and *Zamindars* (Feudal Landlords) controlled the entire economic system of India, the Congress as well as the Muslim League felt that this hierarchy had to be changed. As K.N. Chaudri states, the reasons fundamental in driving the desire for independence from the British were economic more than anything else. He says:

In fact the mainstream of Indian nationalism derived its motivating force from two complementary directions. They were in the first place, the concrete political objectives and secondly, there was, no less important, the desire to control and direct the country's social and economic welfare (Chaudri, p.294).

The above-mentioned combination of objectives acted as a driving force of the whole movement. For Muslims, however, an additional hurdle had to be crossed, which included their political awakening in order to press forward and carry out their demand for a separate homeland. There were a number of politically significant events in the history of colonial India, which for the leadership of Muslim League set out a separate course for the destiny of Indian Muslims.

The year of 1857 marks a cornerstone in British as well as Muslim history of India. After an unsuccessful armed uprising against numerous unjust and openly hostile policies of the East India Company, the already strained relations between the Muslims and British took a turn for the worse. Even though Hindus and Sikhs had also participated in the uprising, Muslims were singled out by the Colonialists for the immediate and brutal military reprisals, as well as for the long-term systematic repression.

The most significant change that this uprising had for the Colonialists was the immediate handing over of the East India Company to the British Crown. As a direct result of this action, what had been under the loose control of a trading company was formally brought under the British government. The new authority of the Crown was absolute, and could rule in any manner she saw fit, on almost all aspects, political, social and individual mode of policies without any fear of being answerable to the Indian public. It was not until this fateful moment that the Indians fully comprehended the expansionist and colonial designs of the British, and it was not until now that they finally came to the rude awakening that the British were in India to stay for a long time to come.

The Muslims, being made the scapegoats, were repressed in almost every conceivable manner. Their education was put down, efforts were made, with the help of the Congress to force school children to learn Hindi rather than Urdu. The professional and administrative positions had no Muslim representation, as a result, there was lack of any coherent avenue for their

grievances. As Richard V. Weekes, in his book, *Pakistan: Birth and Growth of a Muslim Nation*, says:

Sir William Hunter, who wrote of Indian Muslims after the Uprising, reported that there was only one Muslim among the 240 Indian Lawyers admitted to the Calcutta bar between 1852 and 1868 and there was not a single Muslim High Court Judge. Of 1,338 Civil Service appointments in Bengal, Muslims received only 92 (Weekes, p.8).

It should be noted that the figures that Weekes cites here are of geographical areas which are predominantly Muslim, but one can easily speculate as to how the Muslims would have fared in areas where they were a minority.

One of the major factors which continues to be overlooked in this 'traditionalist' description of the events is the reasoning which led to this 'exclusive' demand of the Muslims' call for a separate homeland. One of the fundamental points of difference between the Muslim League and the Congress was the latter's desire for the majority rule and the former's unyielding commitment to view people across the great divide of Muslims and non-Muslims. The League's perspective on the Congress's Westernised ideals was neither unimportant nor incidental; it had a set of historical, cultural and most importantly, religious reasons behind its stand.

Differences between Islam and the Western Ideals espoused by the Congress

The Muslims had a whole set of ideas to counter the claims of the Congress's highly politicised Westernised precepts of democracy. These ideals of democracy with the equality of the plebiscite had emerged in 19th Century Europe. Such concepts had a significant role to play in protecting an individual against the established order, control and influences of the entrenched establishments of Church, State and the feudal system. The Muslim ideals, on the other hand, give preference to the welfare and well being of the Community

over the individual. The communal solidarity is considered as an effective indication of the conditions of the individuals in it.

The second major difference between the Muslims and the Congress was the question of 'representativeness.' As Farzana Shaikh points out, in Liberal (Western) democratic systems, an 'electoral theory of representation' is the foundation of that ideal, through which 'political legitimacy is seen to depend primarily upon elected status.' On the other hand:

Political legitimacy and representative status in Islam tended to rely much upon visibly shared social and communal group than upon his elected status *per se*...[and it was] not inappropriate to court and that within the context of Islamic political values, it was more important to Muslims to be represented by Muslims than by elected, politically accountable non-Muslims (Sheikh, pp. 83-4).

The community as a whole continued to form the basis of the politics rather than the actions of an individual. The emphasis in Islam is on the role of the community to preside over the well-being of an individual, whose interests, in turn are held subservient to it.

The third most significant difference between the two parties was the manner in which they regarded the role and organisation of the representative political bodies. The Western (and consequently, Congress's) perception of the representative institution was the end product of the consensus of the national franchise. And if this freely elected body failed to fulfil the expectations of the general populace, it would be removed, again, by the use of the national rite of vote casting and by creating 'fluid political alignments.' Congress put forward the view that 'the political assembly no longer represents estates, classes, or orders as such, but free and equal heads - abstract political person.' The inherent 'flaw', for the Muslims, of this system, was the fact that the 'majority' always retained the control of this elected body, which in this particular case would have been Hindus.

In opposition to this electorate process, the League presented an Islamic mode of government, which relied on the communal make-up, more than any other factor as the basis of a politically elected body, which seemed:

... [T]o consist not of fluid political majorities and minorities, but of conglomerations of rigidly defined, mutually exclusive communal groups divided principally along religious lines (Sheikh, p. 86).

The Muslims' ideas in regards to the society were presented in the image of a 'mosaic of fixed communal groups which aspire to representations within an evenly balanced political assembly' (Sheikh, p.86).

In Indian politics, the League used the Islamic model to propagate its inherent differences from the Congress's westernised and 'liberal' assumptions for a Raj-free India. These two political forces were poles apart in their views of the political representation in the elections, and in regards to the subsequent representation, the League had an alternative agenda to Congress's Western mode of democracy. This was the rationale behind the League's leadership's claim that theirs was the exclusive and the sole representative of the Muslims of India, that theirs was the *Muslim* party, even after the dismal showing in the 1936-37 general elections.

The Elections of 1936-37

As the general elections of 1936-37 drew closer, Muslim political parties were still organised on local levels and concentrated on the immediate issues at hand, and there was no 'national' party as such. The Muslim League was still poorly organised and provincial parties were not willing to accept it as the sole representative of the Muslims of India. The League's most vociferous opposition came less from the Congress and more from the Unionist Party of Punjab. The latter had invested a considerable amount of resources and manpower especially in the rural areas of the Province. The Unionist leaders, almost all of whom were feudal landlords, continued to insist on being with the Congress because the latter opted for a status quo as far as the former's vested interests

were concerned. The Unionist Party's determined stance was to force on the Muslim League its most humiliating defeat, which made the latter's leadership realise that it would eventually have to change its strategy if it was to win in Punjab.

Even though Jinnah had come back to India in 1935, he lacked the kind of political influence he would have liked, which would have propelled the Muslim League to be accepted as the National Muslim party. The leadership had failed to devise any concrete manifestos of their political aims, apart from some general and equally vague promises to the electorate.

The League was contesting in national elections for the first time, and it lacked experience of running an effective and a comprehensive political campaign. Thus it was only able to win a disappointing 109 seats out of the 482 reserved for the Muslims; in fact the League did not even have candidates contesting all the seats. Even though Congress won only 26 Muslim seats (5.4%), it had won 716 (44%) of the total seats (Zaidi, p. 253). With such results it was clear that if the League was not the party of the Muslims, the Congress could not claim itself to be the party of India, and certainly not of the Muslims. Zaidi points out that '... no Muslim was returned on a Congress ticket from the Muslim constituencies in Bengal, Sind, Punjab, Assam, United Provinces, Bombay, Central Provinces, and Orissa' (Zaidi, p.253). The Congress's success was limited to the Northwest Frontier Province, although it had won some seats in Madras and Bihar. The Congress could very well see that their policies had started distancing the Muslim electorate. However, the euphoria of their national success was so intense that its leaders did not bother to pay enough attention to the Muslim voters and their concerns. Jinnah would confront this problem of apathy of the Muslims, overcome it and build up support for a national Muslim League.

These elections were a turning point in defining the new political shape and ideologies of Indian politics as well as the relationship between the political parties. 'The most significant of these (policies)' according to Z.H. Zaidi, 'was

the Congress tendency towards a one-party polity in India that assumed the submersion of other Indian Parties.' On the other hand, Zaidi continues his assessment that the complete failure of the Muslim League was a result of '[i]t's lack of success in becoming a dynamic organisation, mainly because its leadership in the past had been composed of 'careerists' - professional politicians who lacked mass political appeal and some of whom felt no particular dedication to their cause' (Zaidi, p.245). Jinnah was later to face up to and tackle these and other 'afflictions' which had beset the Muslim League.

The Congress's attitude towards the League and its leadership had been luke-warm before the elections, but took a turn for the worse after 1937. In the United Provinces, where both League and Congress had won seats, the Congress refused to form a coalition with the Muslim League unless the latter met a number of its demands, one of which was to renounce its projection as the sole Muslim party. Even a number of prominent Congress leaders believed that Congress' heavy-handed policies would fail to achieve desired results from the League. Jinnah, on the other hand, wanted both parties to go into coalition after agreeing to common policy terms which could be achieved through dialogue and consultation, rather than being dictated by the Congress. There were a number of objections that the Congress had in recognising the League as the sole representative of the Muslims. They were:

1. If it were to recognise the League as the sole representative of the Muslims, it would have to banish thousands of Congress members who were Muslims.
2. There were other political parties, like the Jamait-ul-Ullema, which claimed to represent the Muslims.
3. If Congress would recognise the League as the sole representative of the Muslims, it felt that it would, by default, be considered a party of the Hindus, which it wanted to avoid at all costs.

Even though Congress continued to proclaim itself as the party of Indians, and not the Hindus, Nehru refused to see the fundamental differences between the two religious communities. His analysis of the complex political entanglement offered a rather unsophisticated view of the situation. He wrote to Syed Mahmud,

the differing ideologies between the two parties was like ‘... the conflict between an advanced organisation like the Congress and a politically reactionary organisation like the League.’¹ However, at the same time, Nehru’s policies were the very opposite of what he had professed to his Party. Deepak Pandey exposes this apparent gap between the Congress’s ideology and their actions:

...[D]espite of the Congress Leaders [insistence] that the Congress was not a communal organisation, at the provincial and local levels the Congressmen acted very much in the spirit of communalism. This became quite clear in the Report of the Sub-Committee appointed by the Working Committee to look into the matter. ‘It is evidently true,’ read the Report, ‘that all our Congressite Hindu friends became openly communal. They completely forgot their creed and became partial to every affair. In so doing they became so much unconscious that their masks dropped off and they looked quite naked to the public eyes’(Pandey, D., p.637).

As his study progresses, Pandey falls short of acknowledging the partisan attitude of the Congress. He says, ‘[a]t least, it can be said that the failure of the coalition talks in the U.P., *whoever* was responsible for it, did prove injurious to the cause of the Indian nationalism’ (Pandey, D, p.637). His conclusions seem quite puzzling if one notes his analysis of the whole debacle of the Congress. ‘Miscalculated moves’ is the best description that Pandey comes up with for the Congress’s attempts at suppressing the Urdu language to promote Hindi as well as their efforts to weaken the Muslim loyalties towards the League.

Gandhi had been appointed as the overall supervisor of the All-India Education Board, and had started to prepare ‘an exhaustive scheme for the development of Hindustani.’ This scheme confirmed the fears of even the most liberally proclaimed nationalist and secular ideals when the singing of *Vande Mataram* as the National Song was introduced. This song, as Pandey points out, was ‘written by Bankim Chandra Chatterji, and appeared in Chapter X of his book, *Anand Math*, and the context in which it was written was essentially anti-Muslim’ (Pandey, D., p.640). The attempts to impose this song where Muslim children would be forced to sing it fuelled the general Muslim bitterness

¹ Nehru to Syed Mahmud of Patna, 12 December 1939, Nehru Papers, Pt 1, Vol. 79.

against the policies of the Congress. The comments of the person who conducted this study are an apt representation of the Muslim feelings towards this song:

...[F]or over fifty years the book of Bankim has been read and resented by generations of Muslims and the song itself became indelibly stamped in their minds with the bitter spirit of insult to Islam and Muslims which permeates the *Anand Math*. However expurgated or standardised, Muslims can never reconcile themselves to a single line of that song (Pandey, p.641).

Even in a political atmosphere where the Congress kept up with its religiously antagonistic policies, Jinnah was still trying to form a loose coalition with the Congress, but he received no encouragement from the latter's leadership. Tara Chand describes Jinnah's political position:

Jinnah was on the horns of a dilemma. He wanted to gain the cooperation of the Congress so that the League might share power and gain prestige, but he was reluctant to modify the conditions on which he would cooperate. Then if he compromised, he would lose his credibility with the community, especially the vociferous section which insisted upon the safeguards guaranteed by MacDonal's Communal Award. (Chand, p. 205).

Despite Chand's clear distaste for both Jinnah and his political aims, his description outlines the dilemma that Jinnah faced after the League's defeat in general elections. Chand's traditionalist approach is evident in the manner he constructs a narrative of the role that Jinnah and the League played in achieving Pakistan. Knowing fully that Jinnah was ready to join hands with the Congress, provided that the latter heeded to his demands for the Rights of the minorities, and acknowledging Congress's blunder in not accepting that offer, Chand, along with a number of historians, continues to blame the Muslims for the Partition. These moves along with the tri-colour national flag of India slowly but surely distanced the Congress from its former Muslim supporters, who moved into the League's fold.

Congress's ideology failed to admit its communal foundations, as it continued to accuse the League of being a separatist movement, a charge

which the leadership of the former party did not dispute. Professor Ian Coupland's analysis provides the basic and simple truth that the Congress had steadfastly refused to consider:

The Congress, however genuinely national and non-communal its intentions might be, was a Hindu organisation. It was not so much that its Moslem [sic] membership was relatively small and included few Moslems of outstanding ability and influence. The psychological and philosophical background of the Congress movement, its modes of thought and conduct, the quality of what was known as "Congress-mindedness" were essentially Hindu, emphatically not Moslem. The doctrine of *ahisma* in particular was at least alien to Moslem as it was to most Western minds (Coupland, pp.192-3).

The Congress's policies inadvertently made the League's political aims much easier. The Muslims' dissatisfactions, which had been mild, scattered and confined to local and provincial levels, soon took a much more determined and a nation-wide stance after 1937. Retrospectively, a number of historians, and a few notable Congress leaders would question the role their leadership had played in turning down Jinnah's offer of co-operation. Jinnah was to use this political rebuke and change his political agenda and voice his opposition to the parochial and insensitive policies of the Congress and eventually succeed in creating a new homeland for the Muslims of India.

Soon after winning the elections, the Congress leadership started to interfere in provincial affairs, even though they fully realised that the current Constitution forbade the Central government from doing so. As Chand states:

The Congress claimed to refrain from any interference with the internal affairs of the States, yet the Congress was doing so through the Praja Mandal in the pretext of establishing relations between the Provinces and the State's people... Similar activities of Praja Mandal were in existence in Travancore, Hyderabad, Punjab, Kashmir and other States of India (Chand, pp.175-6).

This claim, coming from a traditionalist Indian historian only strengthens the sense of frustration and apprehension of the Muslims and the League at the heavy handed policies of the Congress in regards to the provinces where they

formed a majority. Another example of this interventionist policy comes from a letter written by Rajendra Prasad to Vallabhai Patel:

The attempt of our Party in most [of these] provinces has constantly been to win over members of the government Party and thus secure a majority for itself, so that it may form a ministry. In effect its action has been not so much to consider the criticised government measures on their merit and secure the adoption of its own programme by the government, but to try somehow or other to oust the Party in Power. The result... has been to create much bitterness against the Congress (Pandey, pp.127-8, Moore, p.163).

It was policies like those described by Prasad which made Muslims fearful of the Hindu onslaught on their cultural, political and economic mode of life. Such actions encouraged them into the League's fold for it promised them a homeland away from the inequities of Congress. Jinnah repeatedly tried to object, often vociferously, against these partial policies, but Congress leadership, riding the popularity of their win in the elections, was not ready to listen to Muslim fears of control by the Hindus.

Punjab Unionist Party and the Muslim League

The Unionist Party had closely allied itself with the British whose patronage they enjoyed because of the services they were able to render for the Crown. During the War, the Party set in motion certain policies which would prove its loyalties. It drummed up the War effort by being able to gather and supply massive numbers of recruits, by some estimates, close to a million for the British Army. In addition, there were numerous programmes to encourage farmers to grow more food in order to be supplied to the Army. However, as the British were dragged more and more into the War, the government demanded more food and recruits from the Unionists' which was becoming increasingly more difficult. As a direct result of the War not enough attention was paid to the provincial economy, inflation set in and that had further destabilising effects on the economy and moral^e of the population. The exploitation was carried on to such an extent that this most productive province in the whole subcontinent was not able to provide for its own inhabitants. As a result of the Unionists' unconditional commitment to the colonial masters,

the general economy of the province had begin to deteriorate badly, as there was a severe shortage of consumer goods such as cloth, cement, kerosene and sugar. The Unionist party was becoming more and more unpopular by the policies that it was pursuing and distancing itself from the ordinary people by its blatant proximity to the colonialists. It was in such discontent with the Unionists that the League was able to tap into and make inroads to recruit more and more people into its ranks.

In the rural areas, the traditional heartland of Unionists' support, economic conditions had deteriorated considerably, markets for farmers' goods were shrunk as people were not ready to spend their money. However, as Talbot points out:

As the War progressed, inflation wiped out the profits which resulted from the increase in prices of such crops as wheat, maize, gram and *bajra*. As economic dislocation worsened, the Unionist Party's total commitment to the war effort made its position increasingly vulnerable (Talbot, 1988, p.144).

The massive recruitment also had another unintended negative consequence for the Unionist Party. Most of the population of Punjab was from the rural areas where farming was the most practiced form of employment, and the heavy recruitment significantly reduced the number of people able to farm. This policy was not particularly popular with the landlords. However, once these recruits came back or sent money to their families, it very quickly destabilised the delicate financial, and social hierarchy that had been nurtured and enforced by the landlords. The latter had already suffered because of the policies that the Unionists were pursuing, and hence they were comparatively easy recruits for the League. The Unionists' were realising that it could not simultaneously please the British and placate the people whose votes had brought it to Power.

As the policies of the Unionists were determined by the agendas set out by the centre, the war effort required that the interests of the commercial classes needed special attention. To fulfil the demands being made by the British, the Unionists made a fundamental shift in its ideology and policies. It decided to move away from the rural areas, the bedrock of its political support,

and started the patronage of the commercial urban class, because they formed the essential link in order for the Party to fulfil its obligation to the colonial masters' War effort. This move distanced not only the rural populace but the very significant support of the local *Pirs*.

These developments, along with 'rationing and requisitioning' of essential food items made the Chief Minister's position untenable, as increasing numbers of his own Party-members expressed their reservations with the policies that they were being asked to implement. The British were forcing the Unionists to carry out unpopular policies which were not only undermining the position of their most loyal supporters, but it was increasingly becoming obvious for the common people as to who the real beneficiaries were of the misery they were going through. The irony of this situation was that the British were destroying the system they had created to keep their hold on power, as Talbot highlights this self-defeating strategy, when the government decided to put an end to 'the traditional policy of the Punjabi *zamindars*' loyalty above all other political considerations' (Talbot, p. 148).

At this time, other decisions taken by Sikander Hayat came back to destabilise the government. During the drive to boost the recruitment, he had entered into an agreement with Baldev Singh, the leader of the Akali Party in June 1942, who in turn had demanded key concessions for his constituents, which were bitterly opposed by the League. Singh had felt that his community should have more say in the government and had:

Called for the increase of Sikh representation in those Government departments in which it was below the fixed communal proportion of 20 per cent. The Muslim League opposed the Pact because it claimed that it would increase Sikh influence in the political life of the province. Unfortunately for the Unionists, this proved correct. Baldev Singh used his new ministerial power to favour his community in every possible opportunity (Talbot, pp.149-50).

Another key demand that had been made by the Akalis was that Unionists should enforce limits on the growing power of the League. This move

would test the resolve and the ideology of inter-communal politics that Unionists professed to practice. They were expected to publicly distance themselves from the eventual desire to have a separate country, Pakistan, which was the cornerstone of the League's political doctrine. Sikander could not really expect wholehearted support of his Party members, many of whom were Muslims, and many of whom were increasingly becoming disenchanted with his policies.

The Unionists were now pursuing policy changes which could not satisfy any of the parties involved. Their political affiliation with the Sikhs tied their hands in preventing any of the biased concessions which were being demanded by the Akalis, on the other hand, they stood accused, in a number of cases, by their own party workers of working against the creation of Pakistan. Privately, the leadership was opposed to the policies pursued by the Sikhs and yet they could not challenge such moves in public, for that would have damaged their already precarious political situation. Ian Talbot provides an example of the practices of the Akali Party:

Many of the newly appointed Sikh officials almost immediately proceeded to discriminate against the Muslims. In the Karnal district, for example, the Sikh Deputy Commissioner, Sardar Kapur Singh, reduced the magisterial powers of the Nawab families of Karnal and Kanjpura and cancelled their gun licences. No less than 80 per cent of the Muslim licensees in the district were deprived of their rights to possess firearms, while the Deputy Commissioner indiscriminately granted fresh licences to the Hindus and Sikhs (Talbot, p. 150).

Such prejudicial policies could not really help but heighten tensions existing between different communities. Unionists felt the pressure from their constituents, as almost 80 per cent of the population were Muslims, and they increasingly felt that the Unionists either could not, or did not want to protect their interests.

As the Unionist Party was lurching from one crisis to the other, the Muslim League, which had all but been decimated in the 1937 elections had been making slow but determined strides into becoming a major political force. But, as discussed above, the League cannot be given all the credit for its

meteoric rise, for it was helped on the way by a number of events taking place, which were outside its control.

After the dismal results of the 1937 election, it had become painfully obvious for the League that certain fundamental changes had to be made if it was to make any sort of a political impact. One of the first decisions was to focus more on the Provincial level and to learn and adopt policies of those parties who were already successful at that particular level. To fully understand the situation:

The All-India Muslim League's investigation in October 1941 into the strength of its provincial organizations found that no Muslim League organization existed at all in the following ten districts of the Punjab: Ambala, Hoshiarpur, Shahpur, Jhelum, Mianwali, Jhang, Kangra, Dera Ghazi Khan, Rohtak and Gujranwala... Even more worrying for the League than the smallness of its grassroots membership was the fact that over a third of it came from the towns which were politically unimportant (Talbot, p.155).

In its effort to spread its political ideology, the League's strategy employed a new group whose energies it so far had not tapped into. Punjab Muslim Students Federation offered its services to carry forth the League's message to the rural populace. These students were first indoctrinated in the philosophy that they were expected to convey to their intended audiences, which was to combine religious and political obligations in favour of the League. They were told that in each village, the first contact should be the *Imam* of the local mosque and that they were expected to pray with the congregation and then ask people for a meeting. This was a clever move for it was expected to revive the memories of the time of the Prophet when most of the political and social debate took place in such meetings in the mosque. The Party workers used 'religious festivals such as *Eid* to spread its message and to promote unity and social solidarity amongst the Muslims of India' (Talbot, p. 160). However, such political campaigning was not as effective as the League would have liked because the Unionists had used similar tactics in the past and more successfully at that. This was made abundantly clear as the Unionists continued to defeat the League in the district board elections.

The *Pirs* had a decisive role in the political and social set-up of the rural areas. They acted as spiritual guides and their gravesites were seats of considerable influence over the rural population. Most of the *Pirs* had worked with the Unionist party because they could benefit from the government's patronage. The League realised that if it was to have the rural population on its side, it would need the support of the *Pirs* as well as the Landlords. Most of the political message reaching the rural population went through these two mediums. As the popular discontent with the Unionist's policies rose, the League was once again quick to exploit the situation. They spread their propaganda about the change of attention that the Unionist Party had initiated, and how the middle class urban population was not being patronised rather than the small Zamindars, *Pirs* and the rural populace. The League despatched different teams of their workers into rural areas, some with medical supplies which were in short supply, and at the same time, used this opportunity of contact to spread their message and turn people's sentiments against the Unionists' by highlighting the negatives of their policies. The League had by this time, had quite openly started using the religion 'card,' and pointed out that Hindus and the Sikhs were doing much better under the Unionist government than the Muslims. 'Most importantly of all' according to Talbot, was that the League:

Linked the solution of the peasants' economic and social problems with the successful establishment of a Pakistan state. Members of the Punjab Muslim Students Federation were directed when they visited a village to: 'Find out its social problems and difficulties to tell them (i.e., the villagers that the main cause of their problems was the Unionists (and) give them the solution – Pakistan' (Talbot, 1988, pp. 164-5).

The soldiers who had volunteered for the British Army at the behest of the Unionists were now starting to come back, to be faced with devastated economy and hardly any jobs for them. The League stepped in and was quick to exploit this situation as another example of the false promises made by the Unionist party. They employed a number of these ex-soldiers and paraded them as examples of the role that the League was playing in re-habilitating people who were the State's responsibility. The fact that such measures were starting

to bear fruit for the League was demonstrated when it won all the six district seats in Rawalpindi and Jhelum in the 1946 elections.

The Unionist Party's misfortunes increased considerably by the sudden demise of its leader, Sikander Hayat Khan, who died unexpectedly on the 26th December, 1942. He was the leader who had held the Party together and many in his own Party felt that it would prove very difficult for anyone else to unite it. Even though the British government made its last ditch effort to prop up another leader, however by this time, the political mistakes that the Party had made in the past, the waning of the British influence and the total transformation of the political landscape of Punjab made it impossible for Unionist party to sustain itself. As it usually happens, after the death of a prominent leader, the battle for succession usually makes or breaks a political party, in Unionists' case, it was the latter. The political and personal factions that had somehow been hidden from public came to the fore and differences seemed to take precedence over loyalty to the ideology of the party. Hence it was a matter of time for the party to become a spent political force.

Mohammed Ali Jinnah's role in the creation of Pakistan

Mohammed Ali Jinnah's role and personality has been seen in two completely opposite modes by the people and historians of India and Pakistan. From the Pakistani perspective, he is given the ennobling title of 'Quaid-I-Azam' (Father of the Nation). For he, more than any one individual, is considered to be responsible for leading the relentless political struggle which resulted in the formation of Pakistan. On the other hand, as R.J. Moore points out 'Indians regard him as the Lucifer who tempted his people into the unforgivable sin against their nationalistic fate' (Moore, p.160). He was an enigma for those who tried to pin down his personality; Mountbatten completely failed to judge Jinnah. The Viceroy's judgement revealed more about himself than the person he intended to describe:

I regard Jinnah as a psychopathic case, in fact until I had met him I would not have thought it possible that a man with such a complete lack of administrative knowledge or sense of responsibility could achieve or hold down so powerful a position (Moore, p.161).

Mountbatten seems to be unsympathetic to the true character of Jinnah and he does not seem to have made any effort to understand the man facing him. It was the same Mountbatten who thought that the idea of Pakistan as a separate homeland for the Muslims was nothing more than 'sheer madness.' Other political analysts have tended to see Jinnah in a different light. Sir Penderel Moon, speaking of Jinnah, said:

There is, I believe, no historical parallel for a single individual effecting such a political revolution, and his achievement is a striking refutation of the theory that in the making of history the individual is of little or no significance. It was Mr. Jinnah who created Pakistan and undoubtedly made history (Moon, p.160).

Another contemporary historian, Professor Lawrence Ziring has said that Jinnah's 'personality... made Pakistan possible' and that ' it would not have emerged without him ' (Moore, p.160). Robin Moore has commented on the negative portrayal of Jinnah to this day saying that :

British statesmen and officials and Congress leaders alike attached immense significance to the vanity and pride in Jinnah's quest for Pakistan and their views continue to influence the historiography of the Partition (Moore, p. 161).

It was Jinnah who reinvigorated the irresolute Muslim League into a force to be reckoned with, both by Hindus and the British. In the end, he finally achieved Indian Muslims' goal of a separate homeland in the form of Pakistan.

Jinnah had left his lucrative Law practice in England to spearhead the Muslim struggle under the League's banner. He was one of the early members of the Hindu-dominated Indian National Congress which he joined in 1906, and through his diligence had risen to the highest positions in it. The policies and the political agenda he propagated were purely National, in that he emphasised that Indians had to work together in order to gain freedom from the British. He had vigorously proposed that communal and religious differences had to be put

aside and that the whole nation had to put the interests of the country before their individual differences. He had joined the Muslim League in 1913, and was elected President for life of it in 1934. Throughout the 1936-37 general elections, Jinnah had repeatedly called for a Hindu-Muslim unity. It was this policy of communal and religious harmony that had made Nehru claim Jinnah to be an '... ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity', the person who had been 'largely responsible in the past for bringing the Muslim League near to the Congress' (Nehru, p.67). If such was the attitude of the leader of the Congress towards Jinnah, the question which needs to be asked is what caused Jinnah to change his political ideology from being a strong nationalist to leading and achieving the struggle for Pakistan?

There had been a number of issues on which Jinnah had differed from the Congress leadership, but the final break-up came after the sweeping win of Congress in the elections of 1936-37 and the ensuing attitude that it developed towards the very basic demands of the Muslims. The Muslim League, as a result of numerous district and provincial level parties had split the Muslim vote and had thus suffered humiliating defeats on almost all fronts. Jinnah then set out to face the problems at hand, the first of which was to achieve unity within the ranks of India's Muslims, as he said, speaking on April 27, 1936:

Hindus cannot take Muslims seriously and the Congress does not take us seriously because we have not proved ourselves worthy of alliance and that until we are ready to take a proper place in the national life of the country, there cannot be a wholehearted and real settlement (Gazette, p.28).

Jinnah felt that he would have to achieve unity across the ranks of Indian Muslims first and only then could the Muslim League truly claim to be a representative of their mandate. Even at this critical juncture, when he and his party were being rejected by Congress and other smaller Muslim parties, Jinnah continued to voice his opinions in which time and time again, he said, in organising the Muslims together they '... should stand as firmly by national interest. In fact, they should prove that their patriotism is unsullied and that their

love of India and her progress is no less than that of any other community in the country' (Gazette, Zaidi, p.250).

As the Congress refused his repeated attempts to share political power with the Muslim League, Jinnah, in his speech to the party in Lucknow said:

No settlement with the majority community is possible, as no Hindi-speaking leader with any authority shows any concern or genuine desire for it. Honourable settlement can only be achieved between equals, and unless the two Parties learn to respect and fear each other there is no solid ground for any settlement... Politics means Power and not relying only on the cries of justice and fair play or goodwill (Ahmad, pp.31-33).

It was during this address that he entreated the Muslims to work for a unity, not only in their social outlook, but in all aspects of their lives, including political, economic and religious conditions. He beseeched them to leave aside their differences and to achieve unity, which, he said, only they could do for themselves. Indian political commentators and historians have seen this address as a manifestation of the hostilities of the Muslims towards the Congress and, as in other cases, have essentialised the debate by accusing the Muslim League of communalism. According to one such commentator, Anita Inder Singh:

Jinnah's presidential address to the Muslim League in October 1937 was, in fact, a declaration of war against the Congress. His political strategy was starting to crystallise. It consisted of attacking the Congress, and of equating Congress government with 'Hindu' Raj. Jinnah alleged that the Congress was 'pursuing a policy which is exclusively Hindu', that it was imposing Hindi, *Bande Mataram* and the national flag on 'all and sundry'. By identifying the Congress with the majority community, Jinnah sought to create Muslim apprehensions against the Congress (Singh, p.25).

Singh, like other political analysts, seems to have been so taken in by Congress' portrayal of Jinnah that it is difficult for the reader to differentiate between her and Congress's propagandist characterisation of the League's leader. As can be deduced from the paragraph quoted above, Singh makes no effort even to acknowledge, let alone understand the grievances Muslims had

against policies which were surely uprooting a social and an educational system in the very heartland of the Muslim community.

Jinnah and the League's importance was given a boost, again, as a result of events taking place outside his influence. The Congress had backed out of providing any support in the war effort; as a last resort, the British turned towards Jinnah, a move which effectively recognised his status as a spokesperson for the Muslims of India. The Cripps Mission, which had arrived in March 1942, went a long way in accepting the Muslim League's demand for a separate homeland. The political impact of this Mission will be discussed later on in this chapter. Jinnah and the League's acceptance by the British enhanced the national stature of the party and considerably undermined the Unionists' position.

The rank and file of disillusioned Unionists were beginning to drift towards the Muslim League, which was increasingly becoming the most dominant political force in Punjab. Not all of these 'new recruits' were joining the League for ideological reasons, a number of the influential leaders were aware of the eventual fall of the Unionist government and were therefore being opportunistic. There were, however, a significant number of party workers, who had become disappointed by the lack of any coherent policy that the Unionists had followed. As a result, as Talbot points out:

By the end of 1945, the Muslim League had captured the support of a third of the Unionist Party's Assembly members. This was a major breakthrough. It included in its ranks the leading landlords and Pirs. The Hayats, Noons and Daultanas, from whom the Unionist Party had traditionally drawn its leaders, had joined, as had the influential Naru Rajputs of Hoshiarpur, the Pirachas of Bhera, the Dastis of Muzaffargarh and the Arian Mians of Baghbanpura, Lahore... The Muslim League had also gained the support of a large number of Muslim Congressmen. Two former Punjab Congress leaders, Malik Lal Khan and Mian Iftikhar-ud-Din joined its ranks at this time as well as many local officials and leaders (Talbot, pp. 199-200).

The next influential group of allies that the League was able to win over to its ranks was the *Pirs*, whose presence was to prove decisive in the coming

elections. These Pirs held an important position in the social and cultural set-up of rural Punjab, and they often used their particular positions of power to propagate the values of political party they had chosen to join. They issued *fatwas* to their followers and threatened those who refused with ex-communication. After their debacle in the 1937:

The Muslim League realised how vital it was to obtain the pirs' support, not only in the Punjab but (also) in the other Muslim areas of India. It had therefore proposed in 1943 to 'respectfully (request) the Muslim religious heads, pirs and Sufis to help the Muslim nation in its present life and death struggle, and their sincere prayers and by exhorting their followers to sacrifice their all in the cause of the attainment of a free and independent Muslim India (Talbot, p. 210).

The presence of *Pirs* among the League's ranks offered advantages on a number of fronts. They wielded considerable influence on a large pool of votes, and their presence offered a 'religious' backing to the party which it had lacked in the past. By claiming to represent the Muslims, the League desperately needed a group to counter-act their negative religious image that had been effectively exploited by the reformist *Ulemas* of urban areas. Most of the *Pirs* had not switched allegiances without ulterior motives; they were very much aware of the sharp fall in the Unionist Party's influence, and they wanted to be in the heart of the next political party which came to power.

The elections of 1946 came to test whether all the changes that the League had made were going to yield any political rewards. When the election results emerged, they were dramatic, and devastating for the Unionists and all those who opposed the League. The Unionist party had only managed 18 of the 175 member seats of the Assembly. The League had won an incredible 75 of the 86 Muslim seats. It seemed that the population which had wholeheartedly supported the League had rejected the Unionist and Congress's vision for Punjab. The British tried to shore up a coalition of the defeated parties in a final bid to have a Unionist government. It was always going to be a very shaky and not very powerful government, and the strength of its test came when, according to David Gilmartin:

Student processions and meetings in defiance of government bans convinced Malik Khizr Hayat that he could no longer rule with the

majority of Muslim opinion against him. On 3rd March 1946 Khisr's ministry resigned, marking the end of an era in Punjab politics (Gilmartin, p. 223)

The League had finally achieved what it set out and worked for since their almost total decimation in the 1937 elections. Winning Punjab signalled to everyone that it would be indeed be extremely difficult to stop the League achieving its ultimate aim, which was the creation of Pakistan. However, this success had not come about exclusively through the strategies of the League, as has been already discussed there were a significant number of events which had helped it indirectly. What was important was that the League was organised and opportunistic enough to exploit whatever chance came its way.

Clash of Personalities: Jinnah's relations with Gandhi and Nehru

Karamchand Mohandas Gandhi and Jinnah had totally opposing visions of India. Even though both had begun their political careers in order to have one India after decolonisation, the latter had realised the predicament of the Muslims and had seen the biased policies of the Congress towards the Muslims. Gandhi still believed in a united and a democratic India because that meant a legitimised government controlled by Hindus. In their correspondence, Gandhi insisted on Jinnah accepting his vision for India, to which the latter replied:

We (the Muslims) are a nation of a hundred million, and what is more, we are a nation with our own distinctive culture and civilisation, language and literature, art and architecture, names and nomenclature, sense of values and proportion, legal laws and moral codes, customs and calendar, history and traditions, aptitudes and ambitions: in short, we have our own distinctive outlook on life and of life. By all the canons of international Law, we are a nation (Bolitho, p.149).

Gandhi, in a letter to Wavell, the then Viceroy of India, had written that, as Hamid paraphrases its content, that '...if bloodbath was necessary to achieve Independence, it would be welcomed' (Hamid, p.99).

Jinnah's political and national status was raised, though indirectly, by a meeting that he held with Gandhi in August 1944. Before this particular moment,

neither Jinnah, nor the Muslim League was taken seriously on the national level, either by the political parties or the national newspapers. Jinnah and the League were still considered to represent the perspectives of a tiny and a comparatively unorganised group of people. The talks with a national figure, such as Gandhi and the Simla conference re-established Jinnah's stature as a leader of the Muslims of India. Commenting on this historic meeting, Talbot highlights the significance of this event and how others preconceived it:

Officials, Congress and Mahasabha leaders all agreed that the Gandhi-Jinnah Talks wiped out the effects of the Quaid-e-Azam's failure to destroy the Unionist Ministry. 'It is a tragedy that Gandhi should have given the League a new lease of life', wrote Shyama Prasad Mukherji, the Bengali Mahasabha leader, 'just when it was dying that Jinnah should be gloating over the fact that Gandhi had accepted the principle of the Partition of India'. His judgement was echoed by Sir Bertrand Glancy who also declared that Gandhi's acceptance of the Pakistan principle made up for the setback to Jinnah's prestige which followed his failure to impose a Muslim League Ministry on the Punjab (Talbot, p.197).

Despite vociferous criticism from other Muslim members of the Congress, Jinnah held to his conviction in opposing Gandhi. He repeated his deeply held convictions in public, in no uncertain terms, when he announced that '[m]ine is the right way - the constitutional way is the right way' (Sayeed, pp.65-66). Gandhi's talks with Jinnah, and his acceptance of the India of Partition, are considered to be one of the examples of 'Himalayan blunders' that the Congress leadership had made. Jinnah, having extracted this 'declaration' from Gandhi promptly rejected the offer on four counts:

That he would accept nothing less than the 'full' six Muslim provinces for Pakistan, that any plebiscite on the issue of separatism must be confined to Muslim population, and there should be no common ties between India and Pakistan and finally that Partition should come before, not after, the British departure from India (Talbot, p. 198).

As Talbot points out, these proposals might have failed to achieve any concrete results, however, the meeting in itself had raised Jinnah's political and personal stature immensely, making him the most influential Muslim politician in India. Jinnah's unwavering belief in pursuing the whole political struggle for

Pakistan through constitutional mode of operation was to be tested again with the arrival of the Cabinet Mission Plan.

The British government under Clement Attlee felt that there was an urgent need to address the issues raised by the Muslim League regarding a separate State. On 15th March 1946, it was announced in the House of Commons that a Cabinet Delegation was being sent to India to meet with different parties to arrive at a consensus in order to set up an interim Government and to devise a constitution. This delegation came to be known as the Cabinet Mission Plan. The Muslims' feelings about it were highlighted by an editorial in *Dawn* by Altaf Hussain:

With the arrival of Lord Pethick-Lawrence, Sir Stafford Cripps and A.V. Alexander in India the stage is set for discussions and deliberations which may result either in the freedom, peace and prosperity of the peoples of this subcontinent or - in civil strife and bloodshed. We would be less than honest if we were to say that Muslim India extends to the three Cabinet Ministers an unqualified welcome, because if strife and bloodshed were to be the outcome of their mission, it would turn out to have been a mission of evil. This unfortunate suspicion would not have arisen and the Cabinet Mission would have been able to begin their work in a clearer atmosphere had not Mr. Attlee chosen to include in his Commons speech of March 15 expressions which had been widely interpreted as the present British Government's determination to appease the Caste Hindu majority and betray past pledges given to the Muslims and minorities of India... The three Cabinet Ministers must be regarded as having come with their minds already made up on the most important problem which they are supposed to solve here on the spot 'in consultation with leaders of main political parties' (Zubair, p. 39).

Even though the members of the Mission said that they had been impressed by the genuine fears of the League's leadership and of the Muslim's demand for a separate homeland, they opposed the idea of Pakistan. Instead they suggested that there should be a loose Indian Union with a three tiered arrangement consisting of provinces, sections and the federal centre. Even though Jinnah reacted sharply to the Mission's decision of rejecting Pakistan, he still accepted its findings. The League ratified the Cabinet Plan at its Delhi meeting. Hussain, who was present at that meeting writes that:

Jinnah still stressed that 'the attainment of the goal of a complete sovereign Pakistan' still remained their objective and pointed out that 'the basis... of Pakistan is inherent in the Mission's Plan by virtue of the compulsory grouping of the six Muslim Provinces in Punjab, North West Frontier Province, Sind, Bengal and Assam (Zubair, p.45).

Here was the perfect opportunity for Nehru and the Congress to prevent the break-up of India. But, because this plan might have given some power to the provinces some of whom had a Muslim majority, it was rejected. This came to be the last opportunity that the Congress had of keeping India together and they had lost it.

As Nehru rejected the Cabinet Mission Plan, Hamid noted in his private diary what an enormous blunder the Congress leadership had made. He observed:

This was the last outside chance. It had been thrown away by the bad judgement, first of Gandhi and then of Nehru. The Constitution-making machinery could have been brought into operation if the Congress had not made such a grave error. The opportunity has been lost (Hamid, p.82).

Those critics who maintain that it was the Muslims who forced the Partition of India, very conveniently overlook the role played by the Congress leadership. Nehru stated that:

...[I]t was the compulsion of events... A larger India would have constant troubles, constant disintegrating pulls... And so we accepted and said, let us build up a strong India... The truth is that we were tired men... Few of us could stand the prospect of going to prison again and if we had stood out for a united India as we wished it, prison obviously awaited us. We saw the fires burning in the Punjab and heard every day of the killings. The plan for partition offered a way out and we took it (Bakshi, p. 260).

The Congress' role in accepting the Partition had come after it had failed to make any substantial gains in allaying the fears of the Muslims of India. Initially, the Congress was able to gather in the Sikh leadership to oppose the Partition of Punjab.

Sikhs, Communal Violence and the Demand for Pakistan

Sikhs, as a community, held considerable sway in the political and economic matters of Punjab despite being a minority. Chaudhri Muhammad Ali describes their role and position in the social and political make-up of Punjab:

Although Sikhs were to be found all over India, their home was in the Punjab. They numbered five and a half million and formed 13.2 percent of the population of the Punjab. In the Punjab assembly and government service they were allowed 20 percent representation. They owned a high proportion of the most fertile land in the Punjab, particularly in the canal irrigated colonies of Lyallpur and Montgomery, and were well represented in the Indian army. In 1946 their leadership was in the hands of the impetuous Tara Singh, a Hindu converted to Sikhism, and his financial backer, Baldev Singh, whose economic interests tied him to Hindu India (Chaudhri, p. 50).

Because of having the same language as the Muslim majority, and farming interests, the Sikhs had formed an influential and an integral part of the Punjab. Once the political wrangling regarding the future of Punjab started, Sikhs were perturbed with the events taking place around them.

In March 1940, when the Muslim League passed its famous Lahore Resolution, in which they demanded a separate country for the Muslims of India, the Sikhs found themselves to be the most threatened community. For:

No sooner was it made public than the Sikhs launched a virulent campaign against the Lahore Resolution. Pakistan was portrayed as a possible return to an unhappy past where Sikhs were the persecuted and Muslims the persecutor. Public speeches by various Sikh political leaders on the subject of Pakistan invariably raised images of atrocities committed by Muslims on Sikhs and of the martyrdom of their *gurus* and heroes. Reactions to the Lahore Resolution were uniformly negative and Sikh leaders of all political persuasions made it clear that Pakistan would be 'wholeheartedly resisted' (Tan & Kudaisya, p. 102).

Master Tara Singh, the leader of the Akali Dal was particularly virulent in his attacks, not just on the League, but on Unionists as well. He used the Jinnah-Sikander Pact of 1937 as an example of Unionists' 'collusion with the League to create a 'Muslim Raj' (Tan & Kudaisya, p.102). This particular stance was a tactical ploy by Singh, who knew full well that agricultural interest rather than communal or religious ties united the Unionist Party. However, Singh

continued to apply political pressure thus increasing the communalisation of the politics to seek out concessions for the Sikhs. Akali Dal was in the forefront of whipping up Sikh sentiments throughout the summer of 1940.

By 1941, the threat of Pakistan seemed to have subsided as relations with the Congress and the recruitment for War came to dominate the Sikh community. Since the 1880s, Sikhs had been considered a martial race and had been recruited heavily to serve in the Indian Army. This action had yielded economic and political dividends in return and the Sikh community had gained considerable political clout as well. However, following the agitation organised by the Akali Dal in the 1920s, the British had become suspicious about the Sikhs' loyalties, and as a result, their recruitment numbers were down.

As the War broke out in 1939, the Sikh community's' response varied from open hostility to the communists to full support from the Khalsa Nationalist Party. The challenge facing the Sikh community revealed the various factions within the Akali Dal Party. The leadership was quick to realise that because of their close affiliation with the Congress, the Sikh community's relationship with the British was being compromised even further. Tara Singh was aware that with the decreasing number of Sikhs going for military service, the economic and political consequences would be considerably detrimental. By the end, he was uncomfortable enough with Congress's insistence on non-co-operation and resigned from the Party in September 1940 and started supporting the war effort. This move created further division of his party as the anti-British faction, lead by Baba Kharak Singh, broke off in October 1940, while the Central Sikh League remained closely tied with the Congress throughout the 1940s (Tan & Kudaisya, p.103).

One of the most significant moments in the history of the League came rather unexpectedly, when in 1942 the British government signalled its tacit acceptance of the idea of Pakistan. Sir Stafford Cripps' mission to India brought a draft proposal which contained a provision, granting freedom to any Province the right to form an independent government if it chose not to join the Indian

Union. Jinnah used his considerable political acumen to note the British concession to the League's demand, but refused to accept it because he felt that it did not far enough to meet the aspirations of the Muslims. This recognition had made the Muslims even more assured of their position, as the eminent Pakistani historian K. K. Aziz points out the magnitude of the Cripps' offer:

...[W]ithin two years of the Lahore Resolution the British Government had officially and publicly accepted the spirit of Muslim nationalism and agreed to its political manifestation – Pakistan. .. If the Hindus and the British were cast in the role of the enemies to be vanquished before the achievement of Pakistan was possible, one of them had surrendered or at least promised to lay down arms (Aziz, p. 62).

However, the Sikh community was greatly relieved when both the League and Congress rejected the Cripps' proposals.

Because of their break-up with the Congress, the Akalis felt that they lacked a spokesperson of their community on the national political scene. They felt that when political and social concerns of different communities would be taken into account, their position would be marginalised. To preserve a semblance of their presence in the affairs of Punjab, they joined ranks with the Unionists. This move that yielded political gains for both the beleaguered parties. The Pact between the leaders of two parties was signed in September 1942. For Sikander Hayat Khan, it provided some political strength of numbers to challenged the ever-rising presence of the League, for Baldev Singh, this pact offered an opportunity to be part of the Provincial government and to ensure that his community's interests were safeguarded.

This lull did not last long as Jinnah visited Punjab in 1942 and Sikander conceded that he 'saw eye to eye with the champion of Pakistan' (Tan & Kudaisya, p.106). The Sikhs were furious, and started accusing him of playing a double game, but at the same time, they knew that Sikander-Baldev pact was one of the best guarantors of protection of their community's interests. Before this criticism could drag on, Sikander Hayat died. The Sikhs now felt that the terms agreed in the Pact between the two parties could not be guaranteed. The Party felt that a new strategy was required in order to keep them in the fast

changing political process. They took the historic step of suggesting a 're-demarcation' of Punjab.

This idea of a new demarcation had been around for over a decade, since it was first presented by Sardar Ujjal Singh at the Round Table Conference in London in 1931. According to Singh:

If the existing boundaries of the Punjab were re-drawn, and the Muslim-dominated western districts of the Province could be detached, the respective proportion of the communities in the reconstituted Punjab would be more balanced, and there would be no need to introduce unpopular devices such as communal weighting or separate electorates to solve the 'communal problem' in the Province... In essence, the 'Azad Punjab' scheme involved the demarcation of the boundaries of the Punjab by detaching the western Muslim majority areas away from it. In 'Azad Punjab', the Akali Dal claimed, the population of the three communities would be more equitable and no single community would be in a dominant position (Tan & Kudaisya, p. 106).

In this re-drawing of Punjab's map, Muslims would constitute 40 per cent, as would the Hindus and the Sikhs felt that their 20 per cent could act as a decisive force which would keep in check each larger community's aspirations. The British still remembered the Akalis' initial position during the War Effort, in which they had aligned themselves with the Congress and had opposed Indians' participation in the whole endeavour. That, along with the sheer impracticability of the plan led the viceroy to strongly oppose it. Lord Linlithgow warned that the British should be careful and not pay attention to even a 'shadow of such a preposterous claim' (Tan & Kudaisya, p.107). It should be noted that this was not a demand for a separate Sikh homeland, for unlike the Muslims, their population was not densely situated in any particular area to have a viable separate state.

Jinnah's growing stature was always one of the biggest threats to Akali Dal, because they felt that his popularity was inexorably tied in with the creation of a Pakistan. Even though the League had won very heavily in the Muslim majority areas in the 1946 elections, neither it nor the Congress had enough seats to form a government. At the time of such deadlock, the Akalis found themselves in a strong strategic position, and according to Tan and Kudaisya:

The Akali Dal now proceeded to use the twenty-three seats it had won as a bargaining chip to secure its guarantee of political safeguards in the province (Tan & Kudaisya, p.110).

The Akalis had responded quite positively to the political overtures from the League. In Punjab, they felt that an alliance with the Muslims was a better safeguard than the Congress, which they considered, like many of the Muslims, to be a Hindu organisation. Akalis were assured that they could play a very pivotal role in the politics of Punjab, and that the League's demand for Pakistan was a political ploy which was being held up as an ultimatum in order to extract maximum concessions from the British and the Congress. They came up with their demands before they could formally join the League, in it:

The Sikhs demanded reservation of seats in the provincial administration; recognition of *Gurmukhi* as an official language; and a promise that the Muslim League would not arrive at settlements which affected the Sikhs without first consulting the Akalis. The Akali leadership further insisted that the Muslim League denounce all talk of Pakistan if it wanted the Sikhs as partners in government (Tan & Kudaisya, p. 111).

Whereas all of the demands had some merit and could be discussed between the two parties, the last condition was quite unrealistic and made it impossible for the League to accept it merely for the sake of a coalition. As expected, the negotiations stalled with each party not willing to compromise in its stance. As the talks failed, Akalis agreed to form a coalition government with the Congress and Unionist party, and on the 6th March, Khizr Hayat Khan was chosen as the premier of the province. However, this was a very volatile political climate with very little certainty about what the British were going to decide to do. As the Cabinet Mission arrived in March 1946, it was a potent sign of the fact that the British were serious about ending their colonial administration. When the mission accepted the demand for Pakistan, the Sikhs felt that their future was being decided without due consultations with them. In desperation,

they presented a political plan of a separate Sikh homeland for their community. This 'Sikhistan' or 'Khalistan':

[W]as to be a Sikh federation, comprising of districts in Eastern and Central Punjab with large Sikh populations, and was to include Sikh states of Patiala, Nabha, Jind, Faridkot, Kalsia and Kapurthala. In brief, 'Sikhistan', unlike 'Azad Punjab', was to have a distinct Sikh complexion (Tan & Kudaisya, p. 112).

This was always going to be a very difficult proposition to convince others political parties to go along with ~~such a demarcation~~. Even though the mission listened to this idea quite sympathetically, they seemed not to have taken it very seriously. On the 6th of May, the mission issued a statement of its proposed settlement. There were a number of political and social issues raised by different political parties which were given consideration in it. This was a:

[S]etting-up of a Union of India, but in recognition of the acute anxiety felt by the Muslim minority it prescribed a constitution based on a three-tier model. The Union, comprising both British, India and the princely states, would deal with foreign affairs, defence and communications; the remaining subjects and all residual powers would rest with the provinces and the states. The provinces would also have the right to form groups, which would have legislative and executive powers, and each group would determine the provincial subjects to be taken in community. A constituent assembly would be set up, comprising elected representatives from provincial legislatures in the ratio of one to a million of their population (Tan & Kudaisya, p. 113).

The Sikhs felt that their lot was being cast with the Muslims, and that there were not enough safeguards for them to feel secure within the parameters defined in this proposal. As a result, they could not accept the Mission's plan because the scheme outlined in it was 'injurious to their interests' and decided to boycott the proposed constituent assembly. By this time, Sikhs knew that the endgame had begun and believed that other political parties and the British were not paying enough attention to their interests. The communal tension had been rising for a while now and the Sikhs believed that as political stances were not achieving the desired results, they had to be ready for any eventuality, and so started forming para-military units.

The relations between the Sikhs and the Muslims had been deteriorating steadily and there were numerous clashes between the Muslims and Hindus and Muslims and Sikhs. The Sikhs were of the opinion that there was a special hatred of the Muslims towards them, as there were a number of documented cases where Sikh policemen were particularly targeted by the Muslims mobs. Thus the Sikh leadership began to demand for an establishment of a Sikh army for the eventual confrontation with the Muslims. They felt justified in this particular stance when 'Clement Attlee announced in February 1947 that the British would transfer power by a 'date not later than June 1948' (Tan & Kudaisya, p. 116). This announcement increased the speed of the deterioration between the Muslims and the non-Muslim communities. As relations between the two communities reached this critical stage, according to Tan and Kudaisya:

The Sikhs now began gearing themselves for civil war. Akali leaders got in touch with rulers of the Sikh princely states for possible assistance, and *jathedars* were briefed to get their *jathas* ready for the defence of the community. Preparations were made for the regimentation and arming of Sikh militias for the purposes of self-defence and exacting revenge from the Muslims when the opportunity came (Tan & Kudaisya, p. 116).

The Sikhs had begun to organise themselves in a very regimented order and their plans were not just for the 'defence' and retaliation as has been outlined above, it was, as it will be shown later on, to systematically exact a very heavy price for the break-up of Punjab from the Muslims. Even before the announcement by the Boundary Commission, communalism had begun to take a heavy toll in the districts of Amritsar and Lahore, 'in a fortnight in May, communal clashes resulted in more than a thousand casualties' (Tan & Kudaisya, p.120). However, what made these 'preparations' unique was the scale and the systematic order in which they were being carried out:

The British received intelligence indicating plans for large scale violence directed against the Muslims in eastern Punjab, while in western Punjab, Sikh saboteurs, mainly ex-soldiers trained in explosives and firearms, were reportedly producing bombs to blow up trains and destroy canal headworks. Intelligence reports even implicated Master Tara Singh in plots to blow up trains and assassinate Jinnah during the latter's inauguration as the Governor-General of Pakistan on 14th August (Tan & Kudaisya, p. 120).

Despite all these reports of the impending bloodshed being planned, Mountbatten seems quite unwilling to take any direct action in order to prevent the most brutal form of 'ethnic cleansing' being organised. Even a token exercise of colonial power could have had a considerable effect in reducing the violence, Mountbatten did nothing; not even the detention of any of the Sikh leaders.

As it has been already mentioned, a linguistic, cultural and farming community formed a bond between the Sikh minority and the Muslim majority in Punjab. Hence it was believed that it would be in both communities' interests to unite against Congress's designs of dividing Punjab. Because of their economic influence and their considerable presence in the Army, Sikhs could have become the largest minority of Pakistan and would have benefited greatly. However, this coming together never took place because of the historical hostilities towards the Mughals and the lack of foresight by their leadership. They sided with the Congress. As the division of Punjab took place, the Sikhs lost control over all of their religious sites apart from the Golden Temple in Amritsar. Because their community did not receive any geographical enclave and had to suffer the loss of their places of worship, Sikhs were the most outraged of the three communities. As they had sided with the Congress, their anger was directed towards the Muslims in the East Punjab, which is where most of the brutal acts of violence took place.

Master Tara Singh, after the Lahore Resolution on the March 23, 1939, had declared his and the Sikh community's attitude towards the formation of Pakistan. He said that 'if the Muslim League wants to establish Pakistan they will have to pass through an ocean of Sikh blood' (Hamid, p.6). He persisted in his hatred of the Muslims to the very end, as Anthony Read and David Fisher describe his role in public stirring of the violence against the Muslims:

As 15th August approached, the killings mounted on both sides, with retaliation approaching retaliation. In Amritsar, Master Tara Singh was holding court, breathing fire into his people as he exhorted their warriors

'to rise and destroy the Mughal invader'. A massacre of Muslims in the city followed, after the newly appointed superintendent of police, a Hindu, had ordered all Muslim policemen to be disarmed (Read, p. 488).

This systematic and institutionalised violence against the Muslims was very shocking in nature, but hardly surprising for Sikhs had been planning for it even before the Cabinet Mission Plan. The British administration, and indeed the viceroy was very much aware of the situation, but he refused to take any concrete steps which could have prevented so much of this bloodshed. Hamid writes that as soon as the Congress rejected the Cabinet Mission Plan:

The Sikhs have started to arm themselves after the decision of the Congress, and the departure of the Cabinet Mission. Most of the arms are obtained from the dumps left behind by the American Armed Forces. These are mainly in Assam and East Bengal (Hamid, p.82).

Highly organised gangs of Sikhs would use these arms to create terrifying havoc on the unarmed Muslims crossing over to West from the East Punjab. As Andrew Roberts notes, these *Jathas*, which in some cases could include several hundred, moved with the precision of armed guards and were responsible for thousands of murders of unarmed and innocent civilians.

The 1946 massacre of Muslims in Bihar was the first organised effort at extermination of opponents over a wide area, but even that orgy of destruction had no long-term end in view and quickly exhausted itself. The Punjab massacres planned by the Sikhs were not only on a far larger scale, they differed in kind from all previous civil disorders. They had a defined political objective, and to gain it, uncontrolled violence and terror were used. The Sikhs organised a military campaign that would end only when its objective was attained. They had at their disposal the trained armed forces of Hindu and Sikh states and had planned to start the massacres at a time when the administration in East and West Punjab would be in the throes of reorganisation and, therefore, least capable of effective action (Ali, p.254).

The atrocities against the Muslims were gaining momentum, as there were reports in October that a massacre of Hindus had taken place in Noakhali, in East Bengal, a place notorious for very violent communal clashes. It was believed that about 300 people had been killed. This was the opportunity that many of the militant groups had been waiting for. Read describes what followed:

Some Hindu Organisations, especially the Hindu Mahasabha and the RSS, seized on these to fan the flames of retribution. Trouble began in Patna on 25th October 1946, when a *hartal* (general strike) called in sympathy with Hindu victims in Noakhali degenerated into an anti-Muslim riot. Over the next few days, roving Hindu mobs swept through the whole of Bihar province, slaughtering at least 7,000 Muslims - the worst death toll for any incident since 1857, dwarfing even the Calcutta killings. The governor, Sir Hugh Dow, reported that 75 per cent of the casualties were women and children (Read, p. 404).

The East Punjab authorities refused to set up an alternative capital of their province for they felt that such an action would weaken their claim to Lahore. Had the Partition's original date of June 1, 1948 been kept, it would have allowed both the provincial and national governments eleven instead of two months, as was the case. This new date was set in secret consultations between Nehru and Mountbatten. As India already had the administrative infrastructure, Nehru refused to give the newly independent Pakistan the same facilities.

Khalid Bin Sayeed recorded the sentiments of a British governor towards the hasty decision of Mountbatten. He felt that the current widespread disturbances in Punjab were:

The result of Mountbatten's unwisdom in accelerating the date of Partition so suddenly. I am sure that if the Punjab had been given time (say eight or nine months) to sort out their services properly - Muhammadan and Hindu - the terrible massacres of Aug-Sept-Oct would never have happened in anything approaching the scale that they did assume (Sayeed, p.181).

A British officer, working under Francis Tucker who was stationed in Amritsar, in the Eastern Punjab, wrote this description dated 15th September, 1947, of his observation of the city:

Amritsar today resembles an armed camp. Almost every Sikh carries either a spear or a sword. Spears are illegal and the police have been told to confiscate them, but they are either afraid to do so, or have not the desire to do so. The police of Calcutta were bad enough, but the police of East Punjab are utterly and entirely useless. Practically no crime cases have been lodged in the past three months. The administrative collapse of the police and civil organisations of East Punjab is to some extent due to the fact that all records were in Lahore, and most officials and a large percentage of the constables and minor officials have gone to Pakistan...

In the meantime practically all Muslims, apart from those in the evacuee camps, have left their homes in Amritsar district for Pakistan. There is no necessity for Sikhs to carry swords and spears for their protection. These are being carried for display and swank, and so that they can rapidly collect into armed (*italic* Jathas) for killing off Muslim evacuees. These evacuees are well guarded and '*Musalman ka Shikar*' (hunting Muslims), as it is called, is becoming a dangerous task (Tucker, p.481).

Another eyewitness provides equally compelling evidence of the civilian administration's attitude towards the Muslims. The Commanding Officer of a Gurkha regiment recalls a personal incident which illustrates the fury with which Sikhs opposed the formation of Pakistan and how that ire translated into the large scale and systematic ethnic cleansing of the Muslims. According to the Officer:

The Adjutant reported to the C.O. after about five minutes that a train containing dead bodies was lying on the next line to ours. On going to inspect this train they found five carriages, one goods wagon and one flat bogey filled with dead and wounded Muslims. Holes caused by Bren-gun bursts were visible on all coaches. There were some Hindu and Sikh policemen standing by on the platform whilst some of the slightly wounded and unwounded (!) were getting into lorries. There were no doctors present. An Army guard was on the platform taking no action whatsoever. Appeals were made to Sikh civilians to help with the wounded, but they refused... Battalion cleared the railway station, at the point of the bayonet, of the numerous armed Sikhs, etc.,...Our officers had seen piles of burning corpses at Sirhind, the next stop up the line.

During this time the wounded had been taken out of the train and first-aid had been given. The majority of wounds were caused by sword and spear thrusts. Among the more noteworthy cases were those of a small girl aged four or five with both legs hacked off above the knees but still alive: a pregnant woman with her baby ripped out of the womb - she died: an old man of about sixty, who had served in the Hong Kong and Singapore Artillery, with six spear wounds and still alive.

All wounded able to talk stated that the massacre was carried out by the Patiala Sikhs, and that the train had arrived at Ambala at about 4 a.m. that morning (Tucker, p.436-37).

The train had been in the station for over eight hours before anyone tried to help the victims. The most disturbing trend in these attacks was that it looked like a deliberate large scale operation to ethnically cleanse the Province of the Muslims. However, these attacks were carried out on individuals already on their way out of the East Punjab. Tucker describes another tendency of the administration of the East Punjab civil and police officers, all of whom were either Hindus or Sikhs, which was to tacitly encourage mob violence against the Muslims:

The new S.P. of Hoshiapur was a Sikh. The D.C. was a well-meaning Hindu. Reports on possible trouble resulted in patrols going out repeatedly, often to find civilians reports completely unreliable. Finally, (sufficient troops were called out to the supporting rural areas), leaving four sections only for Hoshiapur City. Hoshiapur City then went off in a big way and complete Muslim *Mohallas* (neighbourhoods) were looted and burned. The only places looted and burned were Muslim. It was an extraordinary fact that adjoining Hindu shops and houses had been spared. I went up with the Bde. Comd. the next morning and found that 'all was under control'. I went around the police *Thana* (station) and found that in spite of all the damage being done to Muslim shops, people injured being Muslims, the cells were full of 'criminals' also all Muslims. Not one Sikh or Hindu was under arrest...

In addition to the above a large-scale attack by the Sikhs had been made in the rural areas south and south-east of Hoshiapur to within a distance of only a mile or so. A large number of villages had been completely destroyed and about 500 Muslims killed...

All this literally within a stone's throw of Sikh S.P., who had, of course, received no information whatsoever. Military patrols had estimated that the Sikh *jathas* (bands) in this area numbered several thousand, and up to 15,000. It is too much to ask me to believe that the large numbers of Sikh police in the area were unaware of this plan (Tucker, pp.444-445).

Reporting on a news article of a *London Times* correspondent, Ian Stephens presents the wretched condition that the Muslims faced at the hands of the non-Muslims, especially the Sikhs. As he writes:

"More horrible than anything we saw during the war," is the universal comment of experienced officers, British and Indian, on the present

slaughter in East Punjab. The Sikhs are clearing East Punjab of Muslims, butchering hundreds daily, forcing thousands to flee westward, burning Muslim villages and homesteads, even in their frenzy burning their own. This violence has been organised from the highest levels of Sikh leadership, and it is being done systematically, sector by sector (Stephens, p.183).

As the Sikhs and Hindus controlled the civil and military administrations in the whole of East Punjab, the grotesque manifestation of the Sikhs barbarity was evident in cities as well as the villages. John Connell, in his biography of Claude Auchinleck, describes the scenes:

"On 15th August, the day of liberation was strangely celebrated in the Punjab. During the afternoon a Sikh mob paraded a number of Muslim women naked through the streets of Amritsar, raped them and then hacked some of them to pieces with kirpans and burned the others alive" (Connell, p.906).

In the same book, Cassell records how Auchinleck gave his analysis of the situation in East Punjab to Major General Rees, the Commander of the Punjab Boundary Force, according to the former:

The massacres, arson and disorder which started in Amritsar before the Boundary Commission had made its award had nothing to do with the boundary or anything connected with it. The whole movement was undoubtedly planned long beforehand and soon gave rise to inevitable repercussions in the West Punjab (Connell, p.911).

Almost all the impartial witnesses of this holocaust agree in their judgement of the events in West Punjab as a repercussion, a much weaker and disorganised one, of the large scale massacres in East Punjab. Francis Tucker presents a letter written to him by one of his officers:

I visited Pakistan on two occasions and had long discussions with officers working in this area. There is no doubt whatsoever that the Sikhs of East Punjab are far more vindictive; they take every opportunity of derailing trains and attacking convoys with swords and spears which civil authorities have not got the guts to confiscate. The attacks that are taking place on Sikh and Hindu convoys in West Punjab are more in the form of a reprisal for attacks taking place on Muslim convoys in East Punjab. If the Sikhs could be made to stop their brutal vindictiveness then the Muslims would probably do the same (Tucker, p.489).

Another British writer, D.G.H. Hawes, who was serving in the Raj during the Partition describes the large-scale barbarity of the Sikhs during the Partition.² The acts he witnessed were certainly not of random violence, instead they were carried out collectively and involved planning and military precision. Events described by Hawes, and which are later corroborated by Hamid and Roberts cut short certain claims from certain historians that the violence unleashed on innocent Muslims was the result of the actions of a few Sikhs who had been angered by the reports of alleged massacres of their communities by the Muslims.

The Narratives of Partition

As the final date of the announcement of the creation of Pakistan came closer, the communal tensions which had been simmering for a while exploded in an ugly orgy of mass murder which forever changed the manner in which the religious communities viewed each other. These acts of violence will be discussed in more detail in the subsequent chapters of this dissertation. As the reports of massacres taking place in East (Indian) Punjab reached Pakistan, Penderel Moon, an eminent historian, recorded events which were taking place at that time in Punjab:

The exodus of Hindus from Muslim majority areas is being stimulated by widespread, though mainly underground, propaganda. Extremist Hindus plan to ruin Pakistan by depriving it *ab initio* of all the banking and commercial facilities and "expertise" which their community has hitherto provided. In order to afford a colourable pretext for their exodus from Muslim districts in which so far there have been excesses, the Hindus will often themselves start petty cases of arson in their own houses - singeing a sofa, charring the log of a wooden bedstead or burning up and an old bit of matting - and then make out that Muslims have done it and that their lives and property are in danger. They will flock in feigned terror to the Magistrates saying that they are *khaufzada* (stricken with fear) and must leave at once for some place with greater security. Then, locking their houses and leading themselves, their boxes and stores, their household effects and their family cow into a railway goods wagon, they go off and dump themselves down with relations in another part of

² For a detailed description of one such act, see D.G.H. Hawes. *Four Days of Freedom, Indo-British Review*. Vol. 14, No.2. P.32-39.

the country. Whether their departure will really be permanent remains to be seen (Moon, p.6).

Even though Moon could be accused of generalisation at times, his description of the Hindu community does correspond with the prevalent mood of the Hindus as a whole. They felt that the Muslims and the League had succeeded in *breaking* Mother India into two, and thus there are numerous accounts of their anger taking on a violent form of expression against those that they felt were responsible for this sacrilege. The victims, in most cases, happened to be innocent Muslim civilians.

The revisionist debate, as it has been argued in this chapter, has begun at last and as such, it offers a more realistic examination of the historiography of Partition. This development became essential because it was obvious that 'traditional' debate of blame and counter-blame did not offer any realistic hope of any common ground between the rigid positions taken by historians from both countries. It was no longer possible to continue the whole history of the modern Indian subcontinent around the lives of the political leaders and the colonial rulers. Such generalised versions of history, had for a long time, obscured the nature and significance of internal transformations taking place in ordinary people's lives and thus offered, at best, a skewed depiction of what happened during Partition.

Because Partition is such an emotive event in the collective psyche of both Pakistan and India, there continue to be a number of accounts, as discussed in the chapter above, which continue to be heavily influenced by the national and religious affiliations of the authors. The continuous policy of culpability of the political leadership of the 'other' party for almost all the troubles of Partition, and as most of the historical scholarship comes from India, Muslim League and Mohammed Ali Jinnah bears the onus of censure. On the other hand, Gandhi and other leaders of Congress are held responsible for inciting the violence that took a terrible toll during the Partition in 1947.

Revisionist history sets out, as it has been demonstrated in this chapter, to challenge the prevailing versions of events and attempts to deconstruct the metanarratives of Partition as well as the significance of certain leaders. Patrick French, who has worked on Indian Independence and Partition, points out, after a first-hand examination of the hitherto classified documents of the British administration:

. ... British decision to quit had been based on neither altruism nor strategic planning. It was not the logical culmination of a policy of benign imperial stewardship... Nor was it the inevitable consequence of unquenchable socio-political forces, with the people of India rising up as one to drive the invaders into the sea... Rather, the British left India because they lost control over crucial areas of the administration, and lacked the will and the financial or military ability to recover that control. The documentation of the last years of the Indian Empire provided an unexpected tale of confusion, human frailty and neglect, moving from the florid incompetence of Churchill's wartime India policy to the feeble indecision of Attlee's post-war government. Many of the key events of the 1940s were the result of chance, or even of error, and some the most important decisions of the period were made on an almost random basis (French, p. XX).

A re-questioning, as carried out by French and other academics such as Talbot, Gilmartin and Pandey, as already discussed in this chapter seems to be advocating to history to discover an alternative version of events to those currently prevalent, which in itself is one of the cornerstones of revisionist historiography. In this dissertation, my aim is to re-examine the linearity and matter-of-fact nature of the official discourse. The focus of my thesis will be the 'ordinary people', for they are the living bearers of the ideologies, policies and mistakes of those in power.

Chapter 2

Predicaments of Partition and Post-colonialism in Bapsi Sidhwa's *Bride and Ice Candy Man*

Bapsi Sidhwa is a Pakistani writer, who, like other post-colonial authors has emerged from centuries of imperial domination to write back from the invigorating perspective of the margins. The image of women in South Asian novels has undergone a considerable change in the last three decades. Throughout this period, female writers have moved away from representing women in traditional roles and as enduring, self-sacrificing characters. Rather, in contemporary fiction, female characters have become more three dimensional, involved in searching for their identity as their countries embark on their post-colonial era of nationhood.

Sidhwa situates her narratives during Partition and the immediate aftermath of the creation of Pakistan. Questions of time, space and position of women are examined during this period to demonstrate the workings of gender relations of this new post-colonial nation. Her works offer an acute insight into the workings of religious violence during Partition and how that is carried over or even crudely transformed into vicious violence against women by men of their own community. This violent behaviour is a result of the combination of misguided and valorised macho patriarchal culture and an erstwhile continuation of the targeting of the women during and after Partition. As no effort was made either by the State or community to warn against these abhorrent actions or the inevitable persistence of these tendencies once the civil conflict was over, women's treatment in independent Pakistan confirms the worst fears that one might have harboured. Whereas the violence during Partition was generally immediate, physical and brutal, after the creation of Pakistan, a much more sinister and sadistic element of deliberate persistence has been added to this brutal behaviour. As elaborated in Sidhwa's fiction, some men show characteristics of inflicting much more subtle and deeply disturbing mental violence in addition to physical abuse.

R.B.J Walker contends that violence plays a significant role in the lives of different communities around the world; and as we have entered a new Millennium, if anything, the societies have become more violent. Even though we might be lulled into a false sense of security that the world we live in is a peaceful one:

Yet we also live in a world capable of unleashing violence, even species extermination, on an unprecedented scale. Despite all chauvinistic myopias, violence is indeed prone to erupt here quite as much as there, in the urban ghettos of righteous capitals as well as in the internecine cruelties far away, in the routines of everyday life as well as the grand grotesqueries of war. Violence does not always know its proper place or its proper time (Walker, p.137).

The violence witnessed during the birth of Pakistan seems to carry itself forward into the ideological psyche of the newly independent State. As will be discussed in this chapter, violence is often at hand to determine or enforce social order in either the public or the private domains of the characters' interactions. In most cases, gender violence does not only seem to be the most prevalent, it is carried out without any fear of action from the State's authorities.

The ethnic cleansing and genocide which occurred during this period dominate the direct and indirect themes of Bapsi Sidhwa's first and third novels, *The Bride* and *The Ice Candy Man*. Women are especially targeted in this ethno-nationalist cleansing. Discussing a number of genocides which have taken place around and after the World War II, Helen Fein sets out the common characteristics which define this particular kind of violent period in a State's history:

Most modern genocides are retributive – responses to threat – and not based on comprehensive ideologies, although they may demonise the Other and propagate myths of eternal group hostility. But they are usually based in patriarchal societies in which male dominance is taken for granted. In such societies, women's "purity" and honour are usually contingent on their preservation of virginity before marriage and later inviolability. Repeatedly, we see that men of the group perpetrating genocides in such societies use rape as a means to destroy the Other. Sexual attacks are not only against women but also attacks on the family and the self-esteem of fathers and husbands, publicly demonstrating their group's impotence and their inability to protect "their women." Perhaps, paradoxically, the latent function of the honour of women is to instigate enemies to dishonour women (Fein, p.58).

These characteristics are typical of the pattern of violence carried out during Partition. Men of communities with proud and martial social history became helpless spectators as their women were victimised by the despised 'Others'. This sense of helplessness and inadequacy is internalised and is manifested in the desire for ever more control over the lives of women in their household. The episodes of gender relations between men and women in *The Bride* will be used in this chapter to illustrate this systematic maltreatment and patriarchy's tacit acceptance of everyday violence against women. Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin have made the connection between the violence during Partition and how it is carried on in modern communities in the Indian subcontinent:

A careful consideration of such violence, specific though it might be to a particular historical moment and to communal conflict, may enable us to gain some insight into the more mundane violence and abuse that form part of the everyday experience of many women. It is also our hypothesis that the dramatic episodes of violence against women during communal riots bring to the surface, savagely and explicitly, familiar forms of sexual violence – now charged with a symbolic meaning that serves as an indicator of the place that women's sexuality occupies in an all-male, patriarchal arrangement of gender relations, between and within religious or ethnic communities (Menon, p. 40-41).

Sidhwa's novels provide an alternative perspective to the predominant narrative of Pakistani literature, for it subverts the roles assigned to female figures. This alternative voice is successful in re-creating women's sense of history and belonging. The concept of a "feminist historiography" is best explained by Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid's introduction to *Recasting Women*:

Historiography may be feminist without being, exclusively, women's history. Such historiography acknowledges that each aspect of reality is gendered, and thus involved in questioning all that we think we know, in a sustained examination of analytical and epistemological apparatus, and in a dismantling of the ideological presuppositions of so called gender-neutral methodologies. A feminist historiography rethinks historiography as a whole and discards the idea of women as something to be *framed* by a context in order to be able to think of gender difference as both structuring and structured by the wide set of social relations (Sangari, p.3).

Sidhwa's protagonists are mainly women, who refuse to accept the narrow and constricting roles assigned to them under vague patriarchal terms and notions of "honour," "shame," and "modesty," among others. These labels assume different interpretations under different circumstances; all these explications are, more often than not, in the hands of the patriarchal figures who ruthlessly exploit their advantage over women. Sidhwa's narratives articulate the pain and injustices endured by these victims who are otherwise made to suffer in silence and whose protestations are denied a voice.

Partition, with the inevitable "dis-location" acts as a recurrent motif in *The Bride*. Over a million people died during this period of a few months in 1947 as a result of massacres perpetuated by the three communities involved, namely, Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims. Through her sympathetic and poignant study, Sidhwa unveils the incredible misery caused by such events, not only on the national level but also in the calamitous ways it wrecked and transformed personal lives of "common" people.

By using English as her medium of expression, Sidhwa indubitably belongs to an elite circle, yet she is able to give voice to the marginalised figures of Pakistani society, mainly women. She poses a strong counter-voice to the dominant patriarchal and State narratives, both of which have subdued women's roles to the absolute minimum, through silencing women's literature in one form or the other. She rigorously questions the histories and the assumptions of contemporary Pakistani society and literature, and with her novels seeks to deconstruct the existing discourse. The austere attack on a number of beliefs is somewhat softened by her candid and wry humour which pervades a substantial amount of her work. Sidhwa's witty humour is used as a tool to open up a space that allows her to criticise without causing undue offence.

Her chosen narrative strategies are political as well as social commentaries on the issues of the subaltern figures in her community, in this case, women in a strong patriarchal society. Sidhwa's stories provide alternatives not just to Indian stories on Partition; they also challenge the Pakistani State's official version of

Partition and its aftermath. Unlike the women in the State's version of events, Sidhwa's women are victimised, but they fight to the end with those who are denying them their individuality and brutalising them because they are women. Sidhwa's is one of the increasingly voluble voices that are rising in postcolonial nations as slowly but surely States' metanarratives are being challenged and undermined. Edward Said suggests that it is such emerging writings that will challenge and ultimately lead to the inevitable demise of master-discourses. His arguments are also valid for the need of alternative accounts to the present metanarratives of Pakistani literature. According to Said:

These are not new master discourses, strong new narratives but... another way of telling. When photographs or texts are used merely to establish identity and presence - to give us merely representative images of *the Woman*, or *the Indian* - they enter what Berger calls a control system. With their innately ambiguous, hence negative and anti-narrativist waywardness *not* denied, however, they permit unregimented subjectivity to have a social function (Said, 1993, p.405).

Sidhwa's perspective is indeed an alternative discourse; it not only challenges the existing metanarratives, but also succeeds in offering an insight into the 'photographs' of Partition. Her novels can be said to propound commentary on integral subjects of these 'snapshots', women, who, in most of the other narratives are not much more than passive recipients of the male characters' ideologies. Sidhwa humanises these characters by giving them a voice that challenges perceptions about them and allows them to articulate the complexities of their identities.

The themes dealt with in Bapsi Sidhwa's novels encompass a conglomeration of issues that had not been confronted by other writers using English as their means of expression in Pakistan. She is probably the first Pakistani writer who uses English to explore the implications as well as the causes of Partition and the horror that the average person had to endure during this chaotic period. The main distinction between her work and that done by the Indian novelists is that she provides a voice to those events and characters who are often ignored or marginalised in the latter's accounts of Partition.

Since Sidhwa sets out to deliberate on the issue of the creation of a state, a community, which came into being after a long and arduous journey undertaken by people who wanted a homeland, it is essential to look at what one might consider a “nation” or a “community.” Benedict Anderson, in his seminal work, *Imagined Communities*, argues that the way people comprehend time assumes an important implication in the birth of the imagined community. He defines the nation as “an imagined political community - and imagined both inherently limited and sovereign.” The nation becomes an imagined community because it is bigger than a face to face community; therefore its members “will never know most of their fellow members, meet them or even hear of them, yet in the mind of each lives the image of their communion” (Anderson, p.6). It is imagined as limited because there are always other nations beyond it; it is imagined as sovereign and its sovereignty guarantees its freedom; and it is imagined as a community considering its powerful sense of fraternity, which evokes so much self-sacrifice. He continues his analysis by saying that such imagined communities arise under great human fatalities: those of death and oblivion. Because the nation is a community in which the destiny and prosperity of its members are linked to immemorial time, it can overcome collective suffering and even death. These fatalities together with the new apprehension of time, in order to be able to produce the growth of a nation, should be accompanied by more particular factors. Anderson’s analysis holds true for the post-colonial conception of Pakistan.

The menace of violence from within the community is perpetuated with certain ideas and beliefs, not only by influential members of the society but by the common citizens who form the basic social units of the s *Ice Candy Man*’s protagonist is an eight year old Parsi child, Lenny Sethi, and her narrative reveals the impending violence and destruction of lives, property and human relationships as a result of the Partition of India in 1947. Sidhwa in an interview says that she wanted to write about Partition:

[F]rom a more objective point of view than I had read so far...This book [*Ice Candy Man*] was aimed at the readership in the West, to try and dispel certain erroneous and biased views that had come about in other writing - Indian and British - which was blatantly biased against the Muslims. (Sarwar, p.90).

The presence of bedlam is displayed not just through action; rather, it is advanced through formation and continuation of certain beliefs that implicitly suggest it as a way to achieve all ends in life. The chaos from within can only undermine the well being if not the very foundation of a modern state, and, because it comes from within, it is all the more difficult for the authorities to deal with it effectively. *The Bride* and *Ice Candy Man* offer a microcosmic study of this most tumultuous period in recent Pakistani history.

I

In *The Bride*, Bapsi Sidhwa confronts a number of issues faced by the members of the general populace of Pakistan during and since the Partition of 1947, with a particular interest in the condition of women who are positioned at different levels in the class structure. Women are denied an influential voice both in national issues and those which concern the power over their everyday lives. In the way that they resist the limitations of the definition of “woman” which circumscribes their identity, Sidhwa’s female characters in *The Bride*, as in all her other novels, are as determined, if not stronger than the men who run their lives.

The Partition is used to convey the continuous, unexpected and often forced dislocation not only from a familiar place but also from known cultures and people. Such a violent severance of links with familiar surroundings and way of life leaves a debilitating sense of ordeal that continues to traumatise those who had been forced to flee from their homes. In many cases, it is a sense of exile, but a different kind of exile, as many of them have never been able to return to the physical place that they had called home.

The narrative follows a circular pattern, starting and ending up in Kohistan, which is a tribal area in the North-Western Frontier Province of Pakistan. According to Sidhwa, the traditions of the Kohistanis have not really been altered even as the world around them has moved into ever closer proximity. The bridge is the symbol of the influence of outsiders, which has been built to encroach on the

Kohistanis' separate and unique way of life. The very fact that the bridge is there reveals the chasm that has been in place not only to sever links but to maintain the status quo of fervent hostilities between two ways of life on either side of the river/bridge.

It is rather ironic that the bridge, which, under normal circumstances may have resulted in fostering a more understanding and conciliatory relationship between two different groups, works in the quite opposite fashion in Kohistan. It is guarded by the Pakistani Army, with each side displaying barely hidden fear and hostility towards the other. So the bridge is nothing more than a construction of concrete and cement, serving as a mere and persistent symbol of division rather than a tool of unification. The river in the gorge represents the "true" picture of partitioned and thus dislocated relations between the two sides. It is a fast moving, tumultuous body of water which has cut the mountain into two, and its speed is perhaps the true indication of the hostile relations between the Kohistanis and the Army. The heroine of the novel, Zaitoon, has to reach the bridge by following the river; it is only after she experiences the trauma of travelling along the true division that she can cross over the architectural form of the bridge. Her journey assumes the role of a rite of passage, which Zaitoon has to pass through successfully, not only to gain a new identity for herself but to literally survive.

The Bride is a damning indictment of the Kohistani community in particular and the Pakistani society in general with regards to its brutal treatment of women. The women are marginalised and have, in a number of cases, no say in decision-making processes or actions which may ultimately seal their fates. Qasim is offered a bride at the tender age of ten, not because he has done anything significant or heroic to deserve that honour, but for the mere fact that Resham Khan had been unable to make payment on the loan he had taken from Qasim's father, Arbab Khan. The former's daughter, Afshan, is 'given' into marriage to compensate for her father's failure to come up with the money. This is not a pre-arranged settlement, but is done to prevent a blood feud. The amount of money is not significant; it could have been ten rupees or a thousand rupees, the daughter is available and so displaces the need for negotiation on other, more acceptable,

terms. This transaction between the male members of the feuding families reveals the status of a woman as nothing more than a bargaining commodity, whose role as such has already been decided. The full extent of this injustice is brought into focus when it is revealed that "[T]o begin with" Qasim's father "had thought of marrying the girl himself" (*The Bride*, p.8). Afshan becomes Qasim's wife without knowing how close she had been to ending up as his step-mother. The entire matter rested in Arbab Khan's hands and the decision could have gone either way and all without Afshan having any say in the matter at all. She is forcibly partitioned from her family and dis-located from her home to a new environment which she now has to call her home, revealing the problems of how to define home. But she, like the other female characters, has the resilience to adapt quickly to her new environment and she easily wins over Qasim's mother. Her feelings towards Qasim are maternal rather than that of the wife he expected:

He loved her vivacious, girlish ways and was totally won by her affection. He teased her and played pranks. When he was particularly unkind or obdurate, his wife and his mother combined to give him a thrashing. Then Qasim would shout, 'I am your husband. How dare you!' and he would hate her (*The Bride*, p.10).

Afshan is assertive enough to protect her space in her personal life and to determine when Qasim is ready to come to her as a husband, as she thwarts his half-hearted advances when she is bathing herself in the stream.

Qasim is the first character in this book exposed to the devastation of Partition (from his immediate geographical surroundings) in his case because of the ravages of typhoid and smallpox which decimate his family. He is forced, through circumstances, which are totally beyond his control, to dis-locate to a totally alien landscape, people and culture. His inability to adapt himself to the situation around him is revealed through a hilarious incident regarding his use of toilet stones that effectively disrupt the whole sanitary system of the bank where he works as a guard. His failure to comprehend the change of surrounding is exemplified by his inability to see anything wrong in his actions when confronted by the manager of the bank, Girdharilal. Because Girdharilal had insulted him, it is a matter of honour for Qasim to make this upstart non-believer pay for it with his

life. And so, as soon as the troubles of the Partition of 1947 provide an expedient opportunity, he kills Girdharilal and joins the caravans of people fleeing to Pakistan. His actions add another dimension to the violence of Partition, which was that people used this upheaval to settle personal scores.

Zaitoon, the heroine of the novel is introduced for the first time as a young girl, along with her Muslim parents, Sikander and Zohra, on the Indian side of Punjab province. They, along with millions of others are forced to flee because of Partition's violence. The circumstances responsible for this flight are once again beyond the control of those characters forced to bear the brunt of the agonies caused by it. A collective atmosphere of chaos and helplessness pervades as large sections of the population are given no choice but to move to one of the two newly created countries. They flee with the bare minimum of their possessions towards Pakistan, oblivious to the plots of Sikhs who lie waiting for them. One of the Sikhs describes what he had seen the Muslims do to the Sikh families:

'I saw them myself - huge cauldrons of boiling oil and babies tossed into them!' Then losing interest in what they have heard so often, their faces turn away. By now these tales arouse only an embarrassed resentment. They are meant to stir their nobler passions, but the thoughts of loot undermines that resolve (*The Bride*, p.15).

As the train is derailed by the group of Sikhs before reaching its destination, the passengers, almost exclusively Muslims, are massacred with deliberate cruelty and relish by the Sikhs. Zaitoon's mother (called Munni at that time) is killed before her eyes, and soon afterwards, her father is also murdered by the attacking Sikhs. It is then that she blindly runs into Qasim and immediately starts calling him father. Zaitoon's self-determination and the ability to adjust herself according to the situation is revealed in her immediate response to the massacre. Faced with a terrifying situation she realises that the best way to protect herself is to assume the role of a daughter and Qasim is adopted to cover over the void which has been created as a result of the loss of her parents. Thus, she is able to overcome a crushing personal tragedy which would have undoubtedly overwhelmed many adults.

This fictional incident of the massacre, which may well have been inspired by a true event, is the first reference to the Sikhs' role in the massacres of Muslims in the Partition. Sidhwa's representation is problematic because the characters appear to reinforce stereotypes of Sikhs. Their claims, regarding the atrocities they have suffered at Muslims' hands, appear to be hollow and unconvincing, and Sidhwa fails to leave enough space for her reader to be the judge of the events described by them. Their ensuing massacre of the Muslims reiterates their barbarity and alienates them even further from the reader. Sidhwa presents the whole community through brutality of individual and groups' actions, so that the reader observes them at their worst. The irony of this incident is that it fails to convey the feelings of conflict and hatred that has driven these Sikhs to carry out such a despicable act of carnage. If the Sikhs had been presented in a more sensitive manner, the pain and suffering of their action would have had a much deeper and lasting impression on the reader. In their current state as caricatures, they assume the identity of a mob and one cannot remember the mob as a whole. This is the first instance in which men are used more as metaphors for a whole community rather than as individual characters.

The atmosphere of dislocation and partition is sustained throughout the novel as the conflict between a character's location and character is skilfully tackled by Sidhwa to reveal her character's true identity. She is able to present the conflict that these characters are involved in, not just with the dominating patriarchal control, but also with their natural surroundings. Zaitoon is involved in a life and death struggle with the physical landscape of Kohistan, which seems to act as a maze almost in collusion with her husband, Sakhi and others; it refuses to let her escape her pursuers who are hunting for her in order to kill her. Zaitoon, and to a certain extent Carol, are completely isolated physically and emotionally from their surroundings; the company they have is what is provided for them, and they have to live with that, and are very strongly discouraged from seeking any contact with anyone else. However, Sidhwa adds another dimension to the women's characters' by showing what can be interpreted as their strength or inflexibility by refusing to accept what they have and strive for more, fully cognisant of the consequences of such actions. As already mentioned, Carol alongside

Zaitoon is another character who is dislocated from her environment, in her case, with Pakistan, and in a way partition-ed from her home and culture in America. She is totally alien to the culture and her surroundings. She has left America, yet is unwilling to adapt to the way of life that people lead in Pakistan. She fervently clings to her view of this place as having strange customs and traditions, which in her eyes are definitely inferior to her civilised way of life. What she had imagined to be exotic has failed to live up to the harsh image of reality, as it is apparent in her personal relationship with her husband, Farukh. Yet she chooses to stay in Pakistan because it is still better than the life she had in San Jose, her 'civilised' yet mundane and mind-numbing way of life. She has been able to adjust herself to some aspects of her adopted culture, maintaining a balance between her American upbringing and her present state. Through Carol, Sidhwa introduces the economic class structure of Pakistan, in the process revealing its members' privileges and hypocrisies. Carol chooses to stay in Pakistan because she is able to have an identity which would have been non-existent if she had continued to work as a shop-assistant in a departmental store in San Jose. Sidhwa conveys the fears and boredom of a single woman worker by making Carol stay in Pakistan, with its alien and sometimes claustrophobic culture, rather than return to the drudgery of American life that she would lead if she chose to go back. Yet, Carol chooses not to renew her contacts with the land and culture that is hers. She is presented as a liminal figure in both her native and foreign societies; neither of the identities fulfil her character. The theme of cultural encounter which Sidhwa explores through the shifting, turning circles of activity is the predicament of the Westerner for whom the initial delight in Pakistan gradually turns to disillusionment.

Zaitoon's adoptive father, Qasim Khan, on the other hand, has quite the opposite purpose in mind as he undertakes another journey, this time from Lahore to Kohistan, in a bid to re-establish his lost connection with his past and his people. Though he might be going back to his roots, and it might be a journey which would lead to a re-union with his own people, he is not alone, he is taking a 'gift' as an atonement for his long absence, and to show his commitment in desiring a renewal of ties. And what is a better gift than his own adopted

daughter? It is another example of partition and the necessary migration/dislocation which comes with it for Zaitoon, who had known next to nothing about her life in India and had thought of Lahore as her home.

The major female figures, like Zaitoon, Carol and Mariam (Nikka, the shop vendor's wife), are confined within the narrow framework of rules imposed in general by the patriarchal society and the male figures of the household in particular. They are not expected to play any pivotal role in the significant decisions, even though their feelings and their whole being might be at stake. This aspect of their suppression is abundantly enunciated by the treatment meted out to the young Afshan, as discussed earlier.

Rules for women of the household are never fixed and continuously shifting, thus preventing any one of them from knowing and thus subverting the parameters within which they are expected to function. Such fluid and imbalanced gender restrictions create an unstable atmosphere which means that being a wife, sister, daughter or mother is an ambiguous and not a closed position. The women become "spaces" on which the status of their men is marked, whether they be husbands, fathers or brothers. The notions of honour, shame, and social position are all imposed on a woman's body and actions, and are rigorously enforced to maintain the status quo in society. This incessant obsession to maintain their social standing and 'respect' in a community leads men to desire a complete control over their women. Patriarchal society places man's honour in the achievement or the character of his woman rather than his own. The wives/women, it seems, have to know what needs to be done. As Nikka established himself in his business:

Mariam, reflecting her husband's rising status and respectability, took to observing strict purdah. She seldom ventured out without her veil (*The Bride*, p.51).

What the society seems to dictate is that it was permissible for Mariam to work alongside or individually on her own when it was difficult for Nikka to manage on his own. But now that he has the ability to fulfil his financial obligation in the

running of his household, it is time for his wife to be segregated from the general public. It is taken for granted that the wife would comply with these guidelines. Another of the unspoken but totally understood rules seems to be that as a man acquires financial stability and stature in society, it is imperative for his *Izzat* (Honour) that his wife/daughter be “protected” from the men in the society. This is done because others (read as 'other men') do not respect women and may look or make unwanted advances towards them. There seems to be a fluid connection between a man's financial standing and his honour. It is only when he is financially secure that there seems to be a need to somehow keep the women of his family away from the public gaze. The place of a man in a society and the degree of precautions he must undertake to protect his honour go hand in hand. A much harsher honour code is employed in Kohistan. Zaitoon becomes the recipient of Sakhi, her husband-to-be's disgust of the 'other', the 'outsider' who fails to observe the proper code of conduct for women. Just because he observes Zaitoon waving at the Army jeep, it is enough for him to lose his temper, and in the process passes on all his hatred and bitterness onto her:

'You whore,' he hissed. His fury was so intense she thought he would kill her. He cleared his throat and spat full in her face. 'You dirty, black little bitch, waving at those pigs'... you wanted him to stop and fuck you, didn't you?' (*The Bride*, p.185)

The tribal's honour system, as presented in the novel seems to originate from a very narrow point of view. This kind of presentation is easily believed by those who may not possess enough knowledge about the Kohistanis. The Indian critic, Markand Paranjape is quite right in pointing out the direct linkage between the notions of 'honour' and the women's sexuality. According to her, “It would seem that the entire code of honour of the tribe rests on the notions of sexual superiority and possessiveness” (Paranjape, p.94). The harsh environment of Kohistan is reflected in the brutality with which women are controlled. The men seem to believe that suppression is the only way they can keep their women from running away, and so even a hint of contact with the outside world is considered to be a desire to escape, which is ruthlessly dealt with.

Carol's Pakistani husband, Farukh, on the other hand, is presented as an intensely jealous husband because of the overt attention his American wife attracts in the so-called liberal and educated circles. He belongs to the upper-middle class of Pakistanis, who regard themselves, rather naively, as much more westernised (and thus more "Open"/"Liberal") and may generally tend to look down upon the traditional and 'antiquated' ethics practised by the lower-middle and lower classes. An example of this gulf of ideas is presented by Major Mushtaq's (the Commander of the Army Post) disgust and anger at what he calls the barbaric customs of Kohistanis. But these new ideals are not deeply ingrained enough for Farukh to realise that just because his wife may smile and talk to a man, it does not mean that she has a carnal relationship with him. He becomes Sakhi's counterpart on this side of the bridge. This lack of conviction in his own beliefs makes him extremely suspicious of his wife and seems to widen the gap in their relationship. The most disturbing part of this situation is that he is not even aware of his actions because he has never questioned his beliefs. This distance, which exists between husband and wife, Sidhwa seems to suggest, is one of the reasons which contributes to Carol's sexual affair with the Major Mushtaq who is a fellow officer of her husband.

Major Mushtaq, supposedly still in love with his wife, is presented as having no qualms about sleeping with his friend's wife, for it fits in his pseudo-liberal way of thinking. The same person reveals a much more "traditional" side of himself when Carol admires Sakhi and Misri Khan and asks to be introduced:

Mushtaq was furious. 'Get in and close the window,' he commanded icily.... 'You know how their minds work. He'll spread it all over, I am keeping a tart! ...you are really something, aren't you? Don't you know by now that women don't ask for introductions to such men?' (*The Bride*, pp.220-222).

Mushtaq's outburst reveals the fear of a woman being more than what is expected of her, in this case, the desire of acquiring an identity, of being more than a foreign woman who is married to a Pakistani. Incidents such as these reveal the gulf of lack of understanding which exists in a society such as Pakistan. Because of the absence of any clear channels of communication, a reasonable dialogue

defining each gender's role is lacking. As a result, the dominant patriarchal forces make up and, at will, change the rule of this delicate balance of what is an essential social and communal issue. As illustrated in some of the actions of men in this chapter, they have the freedom to take on different roles and the ability to change their expectation of how women should act. In cases such as Zaitoon's, the woman's inability to conform to the manner expected of her, can have devastating consequences. Violence against women takes precedence over efforts to develop an understanding with them. As some of the events discussed earlier in this chapter indicate, this patriarchal violence has to change if the society is ever to come to terms with the past and make any significant headway towards a more tolerant future.

The worst fate, among the characters in the novel is assigned to Zaitoon. Firstly, she is used as a 'token' by Qasim to re-establish his link with his homeland and then she is left in a totally alien and hostile environment without knowing what identity to assume. She is taken to Kohistan to be 'married' to Sakhi, an action seen as his desire to re-establish links with his native homeland. As she is almost raped by Sakhi on their first night of marriage, she has no one who can explain and comfort her about the first days of her married life. On top of that, Sakhi, in accordance with the expectations of a man's role in Kohistani traditions, starts frequent and brutal beatings in order to tame Zaitoon whenever she dares to go against his wishes. She is a virtual prisoner with Sakhi being the omniscient being who knows of every move she makes (because Yunus Khan, Sakhi's younger brother keeps a watch over her).

Zaitoon is determined to get away from Kohistan and her husband before he kills her. As she runs away from the village, her leaving of her husband is considered not only a disgrace of Sakhi's household but is interpreted as an insult to his whole tribe. They have been "dishonoured", and to be cleared of that shame, they have to find the woman and kill her. No one stops to question the reasons, which had led her to run away from her husband. She loses her identity as a human being and is "hunted" by the tribe. But Zaitoon is endowed with the tenacity and ability to stand-up and fight against all odds and she is able to escape

the environment which would otherwise have suffocated her. Even during her flight, she is unable to escape the violence that prevails in the stark hills of Kohistan. Another group of Kohistanis who may also adhere to similar notions of honour when their own women are concerned, rape Zaitoon, a callous action which tears the shroud of ideals and of respect which these people put on their women. It is quite interesting that neither Sakhi nor his father, Misri Khan, who are so occupied with the obsession of finding Zaitoon, even stop to consider taking some action against the people who have raped her. Zaitoon, no stranger to fleeing for her life, is pitted against a very hostile environment and she uses sheer will power to overcome the obstacles thrown her way. Through her perseverance, Zaitoon survives in the fight against the hostile environments where others might have easily perished. The irony of the whole incident is that Qasim Khan had brought her to his people so that she would lead a happy life; instead, she ends up having to flee from the very people who are supposed to be her family. Her family is out to hunt and kill her to wash away the abstract notion of disgrace with which she has supposedly muddied their honour. Her final escape is more than the result of a mere human effort, as Cynthia Abrioux states:

Zaitoon is ultimately protected and saved, which suggests that an awesome, ancient, natural order combined with a young girl's defiant spirit can overcome the oppressive shackles of a conspiracy of men (Abrioux, p.70).

It should be noted that Sidhwa does not present Zaitoon's actual meeting with her father after her ordeal. Qasim Khan, being one of the Kohistanis, probably does not possess a logic which is very different from that of Sakhi or Misri Khan. It would not come as a great surprise if he refuses to accept his daughter back, for his daughter running away from her husband's house would be a dishonourable action according to his customs.

The hypocrisy of the whole myth about respect given to women in Pakistani society is exposed when Nikka takes Qasim to *Hira Mandi* (the red-light district of Lahore). Sidhwa presents the very men who uphold their women's privacy above everything and would not hesitate to even kill a man who would dare even to look

indecorously at their honour. Yet, in the privacy of a dancing girl's room, Nikka is able to pay for someone's honour to dance naked in front of a whole group of drunken men. After their night of drinking and merriment, these people are able to slip back into the general community to assume their charade with their supercilious values.

Through Zaitoon's fight and escape from the inhospitable environment and Kohistani men, Sidhwa seems to make a statement with regards to women's plight in a country like Pakistan. The path to freedom, in this case of a personal nature, can come about only after a partition. And, as with the Partition of India, those in power would use whatever means they have at their disposal to prevent a person or nation from attaining self-hood /statehood. Sidhwa articulates that women, though jealously coveted by their men from outsiders, are more at risk from the very people who are supposed to guard and value them. Zaitoon's story runs parallel in a number of ways to the nation's turbulent history. Just as the Muslims of this country felt stifled and suppressed in India, Zaitoon knows that it is almost impossible for her to survive in the Kohistani community. Just as there was vehement opposition by the majority of population of India to Pakistan's freedom, the whole of Sakhi's tribe hunting for Zaitoon acts as a parallel. The desperate and trying struggle in both situations displays the resolve, will power and the courage involved in the initial desire and the eventual achievement of freedom. Even though a society has evolved in Kohistan, Zaitoon feels suffocated and longs for a physical space that she considers to be her home. Muslims similarly had for a long time felt that Congress' policies and the attitude of hard-line Hindus was deliberately erasing the contribution of the Muslims to India, and that such policies would eventually lead to wiping out their cultural and religious mode of life. As a result of such hostilities, the idea of 'escaping' to a new homeland seemed so much more appealing and many people were ready to leave India even at the cost of great economic and emotional loss.

The Pakistani nation's internal weaknesses, which can ultimately pit the society against itself, are laid bare in the way the patriarchy treats its women. Thus, the imagined homeland where a woman can be safe still retains the

elusiveness of an often dreamt fantasy, as the dislocated and partitioned relationships of Nikka and Mariam, Sakhi and Zaitoon, and Carol and Farukh dominate the domestic scene in the novel.

Even though the tribals come across as a very cruel and repressive community, one questions the desire of the plain's so called civilisation to civilise them. For it is quite obvious that the latter side is not on a higher moral ground in terms of their treatment of the women in their community. After all, it was Qasim (who had become a semi 'plains person') who brought an outsider to the mountains. Her escape and final return to the plains seems to suggest that it would be better to leave these two distinctly different cultures as far apart as possible.

Despite the fact that *The Bride* is a wonderfully poignant story dealing with issues which govern the ethics of a particular society of Kohistan, it would be imprudent not to point out its shortcomings. This novel somewhat falls short of presenting an accurate picture of Pakistan, because, it basically deals with individual stories, almost all of which have the common theme of violence between those who belong to different ethnic, religious, geographic or gender groups and those who might hold the reins of power. Sidhwa seems to hold on to and advance certain views and incidents in a way that fails to give the reader enough room to form his or her own judgement. The rather pedantic manner results in distancing the reader from a number of incidents which would have enhanced the reader's involvement in the development of the story.

The Bride is Sidhwa's first novel, as a result, it lacks the hard edge of realism which she masters in her later novels. It is felt that she does tend to exoticise certain characters and actions (mostly in terms of cruelty of the men) in this novel. They are used as metaphors, representing the supposed characteristics of their society as simultaneous with their own personalities. Her portrayal of the Kohistanis is rather essentialised and the people (just like the Sikhs) come across as 'uncivilised' barbarians, people in desperate need of being taught the mode of behaviour of the modern world. At the same time they carry a

certain glamour, and, because of their primal and rather limited instincts, are closer to 'noble savages.' The novel postulates a crude stereotype of the Kohistanis, a view very easily put forth and believed by the Western audience and, indeed, many urban Pakistanis who may not have enough knowledge about these people and their way of life, for the characteristics with which she endows her Kohistani characters seem to jump out of the Orientalist fiction of Rudyard Kipling. Sidhwa implicitly suggests that the Kohistani people, and society as a unit, exist in a state of historical and cultural petrification. It is quite apparent that she perceives these Kohistanis (who may symbolise the Pathans as a whole) as inextricably caught in the clutches of their ancient (thus barbaric) traditions, belonging to a distant past mode of life, a world of ignorance in contrast to the sophisticated, civilised narrator who embodies the new world.

Despite these apparent weaknesses, Sidhwa is able to formulate a poignant tale of a woman's struggle to fight and survive in the contemporary society. *The Bride* not only offers the struggle and courage of a woman but a condemnatory view of the practices of the patriarchal society of Pakistan. Sidhwa explicates the dangers posed to the development and stability of the country's community, not by the outside forces but by those within. Zaitoon's eventual freedom from her pursuers indicates Sidhwa's critical (if also affirmative) attitude towards women. One, in a sense, should fight the oppression by '[a]ny means necessary.' It is only after a determined struggle that true freedom is achieved. Sidhwa suggests in her novel that though Pakistan gained its independence in 1947, the women in that country continue the movement for their independence till today.

Bapsi Sidhwa's protagonists are in constant flight. There are numerous factors for this migration from one place to the other. Zaitoon's flight occurs as a result of the danger posed to her very existence by her husband and his way of life. Her resistance is through flight and to stay alive amid the hostile and life-threatening environment of Kohistan. This is not her first flight from mortal danger, she had already experienced it in her infancy, during the partition, when the train had been ambushed and her parents brutally murdered by Sikhs.

If one were just to look at her first novel, Sidhwa might be dismissed as what Timothy Brennan calls a “cosmopolitan writer”:

... [T]hose writers western viewers seemed to be choosing as the interpreters and authentic public voices of the Third-World - writers in a sense, allowed a flirtation with change that ensured continuity, a familiar strangeness, a trauma by inches. Alien to the public that read them because they were black, spoke with accents or were not citizens, they were also like that public in tastes, training, repertoire of anecdotes, current habitation (Brennan, p.7).

With a rather simplistic and didactic portrayal of the Kohistanis, Sidhwa seems to be deliberately trying to make the story more exciting to her prevalent western and western-educated audiences. As Brennan continues:

And yet, while mastering the language of the metropolitan tribe, they did not assimilate in any one-way process. Being invited to speak as “Third-World” intellectuals, they took the opportunity to chastise too, and stated in clear accents that the world is one (not three) and that it is unequal (Brennan, p.9).

The Pakistan of *The Bride* comes across to the reader as a narrow and parochial nation. Sidhwa fails to show the diversity and hybridity of Pakistani society, which is made up of people of different social, economic, ethnic and religious backgrounds. The perception of a reader, who possesses no prior knowledge of Pakistan (true for most of the Western audience), would be of a closed and polarised society.

The Bride's view of Pakistan is more similar to that put forward by the official ideology of the State, which is that the country was created in the name of Islam and is the home of Muslims; and that religion is the unifying concept of the whole population, making it a homogenous society. In reality, Pakistan is made up of people who enjoy the freedom of practising different religious beliefs. Even among the Muslims who are presented, almost none is a practising Muslim. The religion comes across as nothing more than a mere remnant of the traditional rituals, whereas in reality, it exercises a much more significant role over the everyday life and actions of the people of a Muslim society.

Most of the male characters in this novel come across as one dimensional, narrow and cruel in their outlook. The consequences of such characterisation is that the novel fails to convey the complexity of human characters thus making it very easy for the readers to dis-associate themselves from what we might consider as “bad” characters. So, if we have appalling characters, like Sakhi, Farukh and others on one side, and “good” characters like Zaitoon and Mariam on the other, it becomes rather too uncomplicated to take sides. Because some of these characters are rather insipid, they fail to sustain our interest over an extended period of time.

The Bride is unsuccessful in imparting the ethnic complexities which are a feature of contemporary Pakistani society. Sidhwa overlooks the fact that many countries experience divisions based on characteristic group identities, which often have a geographical expression. The manner in which the use of space is controlled, including the temporal rhythm of life in the spatial domain, has an important bearing on the control of conflict among individuals and groups, and on the extent to which divisions and differences within the population are reinforced or ameliorated. “The organisation of territory,” says Michael Chisholm, “may contribute to social cohesion or it may exacerbate divisions, and consequently effects in an intimate way the survival and reproduction of society, or its demise” (Chisholm, p.vii).

III

The Ice Candy Man is Sidhwa’s attempt to present Partition in a comparatively objective fashion. However, it might seem so to the ‘objective’ readers and not so, for example, to readers from communities who may feel that they have been portrayed rather negatively. One thing can be said with certainty; this novel adds an often ignored or silent side of this controversial and complex debate, in this case, of the Pakistani point of view in regards to the Partition.

Ice Candy Man’s protagonist is an eight year old Parsi child, Lenny Sethi, and her narrative reveals the impending violence and destruction of lives, property

and human relationships as a result of the Partition of India in 1947. Sidhwa in an interview says that she wanted to write about:

Partition from a more objective point of view than I had read so far...This book [*Ice Candy Man*] was aimed at the west, to try and dispel certain erroneous and biased views that had come about in other writing - Indian and British - which was unfair towards Muslims generally (Sarwar, p.90).

The story is told through Lenny, as she narrates her observations and comments regarding her immediate surroundings and the ruinous change that public and outside forces bring upon the daily lives of people on Warris Road. A storm of death and devastation is looming in the background as Lenny (who is stricken with polio), basks in the attention of her family, hoping that her foot will never be like that of other children for she would be denied the pleasures of her special status.

She is able to roam freely with her *Ayah* and force the latter's numerous admirers to pamper her in order to gain access to *Ayah's* company. Even though the *Ayah* is a Hindu, her admirers come from a variety of religious and vocational backgrounds. They include Sharbat Khan, a Muslim Pathan knife-sharpener, who has come down from the mountains, and who invests her salary in his money lending schemes. The *Ice Candy Man* is also a Muslim; a flamboyant peddler of popsicles and religious charms, he gives Lenny treats to win over her *Ayah*, and has a wandering toe that frequently finds its way beneath *Ayah's* sari, only to be chased away by Lenny. His real charm is the "silken web of gossip" he weaves in the hopes of ensnaring *Ayah*. There is the *Masseur*, a Hindu, who hypnotises her with his sensual touch, and Sher Singh, a Sikh zoo-keeper, who tends the lions at the Queen's Garden's small zoo. *Ayah's* list of admirers also include Imam Din, the gently lustful cook of the Sethi family, and even the occasional English policeman. She could be seen as a personification of India, with a number of men from different religious backgrounds all yearning to possess her. She becomes the locus of and centre point of all attention, as Lenny observes: "Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Parsee are, as always, unified around her" (*Ice Candy Man*, p.97). Beautiful *Ayah's* "dreamy impartiality," observes Edward Hower, "keeps the peace among

her admirers" (Hower, p.12). In the end, different people do "possess" her when Ice Candy Man pimps for her, but it is all done against her will. Shanta (the Ayah) seems to bask in the competing attention of her admirers. Through this melange of characters, Sidhwa is able to create a socially and religiously harmonious community in pre-partitioned India. She is able to capture and maintain the authenticity of that time period through a web of interactions within this tightly knit community. Most of the characters in the novel are of an economically lower class, and so the economic bonds which hold them together are stronger than the religious expectations they might otherwise have. With the passage of time, as partition comes closer, a change takes place in the personal relationships between this previously close-knit community. Dierdre Donahue writes:

The tensions that destroy the group and that brutally harm the Ayah serve as a subtle metaphor for the divided subcontinent during partition: rape, arson, riots and wholesale murder (Donahue, p.7D).

The novel deals with the every-day emotional struggle of common people and how the national/outside affairs and politics of the country disrupt their lives and result in the total break-up of the fabric of society which had taken generations to build and maintain. Sidhwa assembles and conveys the feelings of the whole nation through the erratic changes of personality that her characters undergo. Their interaction with one another acts as the barometer which conveys the emotional state of the whole nation. The reader is able to observe positive and negative changes occurring in the relationships between different characters.

Sidhwa is able to construct and sustain the reader's interest in her characters. She is artful enough to present the characters in flux. Everyone, from major to minor characters, passes through the phase of Partition that leaves an indelible mark on their personality. The character with multiple "person-alities" and personas is the Ice Candy Man. A lack of any particular name leaves his character open, creating a void, a mould which is filled in with different eccentric personalities. His namelessness allows him the freedom to move from one character to the other without any connection to what he had been. His identity seems to be composed of various temperaments which are, on a number of

occasions, directly contradictory to the ones he might have displayed previously. There is only one common trait in all his characters, that of “selling”. Initially, he sells Ice lollies, in winter it is birds, during the partition, he sells hatred, after her abduction, he sells Ayah’s body, and in the end, he seems to have sold his mental faculties, as he stumbles back to India.

In the beginning of the novel, he is seen as selling Ice lollies; as soon as winter arrives, he, as Lenny observes, transforms himself into a birdman. He is a shrewd enough sales-person to know how to make a profit, as he displays his ruthlessness with his apparent threatening gestures to the captured birds near the English women:

He flourishes a barber’s razor. It is an infallible bait. Clutches of tender-hearted Englishwomen, sporting skirts and tennis shoes, abandon their garden chairs and dainty cucumber and chicken tea sandwiches to rush up and scold: ‘You horrid man. Don’t you dare cut their throats!’ (*Ice Candy Man*, p.26)

Ayah and Lenny participate in his role-acting and convey their apparent glee: “[e]very now and then we [Lenny, Ayah and Adi] heighten the histrionics and encourage sales by shouting, ‘Cut their throats! Cut their throats!’ (*Ice Candy Man*, p.26). These accomplices help in expediting Ice Candy Man’s birds being sold earlier than they would have been otherwise. This spectacle, which Ayah participates in and enjoys at the time, is quite ironic, for later on, she becomes like one of his birds. Her captor is her sole possessor and has the same powers over her as he has over the captured birds.

At the inception of partition, Ice Candy Man begins to change once more, this time, for the worse. By the time he abducts Ayah, his moral deterioration is complete. As Ayah leaves him, his mental faculties also deteriorate and he is completely overwhelmed by the forces of his inner conflict. It seems that Sidhwa presents Ice Candy Man as a figure caught up in an environment that is in constant flux. The events and moods change so frequently and often times so violently that one being is shattered and the Ice Candy Man puts on a new persona to keep in tune with the times. His multiple personalities seem to keep not

only everyone but also himself guessing as to what role he might assume in future. Each new role is complete in itself for it has nothing what so ever to do with the identity he had earlier on. However, as the time of Partition moves closer, his successive identities assume a more sinister nature. Ice Candy Man's brutality is obvious in some cases (during the partition, when he leads a mob) and at other times it is lurking just beneath the apparently calm surface of his character, which is more terrifying than physical violence. After kidnapping Ayah, he uses her for his own perverted sexual fantasies, and till then unfulfilled lustful pleasures. As if that was not demeaning enough, he assumes the role of being her pimp, selling her to secure financial gains from her already wretched state of being.

The next time that he surfaces, it is under the semblance of a mild mannered and soft voiced poet deeply in love with Ayah, whom he has married now. Although on the exterior he seems to have changed, in reality, he seems to have become a sociopath, a state which is revealed by his utter lack of comprehension of and sympathy for Ayah's emotional state. It seems that at this moment he himself is so shocked by his cruelty that he forces himself to deny that aspect of his being. He lacks the stability of a distinct and stable character of his own and thus is able to adopt whatever his surroundings dictate with familiar ease. His last role is that of a scorned lover, and maybe he does go mad because Godmother arranges to have Ayah removed from his house. Ice Candy Man's behaviour shows just how irrevocably some people have changed since partition.

The interaction between people of different religious backgrounds is radically different on a personal level from that of the mob. Imam Din is able to travel to his village and get assurances from the Sikhs that no harm would come to his family, and vice versa. In Lahore, Imam Din tries his utmost to take sides with Ayah, a Hindu, against a mob of Muslims. He undertakes this action because he considers it as his moral duty as a human being. On the other hand, opportunists like the Ice Candy Man settle personal scores against both Muslims and Hindus. The final irony of the novel is that Ice Candy Man, who had caused so much bloodshed and untold misery for others in the name of Pakistan, ends up going back to India.

This novel is not about the national politics of the Partition of India, rather, it is a detailed account of the lives of people who lived in that time-period. Sidhwa does not take sides in this cruel and bloody conflict. Even though she is from Pakistan, this fact is not reflected in her novel as there are number of villainous characters who happen to be Muslims. This could be because she is able to distance herself from the Muslim majority's perspective, or is deliberately trying to follow what she had promised to set out to do, which is to present the story of Partition in a more objective way than the ones that she had read.

In *The Ice Candy Man*, the focus is not just the violence of Partition and events that are described as affecting the characters in the novel, for instance, Ranna's story. Sidhwa looks at human beings who undergo radical transformations, sometimes in response to issues or ideals which they only vaguely comprehend, but which, in a way, affect them.

The disastrous effects of national politics slowly but surely invade the idyllic world of Warris Road, which is the focal point in the activities of all the major characters in the novel. During the personal interactions between different characters, there is an avid interest in national politics, but because of the good relations between these people, all the hatred and violence of the national politics seem to be viewed as almost foreign. When the characters discuss the massacres and looting going on, each person tries to assure the other that something like that would never be allowed to happen in their neighbourhood. In the earlier section of the novel, it does seem that this section of Lahore might escape the murdering rampage of religious zealots, but as events show, it was not to be.

The narrator, Lenny, it seems, is a somewhat autobiographical figure, because Sidhwa was also born around the time period of Lenny's birth, and when she was eight years old, she also had polio. Lenny, the protagonist, plays a significant role in observing the political events taking place around her and how the lives of the people she knew are changing at such a rapid pace that it is difficult for her to keep up with the characters around her. It is important that

Sidhwa has made a child the narrator rather than an adult because it would have been quite difficult for an adult protagonist not to take sides in this political and emotional partition which was taking place at that time. Lenny is able to keep an emotional distance from other characters. She is worried about her own inner turmoil and questions. In spite of her status as a child, she stands for an extreme degree of independence and otherness. In the politically charged atmosphere of Warris Road, Lenny also vents her anger against the Imperialists after she overhears Col. Bharucha saying, that "If anyone is to blame, blame the British! There was no polio in India till they brought it here" (*Ice Candy Man*, p.16). From that point onwards, the British deserve nothing but anger and contempt from Lenny, as she declares resolutely:

'The goddamn English!' I think, infected by Col. Bharucha's startling ferocity at this 'dastardly' (one of Father's favourite words, just as 'plucky' is Mother's) instance of British treachery. 'They gave us polio!' And notwithstanding the compatible and sanguine nature of my relationship with my disease, I feel it is my personal involvement with the Indian politics: the Quit-India sentiment that has fired the imagination of a subject people and will soon sweep away the Raj! (*Ice Candy Man*, pp.16-17).

Lenny embodies the Pakistani community's young identity; she represents the hopes of a new political entity, and her personal gifts can be seen as promises for the future. In Lenny's case though, her gift of 'telling the truth' brings nothing but pain and heart-ache for her, however one feels that Sidhwa suggests that if this trend would continue in her life-time, it would offer her a more secure, rational and sober future. If one continues her analogy with that of Pakistan, such a character would offer similar future for Pakistan. At the moment, she reveals her utter disgust and bitterness about herself as a result of this 'unfortunate' gift:

I am the monkey-man's performing monkey, the trained circus elephant, the snakeman's charmed cobra, an animal with conditioned reflexes that cannot lie... For three days I stand in front of the bathroom mirror staring at my tongue. I hold the vile, truth-infected thing between my fingers and try to wrench it out: but slippery and slick as a fish it slips from my fingers and mocks me with its sharp rapier tip darting as poisonous as a snake. I punish it with rigorous scourings from my pricking toothbrush until it is sore and bleeding. I'm so conscious of its unwelcome presence at all times that it swells uncomfortably in my mouth and gags and chokes me. I throw up constantly (*Ice Candy Man*, p.184).



Sidhwa reflects the mental turmoil that Lenny undergoes after confronting the disastrous consequences of her "truth." Her references to "trained" animals displays her intense desire for alienation from herself and from those "destructive" parts of her body which have meted out such a terrible fate upon her beloved Ayah. She is ready to negate her personality, because of her utter helplessness when it comes to speaking; she is unable to lie. This incident reveals the often-times ignored aspect of growing-up; Sidhwa captures the painful and tortuous period of childhood, and of the desire to out-grow one's years. One of the reasons for desiring to become an adult is to acquire the unhesitating ability to lie when the situation demands it.

Although her compulsive truth-telling ability might cause her and those around her a momentary uneasiness, its long term effects hold a promise for a better future for the country. Lenny's un-self-conscious, and matter-of-fact narration at times distances the reader from the passionate tensions of the situation, as is the case of certain instances between Shanta and her admirers. The protagonist also appears as an anti-hero(ine), and is plagued by failure (to protect her loving Ayah in the time of her need), insignificance and burlesque inadequacies (her sex in addition to her physical handicap and not being able to lead a normal life like other children), at the same time as she incarnates the values of her people. She is comfortable with people from all walks and different religions. But most of all, she is sure of her personal identity.

Sidhwa accomplishes another objective through her use of Lenny as the protagonist. Lenny's early years bring to the reader the pleasure of recognising his/her own childhood in any portrayal and recollection of childhood. Through the idealised gift of Lenny's perception of the world around her, we recover the memory of our own past, with its rich imaginary life, its free creativity, its illusionary omnipotence, which is the source of all adult imagination. Because nobody else is involved with her project she does not dominate anyone. Because she imitates no one, she cannot reflect our presence or our hopes. Accepting her means getting rid of our self-image that stands between us and the others, reaching beyond

social appearances, beyond our ego, that true being whose desire is to join the other's self, which is radically different from ours. Because the children want so little from others, they forgive whenever their expectations are not met. The person who ends up getting the harshest of treatment from Lenny is no one but herself, for example, when she tries to twist out her tongue because of its uncanny habit of telling the truth every time. In the latest incident, Lenny's indifferently truthful tongue leads to Ayah's abduction and subsequent disappearance, with her image forever planted in her and the reader's mind.

The Ayah is the most problematic and multifarious figure in *Ice Candy Man*. As discussed earlier, her identity is marginalised because she is presented and spoken for, more in regards to her social rather than personal figure, as she is confined by the boundaries of her job-description (Ayah) as second mother to Lenny. Ayah's life is presented as a succession of apparent contradictions, the absence of a proper name denies her the fullness of identity endowed upon other characters, yet at the same time, her namelessness propels her beyond the not-so-narrow limitations associated with others around her. She is a Hindu, yet works in a Parsi household, and encourages flirtatious behaviour from men of other religions. As soon as the partitioned countries come to existence, she reveals no inklings of going to new India, choosing, instead, to stay in Pakistan, perhaps not fully aware of the changes which have created the unbridgeable rifts between religious communities. She assumes the role of the latter-day "Mother India" figure; in fact, Shanta becomes a stand-in for India, an impression that is strengthened by her pure and radiant beauty and how her description rises above everyone else around her. Her undemanding love and care towards Lenny and her teasing callousness towards her admirers elevates her higher than those surrounding her.

During the rioting of the Partition, Ice Candy Man comes to the unsuspecting Sethi household, especially for Shanta, not alone but with a mob, to possess her, to overcome her "unnatural" being, to own the "concept," the "idea" for himself. Shanta had always been this desirable but ultimately unachievable source of desire during 'normal' times. It is only through a collectively violent act

that he is able to destroy the social and moral order of a society. As he cunningly elicits the information of her whereabouts from credulous Lenny, he is ferocious enough to ward off Imam Din's challenge. He finally "captures" Ayah, and as she is carried away on the raised hands of the mob, she is, once again, without "identity" as her mental abilities fail to register the shocking truth:

They drag Ayah out. They drag her by her arms stretched taut, and her bare feet - that want to move backwards - are forced forward instead. Her lips are drawn away from her teeth, and the resisting curve of her throat opens her mouth like the dead child's screamless mouth... The last thing I noticed was Ayah, her mouth slack and piteously gaping, her dishevelled hair flying into her kidnappers' faces, staring at us as if she wanted to leave behind her wide-open and terrified eyes (*Ice Candy Man*, pp.183-4).

Her indignity at the hands of the Ice Candy Man is revealed as discussed earlier in this chapter. Ayah, who could have served as the very concept of the nation, is debased to such an extent that she is "partition-ed" from the land which she had called her home. Whereas her being a Hindu in a Muslim country would have undoubtedly resulted in a hybrid community, her forced conversion to Islam wipes away any traces of "differences" from the majority of the population. And so the dream of a well knit but diverse community is not realised and the elusive concept remains imaginary.

As in *The Bride*, Sidhwa's protagonists are mainly female, who have refused to accept the narrow and constricting capacities assigned to them under vague terms such as honour, shame, and modesty, among others. These labels assume different interpretations under different circumstances, more often than not in the hands of the patriarchal figures who ruthlessly exploit their advantage over the women. Sidhwa's narratives articulate the pain and injustices endured by these victims who are otherwise made to suffer in silence and whose protestations are denied a voice.

Through her characteristic manner, which includes, as Mann points out "dissents, subversions, appropriations, transgressions, and even deformations," Sidhwa is able to undermine the rather shallow and apparently unified version

presented by the predominant literature of the "... [n]ationalist discursive tradition to establish the complexity of the modern Indian/[Pakistani] nation-state" (Mann, p.87). By subverting the primary and essentialist narrative of Pakistani society through her painstaking portrayal of the unequal battle of gender and sexual politics, ethnic and religious affiliations, and, therefore alternate nationalisms, Sidhwa participates in:

...[W]hat Bhabha describes as the "substantial intervention" of the marginal or "minority" into "those justifications of modernity - progress, homogeneity, cultural organicism, the deep nation, the long past - that rationalize the authoritarian, 'normalizing' tendencies within cultures in the name of the national interest" (Mann, p.87).

Through her portrayal of a melange of characters, Sidhwa offers at the very least, an indispensable commentary on the heterogeneous ideologies that underwrite a new Pakistan at the turn of our millennium and brings forth the plan of a nation-in-process of attaining its aspirations.

Chapter 3

Of Victims and Villains: Representation of Muslims in Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* and Chaman Nahal's *Azadi*

The fiction of Partition manifests, to a certain extent, feelings of each community and how some authors have reflected that emotion, and, as we shall see in this chapter, if one is not prudent, such a medium may actually create further divisions between communities.

It is generally agreed that on both sides of the divided Indian subcontinent, there has been a smaller literary output than one would have expected from a tragedy on such a mass scale. Ania Loomba very rightly points out that "Partition has functioned as a sort of repressed cultural memory in the subcontinent, inviting, until lately, curiously little sustained academic attention or creative representation" (Loomba, p.17). Because of the dearth of critical output, some novels about Partition have assumed, in a number of cases, the status of 'classics' without being subjected to any rigorous scrutiny. Such an easy passage on the path to becoming an essential read on a subject as controversial and emotionally charged as the Partition has resulted in not only distorting the events of that tragedy, but it is also unjust to those individuals' memory who were killed and to those who lost all their worldly possessions in that march towards a new homeland. In some of the narratives of Partition, the killing and the suffering of communities is weighed according to the religious affiliation of the author. If both of these associations are to the same religion, the protagonists are usually cast as 'victims', and the whole of the 'Other' community is portrayed as the collective 'villains'. The sufferings of the 'Other' community are either ignored, or on rare occasions, passed off by merely token lines of acknowledgement.

Saros Cowasjee, a literary critic who has written about Partition literature, has summed up his views in regards to the Sikh fictional accounts of that event:

We see a persistent pattern running through the novels by Sikhs. First, the principal characters in the novels are all Sikhs, and each novelist shows a romance between a Sikh boy and a Muslim girl.... [T]he Sikh writers admit to Sikh atrocities against the Muslims, but argue that it was only in retaliation for what the Muslims did to them. This last contention, however is not supported by independent observers. Both Leonard Mosley and Michael Edwardes in their respective studies mention Sikhs spoiling for a fight, and Collins and Lapierre in *Freedom at Midnight* (1975) refer to them as the "most vicious killers of all." In Amritsar, Muslim women were stripped, repeatedly raped, then taken through the city to the Golden Temple where their throats were slit. A British officer of the Punjab Boundary Force discovered four Muslim babies "roasted like piglets on spits in a village raided by Sikhs." (Cowasjee, p.18).

In this chapter, I intend to examine the portrayal of Muslims in the novels of two prominent Indian writers. One is a Sikh (Khushwant Singh) and the other, a Hindu (Chaman Nahal), and their novels are *Train to Pakistan* and *Azadi* respectively. The two authors formulate the events of Partition and have a certain degree of similarity in which the Muslim characters and the whole community is presented. In addition, I hope to focus on a number of examples in the two novels, especially the portrayal of Muslim women.

In both the novels, events and social relations of the pre-partition era are treated in quite an uproblometric fashion, even though in both cases we are told that there were three distinct religious and two economic classes in Punjab. The Muslims were the peasants and the underclass while the Hindus and Sikhs controlled the industrial and economic matters in this region. It is however surprising that there are no instances of an uprising of those who felt that they had formed a permanent underclass. The carefully constructed facade of religious and social harmony is, in both novels violently shattered by the actions of Muslims. Because the status-quo favoured the Hindus and Sikhs, anything that the Muslims did to disturb that structure and balance of power could be deemed as subversive. These disturbances are created either by Muslims in the community (as in *Azadi*) or their actions are responsible for tearing the fabric of social cohesion which seems to exist in these communities; for example as the

'ghost' trains from Pakistan plunge the Mano Majra community into a slide towards anarchy in *Train to Pakistan*. The social upheavals which result in bringing turmoil and often break-up of families is a microscopic representation of a much larger break-up and destruction of the whole civil society which took place during Partition.

In these novels, it seems that both authors are following pre-determined notions of holding the Muslim characters to bear the brunt of responsibility for the ensuing violence. At times, it seems that their political affiliations are also drawn in which leads to blame being levelled at the Muslim League as a whole, which is held accountable for the bloodshed. As a link was established in blaming the League for the violence caused by Muslims, then there could be a very convenient connection of blaming its leadership. However, it should be noted, as will be discussed in this chapter, a similar argument is not used to link Hindus and Congress or Sikhs and the Akali Party. A significant portion of the Indian literary commentary on the Partition novels follows, in a number of cases, the same version of events as set out in the novels, which, in turn is that of the Indian National Congress. According to the Congress' ideology, all the 'other' parties and groups involved in the Partition are to blame, all except Hindus and Congress Party. In N. Radhakrishnan's opinion, Muslims would never have gained independence if it had not been for the "... British who played to the tune of Mohammed Ali Jinnah" (Radhakrishnan, p.45).

In her study of the history and literature of Partition, Susie Tharu argues that:

In India, Partition is rarely conceived (as it seems to be in Pakistan) as a political resolution to the Hindu-Muslim tensions that developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries - a perspective that would image the violence as regrettable but perhaps unavoidable... Indian accounts are nearly always shot through with a sense of grotesque and uncivilised violence of human nature that has been desecrated (Tharu, p.74).

Her analysis of the Indian perspective of the Partition's violence side-steps the issue of whom the violence is directed towards, or which community of the Indians are portrayed as carrying out most of these acts of "uncivilised violence." In other fictional accounts, as in the two novels being discussed, the archetypal Muslim man is continuously represented as an agent of physical as well as sexual violence towards the Hindu and Sikh communities, whereas the Muslim women seek the comfort and solace of non-Muslim men.

According to Tharu, it was not until the 1980s and the 90s that the Muslims had been collectively blamed and not the British. As she continues, "[T]he antagonists now are Muslims, with their 'sub/pre-national' religiosity who take on the role of the enemy with and symbolise the evils of a 'soft' (Nehruvian/socialist) state." (Tharu, 75). Such deliberate and simplistic 'othering' of Muslims or any particular group ultimately fails to develop one's understanding of the complexity of issues involved. All the communities need to accept that people from their own religious affiliation were involved in the carnage that took place and that they bear a certain degree of responsibility.

Aijaz Ahmad has called for the analysis of Partition in which people of the subcontinent have to come to terms with the events which took place by looking at their own actions rather than blaming the British. He says that:

Our 'nationalism' at this juncture was a nationalism of mourning, a form of valediction, for what we witnessed was not just the British policy of divide and rule, which surely was there, but our own willingness to break up our civilisational unity, to kill our neighbours, to forgo that civic ethos, that moral bond with each other, without which human community is impossible... The major fictions of the 1950's and 1960s ... came out of refusal to forgive what we ourselves had done and were still doing, in one way or another, to our own polity. No quarter was given to the colonialist; but there was none for ourselves either (Ahmad, p.119).

Pakistan and India, as nations seem to be able to sustain their national integrity by blaming 'Others' whether they are foreign forces or those belonging to different religious groups. The same holds true, and will be demonstrated again and again in this dissertation, for the Partition and the ensuing violence.

Ahmad points out that the harshness of perspectives that seem to have dominated the general public in both countries and the literature of Partition is reflective of that continued bitterness and anger against each other. The lack of forgiveness is aptly demonstrated in the stories discussed in this dissertation. Even after more than fifty years, the primary emotion continues to be that of anger, starting from the British to those belonging to 'Other' communities, to the political leadership of each major Party. One cannot but agree with Ahmad, that there is an urgent need to re-assess the way in which Partition continues to be remembered and portrayed so that individuals, communities and both countries are able to progress beyond the simplistic politics of blame towards a more conciliatory and forgiving avenue towards others and ultimately towards themselves.

The time period covered in the two novels under discussion is from June to September of 1947. These are the most crucial months of the Partition, because of the elections, as already discussed in the first chapter, West Punjab had been aligned to be with Pakistan and the relocation of the three communities began in earnest. It was during this phase that most of the crossings by the refugees were taking place, whilst there was also more bloodshed during these months than at any other time. In this duration, certain elements came to the fore, which included, among others, people with hatred of other communities, or those with past grievances, or those bent on looting and stealing from those already under the intense strain of forced dislocation and thus at their most vulnerable. The complexity and diversity of those involved in the violence just confirms that it is naïve and simplistic, not to mention unjust to homogenise all perpetrators of these horrendous crimes into a single and a distinct group, no matter what religious affiliation they might have. Some authors have chosen the uncomplicated and thus totalising view of certain communities, which, instead of furthering their point of view, ends up limiting it. The reader is able to decipher the forced and laborious twists put in by these authors in their narratives to vilify one community in contrast to their own.

Like a number of narratives detailing the process of nation-building, women are presented as the central figures, who are most vulnerable to the sexual and physical attacks from the 'Other' community. In the Indian subcontinent's case, their 'honour' is quintessentially tied in with that of the whole family; thus it needs to be 'protected' at all costs. The women have to be 'unspoiled' for they will be the bearers of children which in turn would ensure the future and purity of not only the family and religion, but of the whole nation. Khushwant Singh and Chaman Nahal have emphasised the essential and primary duty of women and men of Sikh and Hindu communities respectively to protect and carry forward their 'honour'. On the other hand, the Muslim community as a whole and their women in particular are represented as fairly acquiescent to the idea of 'impurity' (according to the logic of both authors' rationalisations of what is expected of women of their faiths). The Sikh and Hindu women, according to both the authors, could only be 'defiled' by Muslims, and that too could only be achieved through extreme violence; Muslim women on the other hand, seem to act as willing partners in submitting to the Sikhs' and Hindus' sexual advances. According to the fiction as well as non-fictional accounts of the Sikh communities during the Partition, a number of women were killed by their own men, or they 'chose' to commit suicide, because there was no way to escape the impending attacks of the Muslims. Urvashi Butalia, in her essay on community and gender at the time of Partition, narrates an account of the events of 6-13th March 1947, in Rawalpindi in West Punjab:

In Thoa Khalsa, some 90 women threw themselves into a well in order to preserve the 'sanctity' and 'purity' of their religion, and to avoid conversion... in Gulab Singh's haveli 26 girls had been put aside. First of all my father, Sant Raja Singh, when he brought his daughter, he brought her into the courtyard to kill her, first of all he prayed (he did *ardaas*) saying *Sacche badshah*, we have not allowed your Sikhi to get stained, and in order to save it we are going to sacrifice our daughters, make them martyrs, please forgive us...

Then there was one man who used to do coolie work in our village. He moved forward and... caught his [the father's] feet and he said, *bhapaji*, first you kill me because my knees are swollen and I won't be able to run away and the Mussulmaans will catch hold of me and make me into a Mussulmaan. So my father immediately hit him with his *Kirpan* and took his head off... I crept downstairs, weeping, sobbing and all the while I

could hear the regular swing and hit of the *Kirpans*... twenty five girls were killed, they were cut (Butalia, pp.37-8).

If this is one example of Sikhs' ferocity and resolve to 'protect' their women's 'purity' in the face of adversity, neither Butalia nor Singh provide any example of their actions against those (Muslims) who had apparently caused them to take such drastic actions against their own kin.

As Sikh women are canonised for the ultimate sacrifice of themselves to retain the sanctity of their bodies and religion, the Muslim women in both the novels are shown to possess very loose moral character and seem eager to enter into romantic affairs with non-Muslims. Not only are these women never presented as having any second thoughts about miscegenation, there is a conspicuous absence of even a single individual in the Muslim community who tries to dissuade them from their actions. In two clear instances in the novels, relatives of Muslim girls actually encourage them in their affairs. For example, in *Train to Pakistan*, Hasseena, the teenage courtesan, whom Hukum Chand calls a prostitute, is there with her mother, who takes money and leaves her daughter with a lecherous old Hindu man. In *Azadi*, Munir, Nur's (a Muslim girl) brother plays an active role in bringing together his sister and Arun, a Hindu. Instances like these two highlight the prejudices clung to by certain segments of Sikh and Hindu societies and show how these two highly respected and 'unbiased' authors are able to institutionalise such partiality in their novels.

Whereas chastity of the Hindu/Sikh women is considered to be the most basic a characteristic of their being, Muslim women, on the other hand, are removed from this cultural and religious binding. Mona Fayad in her essay on identity and the nation, considers the social structures which confine women's bodies. According to her, "Woman is appropriated as signifier of traditionalism, reservoir of communal identity out of which the 'imagined community' of the nation, in Benedict Anderson's term, can be construed" (Fayad, p.43). Women are cast as the bastions of the community's collective purity, who need to be protected, and in the last resort, 'destroyed' rather than letting them be 'despoiled'

by men of the other community. In this context, 'dishonouring' of Hindu and Sikh women at the hands of the Muslims, not only 'corrupts' their being but carries forth the threat of 'polluting' the entire race. The Muslim women characters' marginalization, however, is not carried out in order to raise them above this socially constricting character; they are represented as somehow being unworthy of carrying out the moral commands of their respective societies. They are 'loose' women, whose only redeeming actions are that they are almost invariably drawn to the non-Muslim men. By compromising their social and religious laws, the Muslim women are assigned to lower rungs of morality's ladder. At the same time, non-Muslim men's actions, especially the sexual violence towards women, is shielded by showing the Muslim women drawn to, and in some instances, encouraging the sexual and physical domination over themselves. These men continue to protest against the threat posed to their women by the Muslim men, yet their own sexual liaisons with Muslim women is not presented as arousing any similar sentiments from the Muslim community. The emasculated Muslim community, it seems, is either not aware of these relationships, or is not really 'honourable' enough to control their women. The non-Muslim characters in both the novels under discussion are used indirectly to present a Partition from a particularly biased perspective, and allows the authors to express their own attitudes towards the whole of Muslim community. Characters, just as Jugga (*Train to Pakistan*), Lala Kanshi Ram (*Azadi*) give full vent to, it seems, their respective author's distaste felt towards the Muslims. These non-Muslim characters seem to enjoy a considerable degree of immunity, and their views in most instances go unchallenged, they are, as will be discussed later, tacitly approved. These sentiments of hatred and anger seem to have been directed towards the whole of Muslim community because they had dared to challenge the Hindu majority's authority, and had demanded a separate homeland for themselves and their coming generations. The Muslim characters seem to be villainised as a community because they have chosen to affiliate with the Muslim League rather than the Congress.

In a number of Indian novels of Partition, violence is consistently portrayed as spilling over from the Western Punjab, and as carried out by Muslims on the

other two communities. Gomathi Narayanan, in his book *The Sahibs and the Natives* states that in Partition novels it is a "... general tendency to confess the violence but deny the communal disharmony" (Narayanan, p.101). Almost all the Indian critics have described the Partition novels as representing atrocities committed by all sides, yet the most significant sections of these novels end up villainising the Muslims. These novels perpetuate the dominant tropes of Partition discourse. They utilise, as a recurrent dramatic event, the physical threat to Hindu/Sikh women from Muslim men, as well as the latter's predatory thirst for violence against the Hindu/Sikhs. The Muslims' affiliation or sympathies become a perpetual focal point for anxieties about the threat of general uprisings/massacres and, in particular, extreme and biased paranoia about the potential rape of Hindu/Sikh women.

A revisionist view of events is conspicuously absent from both novels being discussed. The narrative techniques of Singh and Nahal express an un-reflexive attitude in their version of events. The rigidity that is symbolised by caricatured characterisation of Muslims is also carried on in a systematic thematic way. Both authors fail to develop a critical distance between themselves and their narratives. These novelists also display a lack of any detachment from all totalising modes of historical thought; in fact, their narratives seem to reconfirm, rather than question the prevalent version of events 'authorised' by the Congress. The authors' barely concealed personal dislike of the Muslim community comes up again and again, resulting in a narrow and parochial view of the Muslim characters. Chirantan Kulshrestha highlights an inherent weaknesses of Singh's writing:

His stylistic weakness, I feel, is a symptom of the more acute malady from which his view of life as a novelist suffers. In his exclusive concern with things as they are, the artist in him fails to capture the subtleties and surrounding nuances which light up the facts, and tends to describe and explain, rather than vivify and dramatise, write about rather than create. In the scramble for authenticated realism art lags behind or is lost in transliterated reality; the novelist thus yields ground to the sociologist and the journalist (Kulshrestha, p.131).

Kulshrestha's discerning observation about Singh's style points out what has been my argument in this chapter. Singh's journalistic style does tend to simplify the characterisation and thus the development of the plot follows a predictable and simplistic pattern. He lacks complexity in his characterisation; as a result, the readers' feelings do not really undergo any radical changes about the personalities of the characters. The narrative, it seems, is being forced to fit a particular stance that Singh has taken, which is that he connects a character's actions with his/her religion. This predictable style fails to arouse considerable interest in the story, which could have been much more dramatic had it been allowed to flow, and develop more freely. This particular trait of Singh's writing will be discussed in greater detail in this chapter.

Muslims are lumped under the monolithic banner of being a community which wreaked violence on the non-Muslim communities and who were responsible for the break-up of India. This may explain the absence of any Muslim character in *Train to Pakistan* who can even subtly express his/her aspirations for a Muslim homeland. This event is even more incredible in the fact that it is happening in Punjab, which was in the forefront of the struggle for a separate homeland, and it was as a result of the support of the rural population in the elections of 1946 that the Muslim League had been able to press ahead a demand for a separate homeland for the Muslims.

Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* is probably the best known Indian novel about the country's Partition in 1947. A vast number of critics have hailed it as one of the Classics of modern Indian writing. It is basically a story of the sleepy little village of Mano Majra on the Indian border, near a train station, which has a roughly equal number of Muslims and non-Muslims who have lived in harmony for a long time. However, as Partition approaches, a train comes from Pakistan and it is full of bodies of Hindus and Sikhs. A group of Sikhs set out to do the same to a train heading towards Pakistan, but the protagonist, Juggat Singh, saves the train and is killed in the process. Singh begins his version of the Partition by taking an equally tough stance against what he perceives as the two warring communities:

Muslims said the Hindus had planned and started the Killing. According to the Hindus, the Muslims were to blame. The fact is, both sides killed. Both shot and stabbed and speared and clubbed. Both tortured, both raped (*TP*, p.1).

It should be noted, that curiously, Singh's co-religionists, the Sikhs, considered by some eye-witnesses to be the community most responsible for large scale collective violence are curiously absent from these collective references to the warring communities. Such a beginning fails to live up to his claim of presenting an unbiased portrayal of events. His description seems to shrink away from a realistic approach needed to fully comprehend the complexity of Partition, as he fails to include his own 'community' as one of the most potent forces responsible for the bloodshed.

Authors like Singh and Nahal's apparent partiality not only distorts the events of Partition, they can also be seen to use their 'positions' to misconstrue certain factual events so that their predisposition gains prominence. In Khushwant Singh's case, by refusing to acknowledge and assign equal responsibility to the Sikhs, he seems to have endowed those widely considered to be the villains with the moral ground of the victims.

The Muslim characters are reduced to depraved levels and shown to possess very little human understanding. In a number of cases, they are caricatures who seem to lack the will to solve the crisis, as compared to their non-Muslim counterparts. Such a coloured representation ends up undermining the overall theme of both novels and fails to present a convincing and balanced perspective that both authors claim to have adopted. Such subjective characterisation leads one to believe that the actions of certain characters and the progress of the primary plot has already been decided and hence the authors are developing those predisposed ideas rather than creating an original piece of work. They seem to have chosen the rather simplistic way of portraying rather clumsy stereotypes about Muslims rather than creating situations which are reflective of the complexity, and anguish that all individuals and communities endured during the Partition. Both Singh and Nahal's representation follows a

persistent trend in Indian writing about Partition; the representation of Muslims as those who bear the primary responsibility of the violence that took place. Such an unsophisticated manner of depiction that privileges the Hindus/Sikhs' position of those who were solely responsible for initiating and perpetuating the terrible acts of brutality at that time seems repetitive and biased at best, and thus continues to produce distorted Muslim stereotypes for the readers.

Mano Majra has organised its daily life around the timely arrival and departure of trains:

Before daybreak, the mail train rushes through on its way to Lahore, and as it approaches the bridge, the driver invariably blows two long blasts of the whistle. In an instant, all Mano Majra comes awake... By the time the 10.30 morning passenger train from Delhi comes in, life in Mano Majra has settled down to its dull daily routine... As the midday express goes by, Mano Majra stops to rest... When the evening passenger from Lahore comes in, everyone gets to work again... When the goods train steams in, they say to each other, "There is the goods train." It is like saying goodnight (*TP*, pp.4-5).

The ominous hints of impending disaster are suggested by the unexplained and disturbing disruption of the train schedules, and the arrival of the first of the ghost trains from Pakistan sets the mood of the supposed horrific intentions of the Muslims. Finally the train does come during the day time, and soldiers come to Mano Majra to collect kerosene:

A soft breeze began to blow towards the village. It brought the smell of burning kerosene, then of wood. And then - a faint acrid smell of searing flesh. The village was stilled in a deathly silence. No one asked anyone else what the odour was. They all knew. They had known it all the time. The answer was implicit in the fact that the train had come from Pakistan. That evening, for the first time in the memory of Mano Majra, Imam Baksh's sonorous cry did not rise to the heavens to proclaim the glory of God (*TP*, p.84).

The train, a symbol of modern transportation and mobility on a large scale, and thus a symbol of life, is perverted and becomes the vehicle which carries in death and destruction on a massive scale. This was the colonialists' legacy of industrialisation and one of their supposed gifts to the indigenous population of India. The train from Pakistan arrives without its headlight, an indication of the

loss of light, and of the of life of its passengers: "There are no lights, The engine did not blow its whistle." It becomes the carrier and a manifestation of the genocide committed by the Muslims of Pakistan. This is just a start, according to Khushwant Singh, of the massacres committed by the Muslims, as the river Ravi is filled with mutilated bodies. Yet another trainload of the dead arrives in Mano Majra.

Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* is set in the months of August-September, 1947, and yet, according to his version of events, there was still no resentment by Sikhs towards the Muslims. It is not until the violence is initiated from Pakistan that there is a threat of violence from the Indian side. Even that diabolical plan, according to Singh's version of events, comes to nothing, as the plans of many are foiled by one Sikh. According to Chaman Nahal's version of events, which he situates in June of 1947, the 'ghost' (to use Khushwant Singh's term) trains have already started coming from Amritsar into Pakistan. This is in direct contrast to Khushwant Singh's narration of events in which the first train to arrive is in August-September and it is only after the arrival of another train that the Sikhs decide to take any retaliatory action.

The religious conflict is the basis of much of the violence, yet most of the literary criticism on these two novels seems to have ignored the religious affiliations of the characters. The Sikhs are presented as a community, and we have a cross-section of people, which includes the bandit Juggat Singh, the religious representative, Meet Singh, and the policemen. On the other hand, Muslims are presented in the barest minimum detail, without any allusion to their cohesive role in their village or personal lives. It is surprising that there is no other Muslim man in this novel, apart from Imam Baksh, who is not only literally blind, he is equally oblivious of his daughter's sexual relationship with Juggat Singh. Khushwant Singh, fully cognisant of the implications of such an inter-religious union, forces a 'love' relationship between the Muslim girl and a Sikh man. He is not the only non-Muslim writer, as will be discussed further in this chapter, who delves into this socially and religious taboo. What is conspicuously absent is any hint of romance, even remotely, between a Muslim man and a Sikh/Hindu

woman. The Sikhs use a number of occasions to describe the threat from the Muslims to their women and the lengths they would go to protect their 'honour'. The Muslims, though differing in religion, share the same cultural and social characteristics; however, there is no man shown in these novels who protests or argues against this systematic and voyeuristic 'dishonouring' (in the terms applied to the Hindu/Sikh women) by the non-Muslims.

Both novels present Muslim girls so intent in their relationships with non-Muslims men that they seem willing to be ostracised from their communities. Yet both authors fail to present a comparatively dispassionate view about these 'relationships', not only that, no efforts seems to have been made to reveal any inner conflict that these girls might be going through. Both authors' depiction of Muslim women is very much like any dominant's cultures' representation of those on the fringes, and not much different from what Edward Said has described in *Orientalism* as the West's deliberate creation of the highly sexualised men and women of the East. In this case, the 'other' is a group that lives in the same geographical location, but the distinctions are drawn along religious affiliations. Both Singh and Nahal seem to have attributed similar characteristics to the Muslims, yet in both novels, the sexual violence is perpetuated on Muslim women.

If one examines *Train to Pakistan* closely, there is disturbing evidence of bias, hostility and misogyny in it, and it is directed towards a particular community. There are basically three Muslim characters; two teenage girls and a blind man. Each seems to have been caught in their private struggle without making any effort to help or understand anything happening to them or their community. Nowhere is there a suggestion of a social or personal cohesive family unity within the Muslim community of Mano Majra.

Imam Baksh is the 'leader' of the Muslim community of Mano Majra, but is totally ineffective in exerting any influence over the Muslims. What makes his portrayal by Singh is rather ironic is that he is shown as someone to who is responsible for spiritual and personal guidance of the Muslims, yet he is

presented as a blind man. Controlling the Muslims is one matter; yet he is totally out of touch with the daily activities of his only daughter. Not once does Singh show them to be even talking to each other.

There is another 'Muslim' character, Iqbal, who comes in from the 'outside' into Mano Majra. Singh, it seems attempts to be deliberately vague about Iqbal's religious affiliation, even though his first name would classify him to be a Muslim. Because there aren't any other positive Muslim characters in this novel, it becomes increasingly obvious that Iqbal is also 'Muslim' because he fails to make any constructive contribution towards the well-being of the village or its inhabitants. Thus Singh fails to sustain the 'anonymity' of his character's religion which would be quite difficult to guess, had the author been more even-handed with his other characters. Hence he fails in introducing a comparatively complex character who could have been a representative of the 'outside' influence in bringing ideas of conflict from the urban to the rural populace. Rather than carrying this concrete idea further, Singh falls into the realm of predictability once again and ends up using a character's religious affiliation in determining his behaviour and position to the plot of the novel.

Iqbal is a man with a western education, but is shown to be completely out of touch with the reality of the village. It is at this time that Khushwant Singh's agenda in portraying the Muslims is first revealed, for Mohammed Iqbal also happens to be the name of the national poet of Pakistan, the person who was responsible for starting the ideological struggle for a separate homeland for the Muslims. In the novel, Iqbal is shown to be totally confused in his ideology, unable to comprehend the religious mix and the social hierarchy that exists in Mano Majra. But once the local moneylender is murdered, he is arrested because he is presumed to be a Muslim and thus linked with the Muslim League. A combination of factors, according to the Police and Hukum Chand, appear to warrant his arrest as an agitator, even though he comes into town after the murder had already taken place.

It is not until Khushwant Singh presents us with his female Muslim characters that one fully comprehends his derision towards Muslims as well as women. The first girl that Singh describes is Nooran, Imam Baksh's daughter:

Juggat shut her mouth with his. He bore upon her with his enormous weight. Before she could free her arms he ripped open the cord of her trousers once again. "Let me go. Let me go..." She could not struggle against Juggat Singh's brute force. *She did not particularly want to.* Her world was narrowed to the rhythmic sound of breathing and the warm smell of dusky skins raised to fever heat. His lips slubbered over her eyes and cheeks... She felt the dead weight of the lifeless man; the sand gritting in her hair... The girl began to cry. "Something is happening in the village. My father will wake up and know I have gone out. He will kill me." Juggat Singh was not listening to her. He did not know what to do. She was saying so: "I will never come to see you again. If Allah forgives me this time, I will never do it again."

"Will you shut up or do I have to smack your face?" The girl began to sob. She found it hard to believe this was the same man who had been *making love* to her a moment ago (*TP*, pp.14-15. Italics mine).

Nooran is sidelined once again, after she has proven herself to be a receptacle for what she tells him is his desire in "[A]lways wanting to sow your seed." As Juggat is the protagonist of the novel, he is the one who elicits the author's sympathies as well as those of the readers. As his relationship with Nooran is portrayed and then ended in an unproblematic manner, it is up to the reader to judge the violence which takes place. If a reader was to shrink away from understanding the implied undertones of this relationship during the time of Partition, between a Sikh man and a young Muslim girl, then he/she misses the connotations assumed in it. One should keep in mind the incident described earlier at Thoa Khalsa, where there was a threat towards the Sikh women by Muslim men and how Sikhs had acted on such an occasion. On this occasion, I believe that if the reader fails to notice the implicit aggression of this 'relationship' then he/she also becomes a violator whose gaze perpetuates the violence of a crime that reduces woman (in this case, Nooran) to the state of an object. As Wolfgang Iser states, in novels where an author intends to push forth his version of events involving violence against women, as in *Train to Pakistan*:

The degradation of the experience is heightened by the naked woman's forced participation in her own objectification... The reader's presence as not only an observer but a participant in the novel's violence is obscured by a literary screen that assures the reader of his or her distance from the act of violence even as it affords an entry into that violence. (Iser, p.19).

The narrative tone in *Train to Pakistan* pressurises the reader not only to perceive the rape from the perspective of the violator but to assume the position of that violator, to anticipate, to plan, and to execute - in the arena of imagination - the crime of rape. The novel continues to assert the purely literary nature of violence enacted in the reader's mind.

The second 'relationship' between a non-Muslim man and a Muslim girl takes place between the Magistrate Hukum Chand who is in his late forties and a sixteen year old 'courtesan' named Haseena. Even a morally hypocritical character like Hukum Chand is given the opportunity to differentiate between the way in which women are treated in Hindu and Muslim societies:

"Harey Ram, Harey Ram," rejoined Hukum Chand with a deep sigh. "I know it all. Our Hindu women are like that: so pure that they would rather commit suicide than let a stranger touch them. We Hindus never raise our hands to strike women, but these Muslims have no respect for the weaker sex. But what are we to do about it? How long will it be before it starts here?" (TP, p.21).

Even though the narrative does not tell us about any sexual act between these two characters, it is something that is understood to have happened. With each tauntingly inadequate representation of the violence, each symbolic allusion to the crime, each purely imaginary conjecture of the sexual perversion of violence of Hukum Chand, the act itself becomes more visibly absent; the sexual violation becomes a gaping hole in the text that Khushwant Singh opens for his readers to fill. In *The Act of Reading*, Wolfgang Iser describes such narrative gaps as "structured blanks." "Communication in literature," Iser states:

[I]s a process set in motion and regulated, not by a given code, but by a mutually restrictive and magnifying interaction between the explicit and the implicit, between revelation and concealment... . Hence, the structured blanks of the text stimulate the process of identification to be performed by the reader on terms set by the text (Iser, pp.168-69).

Such blanks function as invitations to the reader to participate not only in the viewing but in the making of the novelistic universe; the gap in the narrative "turns into a propellant for the reader's imagination, making him supply what has been withheld" (Iser, p.194).

In the violence carried out by Hukum Chand and Juggat on the two Muslim minors, the erotic objects of their perverted desires are not only transformed into objects of violence but are made to testify to the suitability of the abject position they are assigned. Haseena's character not only exposes the connection between violation and objectification of the Muslim women in Khushwant Singh's narrative, but also the ease with which it is presented to the reader in order to persuade him/her to accept both.

Some of the critical commentary on *Train to Pakistan* follows the somewhat similarly simplistic attitude as that expressed by Singh. There seems to be lack of any serious effort to question the portrayal of events by Singh and thus we may read S.C. Harrex's verdict on his writing, and wonder at what can only be considered to be an oversight in the analysis of the writer and the novel, according to this careful analysis:

[Singh is a] writer who has been deeply affected by catastrophe and that he had relied largely upon the direct, forthright and energetic methods of realism to convey his reactions to experience.

In *Train to Pakistan*, 'conciseness' is confined to what is dramatically necessary (an inevitable concession to realism since most of the characters are simple peasants)... Juggat Singh's vigorous and brutal conquest of Nooran at the beginning of *Train to Pakistan* is the prelude to the growth in him of a vital and responsible love...Climax of the novel that it is through love, not intellectualised ideology, that salvation is possible. (Harrex, pp.163-5)

Harrex expresses his opinions about Khushwant Singh and his novel without any trace of irony. He, for some unexplained reason fails to take into account the political and religious connotation of events being described, as a result, the analysis falls short of comprehensive explication that was needed.

There are no hints at all of any other inter-religious romance, most certainly not between Hindu/Sikh women and Muslim men. While the latter are 'protected' and thus kept away from contact with any Muslim men, in accordance with the Punjabi honour code, the Muslim women, apparently, have no qualms about their social and religious obligations. The Muslim men seem to collaborate in this convenient arrangement of providing their teenage daughters for the pleasure of Hindus and Sikhs. Khushwant Singh persists in representing Muslims as shallow, naïve and dishonourable characters. As will be discussed further in this chapter, he is not alone in characterising Muslims in such a lowly manner.

In *Azadi*, Chaman Nahal presents his Muslim characters' demand for Pakistan as an ideology that he opposes, which is understandable for the author does not necessarily have to be in agreement with all his characters. However, in this case, Muslim characters' demand for a separate homeland is somehow equated with their loss of morality. There seems to be only one way for a Muslim character to have a certain decency, which is tied to his clear and unequivocal renouncing of any desire for a separate homeland and condemnation of the Muslim League. A Muslim character is given more favourable representation because he is deeply impressed by a completely fictional visit of Gandhi to Sialkot. It is interesting to note that Nahal weaves such an event into his narrative, and yet fails to mention the most famous son of Sialkot, Mohammed Iqbal. He was considered to be a national poet of India before falling into disrepute because he suggested the ideological foundations of a distinct Muslim nation.

Although Mohan Jha in his essay on Nahal, considers *Azadi* to be a 'masterpiece' and an 'epic' on Partition, he fails to point out the stylistic or thematic qualities in this novel which makes it stand out for him. There is no effort to produce or point out any particular characteristics required in a work of fiction that he has judged to be a 'classic'. Instead, he tells us that, "[I]n fact, there are only two characters in the novel, Lala Kanshi Ram and Arun, who deserve, even

command, a close and detailed consideration” (Jha, p.38). Jha’s rather simplistic analysis fails to unearth any signs of Nahal’s bias towards his Muslim characters.

Azadi is a story of a Hindu grain merchant, Lala Kanshi Ram and his family, along with a small community of Hindus and Sikhs in Sialkot in the Western Punjab during the June-September of 1947. Mountbatten announces that India would be given freedom as well as partitioned and a new dominion, Pakistan, would also be created. As the date for the partition approaches, tensions, which had been few and far between, take on a frightening turn for the worse. At the end, Kanshi Ram has no option but to migrate to India, but before that he is put in a refugee camp, where he hears the terrible news that his daughter and her husband have been killed in a train. The refugees have been formed into a large convoy which is escorted by the Indian army across the geographical boundary into India. Before the caravan crosses over to India, it is attacked by Muslims near Narowal and a number of people are killed and some women are abducted. Upon their arrival in Delhi, Kanshi Ram is horrified and disheartened by the treatment meted out to the refugees by the Indian officials. It is there that he observes the large scale looting and massacres of Muslims fleeing to Pakistan. At the end, he is shown to be involved in attempting to rebuild his work and life once again.

The Muslim characters are set apart from the Hindu protagonists in the very beginning of the novel. The first reference to a 'Muslim' is an indication of what one should expect from Nahal; he describes an incident between the English Superintendent and Kanshi Ram where the latter is hesitating in bribing the former, because the police officer “... would not take the goods gratis. Ultimately the Superintendent left a reasonable amount of money on the counter, which the Muslim City Inspector, who always accompanied the Superintendent on his rounds of the city, quickly pocketed” (*Azadi*, p.24). It is curious that the reader is not told anything about the religious affiliations of either Kanshi Ram or for that matter of the English Superintendent, but the City Inspector is only identified with his religion even before his name is mentioned.

Even Mohammed Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan is not spared Nahal's hostility as he uses Kanshi Ram as his mouthpiece to say that: "Who took Jinnah seriously before September 1944? It was doubtful if he took himself seriously, either. Ever since then he had been sharpening his teeth and becoming more and more menacing" (*Azadi*, p.40). And thus Nahal has Jinnah described with a blood-thirsty animal imagery; in the same instance he refers to Gandhi with a 'Ji' (a reverential and formally respectful tone of reference). When Jinnah makes a speech about the creation of Pakistan, "Suraj Prakash switched the radio on again and in the sudden crackle of noises, the room went silent. Jinnah was finishing his speech and what they heard, loud and crisp, were his last words: 'Pakistan, Zindabad! Long Live Pakistan!' Suraj at once turned the radio off. But they had heard the cry of Jinnah and there was no mercy in it, only pride" (*Azadi*, p.66). This is at the heels of Nehru's description as the 'brilliant leader' (*Azadi*, p.64). Nahal seems to have made up his mind that it would be not be worth his while to create any Muslim character, from the Muslim League leadership to the average person in the street, who could have any drop of decency or a realistic desire to distance themselves from the violence which was to overtake a large area of Northern India. All these qualities were to be confined to the characters whose only 'quality' was that they were non-Muslim. This theme of apparent vilification starts from the very beginning, and gathers momentum as the novel progresses, and the characteristics of the Muslims become more and more grotesque, until at the end, they seem be devoid of any humanity at all.

From the very beginning, even before the decision for the separation has been announced, the Hindus and the Sikhs begin to spread the paranoia about the alleged brutalities which they 'know' will be carried out against them by the Muslims. Nahal, it seems actually encourages this particular trend of thinking by his non-Muslim characters because they seem to reflect his own bias. These fears are of people who had been living as a minority in the midst of Muslims, and where they had been economically better off than the majority. Nahal's objectivity reflected by his characters' failure to discuss or even contemplate the brutalities being suffered by Muslims coming over from East Punjab, one only hears about the very real and menacing change in the attitude of the Muslims of Sialkot

towards the non-Muslims. It is not mentioned that the districts of Sialkot were the areas where most of the uprooted Muslims of East Punjab landed. Almost all the refugees had experienced or seen the violence carried out by armed Sikh jathas and members of other Hindu militias. Nahal's characters seem to be blissfully unaware of the suffering and the anger of Muslim refugees. Instead of contextualising the anger towards the Hindu and Sikh characters, he presents the eventual actions of Muslims' as a premise in the threat that they pose. The sentiments of foreboding are apparent in the daily conversations of the Hindu and Sikh characters, as can be seen from the dialogue between Kanshi Ram and his wife, Prabha Rani:

'If Pakistan is created, we'll have to leave. That is , if the Muslims spare our lives!'

'There will be much killing, you think?'

'Don't you know the Muslims? There has been much killing going on for the past many months. Imagine what will happen once they're in power!'

[The conversation between Prabha Rani and her neighbour Sikh, Isher Kaur:]

"... do you think the Muslims will get their Pakistan?'

Isher Kaur's voice: 'Difficult to say, chachiji (Aunty). I hope they don't -- these *badmash!*' (Crooks, bastards).

'Your chacha thinks there will be much killing.' (*Azadi*, pp.40-43).

The reference to Muslims is in totality and there are hardly any obvious attempts, either by the author or the characters to differentiate between those who will carry out these atrocities in the future, or those who will be suffering if not the same or an even more gruesome fate than these people.

Almost every action of the Muslim characters is construed as an apparent threat of violence against the non-Muslims. The public celebrations with fireworks and processions is, according to the characters in the novel, an invitation to their alleged victimisation, and it is an act against which the Hindus have made preparations for more than an year before there is even a valid threat of it:

Muslims in the city were celebrating. From all over the city huge fire-crackers shot up into the sky and exploded into billions and trillions of little lights of red and green... The first indication of a procession was rumbling noise in the distance. It was the sound of drums. Everyone on the roofs raised his head in alarm... There were two flights of stairs to the street, and on the way they bumped into Mukanda's mother. She was slowly climbing to the roof. 'Arun, I was coming to ask you -- what do you *think* they are going to my Mukanda?'. And quickly they held an on-the-spot council of war... It was only during the last year they had formed a youth club to face the Muslims. The gates had been set up only three or four months back... And most young men of the street at his (Hare Krishna's) advice had joined the training in self-defence a few Hindu organisations were giving in the town. By now the youngsters in the street were trained in the use of the stick and other guerrilla activities and each house had its store of acid-filled bottles, bricks and heavy sticks. (*Azadi*, pp.69-71).

Because the procession of Muslims had dared to enter the Hindu and Sikh dominated section of the city, their most immediate and pressing menace is reflected by the concern of one of the women, who is not concerned about the loss of her property or her life but of something which is most threatened by the Muslims: "Padmani came up to Lala Kanshi Ram and said, 'Lalaji they might dishonour us!'" (*Azadi*, p.74). The trepidation of women has attained such a level, very probably, as a result of the influence of their men, that they actually take on the burden of their paranoid obsession with their sexuality.

As the date of Partition moves ever closer, the intensity of the alleged Muslim killings and pillaging of the non-Muslim community in Sialkot gains momentum. Nahal narrates these events, without even once questioning their authenticity and thus the magnitude of guilt he seems to be piling on the whole Muslim community emerges. His is the only voice which describes and passes judgement on the events and people in his novel. He seems to have made up his mind as to which community would bear the brunt of his antagonism; the Muslims. It is hardly surprising that he should gloss over what he considers to be single incidents of brutality. He seems to be waiting for an opportunity to show the massive scale of violence to convince his readers, and more than that, to convince himself, that Muslims are inherently evil and villainous. As he states:

On the twenty-third of June, the Legislative Assembly of the Punjab formally decided in Lahore to opt for the partition of the province... But for the common Muslims that vote had a sentimental appeal; for them it was a step further in their goal of Pakistan. And in their excitement, the Muslims of Sialkot broke loose the following day and killed a number of Hindus. And then it became almost a daily ritual. There were four or five cases of stabbing each day and at least four or five fires. It was not mass killing or organised killing -- not yet (*Azadi*, p.125).

Nahal's narrative seems to implicate almost every segment of the Muslim population in the attacks on Hindus. He refers to the different sectors of the civil administration of Sialkot, initially through a token Muslim and then generalises that person's character to the whole community. The first character to suffer the effects of Nahal's apparent bias is the City Inspector Inayat Khan who is first accused of being corrupt and is then portrayed as someone who incites the Muslims against the Hindus. The next reference to a nameless Muslim policeman is when he kills the peacemaker of Sialkot, who happens to be a Hindu Deputy Commissioner. Yet this is not the height of the Muslims' treachery, for he is now "(A)bsconding. That's the story. He will turn up soon enough, and I think the Pakistani government will bestow a medal on him" (*Azadi*. p.139). Nahal's narrative now encompasses the whole of the Pakistani government, which he accuses of a relentless drive to exterminate all the non-Muslims. The next segment of Muslims are the businessmen who stand to gain the monetary riches of the Hindus. Abdul Ghani is the sole representative of this group, as he tries to force Kanshi Ram to go into a 'partnership' with him. When the latter refuses, the former extracts a terrible revenge. When Arun ventures into the camp where the dead are being cremated, to find the body of his sister and her husband who had been killed in one of the train massacres, a voice from his past confronts him:

'Imagine! If it isn't Arun.' Arun identified the voice before he saw the man. It was Abdul Ghani. Abdul Ghani smartly saluted the police officer and said: 'I'm one of the Khaksar volunteers, sir, helping to keep our city clean by cremating the kafir(infidels) dead.' And cynically, showing his teeth which lit up eerily in the light of the fire, he said to Arun: 'who told you your sister was killed, my boy? But don't worry. I put her and her husband into the fire with my own hands, and they're now on their way to dozakh, to hell -- where I hope they rot for ever!' He made no effort to disguise his venom (*Azadi*, pp.185-6).

If this was a single instance of a person's evil and cruel nature, it would have made an impact. As a result of Nahal's persistent portrayal of every conceivably hellish crime that a person could commit attributed to Muslims, his characterisation seems hollow and forced.

The third group to suffer from less than objective portrayal is the Pakistan Army, which is manifested through the characterisation of Captain Rahmat-Ullah Khan. He is characterised as the personification of all the sexual threats to all non-Muslim women that Arun and Kanshi Ram imagined. He is a one time class-fellow of Arun, but is now the Commander of the Refugee Camp. Rahmat-Ullah Khan invites Arun to his office and expresses his fondness for one of latter's neighbours and tells him that:

Look, I might as well be frank with you. I like this woman... Riding the crest of his laughter, he added: 'Couldn't you arrange for me to meet her? --

I wish I could perish before her doorstep

But she would kill me not, nor sheath her dagger.

As he recited from Ghalib and as he sighed, Arun saw the veins on his neck throbbing hard (*Azadi*, pp.225-6).

Even though the Camp Commandant could do whatever he liked, nothing happens in regards to his lecherous intentions towards Sunanda. Instead of resting this case, Nahal seems to have had second thoughts and he introduces Rahmat-Ullah Khan again. This time it is during the night raid by the Muslims on the caravan which consists of several thousands of refugees as they track toward their destination. Amazingly Rahmat-Ullah is able to pick up Sunanda among this chaos and takes her into a deserted house and more amazingly, Arun reaches that same house as he is running away from the point of attack. He recognises the man as Captain Rahmat-Ullah Khan:

Quietly, step by step, he walked into the other room and picked up a sharp wooden spike from among the farm implements... He had seen the mass of black hair and he taken a careful aim. Lying atop her, the man was still holding her in his arms. With the blow his arms slackened and he rolled off to he side. His body twitched but he did not move after that. Arun hit him repeatedly on the head, as though he had gone mad... he was looking at the collapsed heap of the man and he was hitting him

repeatedly on his head. He swung the spike high above and brought it down with his full force. Again he swung it high and brought it down. And again. He continued hitting... Arun bending low to look at captain Rahmat-Ullah Khan's body and kicking it as he left (*Azadi*, pp. 307-11).

Rahmat-Ullah Khan not only bears the brunt of anger for raping a Hindu woman, his punishment carries much more than Arun's ire, there seems to be certain deliberateness in the manner in which he is beaten to death. Such an over-emphasis on this particular incident could reflect Nahal's resentment towards this character or his religion as well.

The reader is invited to identify with the Hindu/Sikh characters who are the protagonists in both the novels. It is their unreflecting and un-problematic view that is taken to be the whole truth. For it is only through essentialised accounts and characterisation by both authors that we are told about the events of Partition. Such simplistic representation does little to substantiate their and some critics' opinions that both authors represent an unbiased version of the events of Partition. When such claims of unchecked praise continue to be heaped upon any literary work, as has obviously happened in the case of these two novels, it becomes increasingly more difficult to challenge their representation of an historical event. Certain themes and characterisations become so sacrosanct and the work becomes an essential part of the Canon that anyone criticising it faces a certain degree of hostility because of the level of reverence accorded to it for such a long period. It is narratives such as these two that Benita Parry argues against. She believes that such a conceptual structure is "calculated to drain the writings of historical specificity." She states that such parochial perspective "naturalises the principles of the master culture as universal forms of thought and projects its authorised representations as truth" (Parry. p.50). For the two Indian authors being discussed, the existing social and hierarchical order needs to be maintained because it upholds the minority's control over the majority. No effort, it seems, is to be allowed to question this stranglehold, and one is expected to view it as the 'natural' order of how society is expected to function, just because that is how it had existed. In both cases, Singh and Nahal seem to go to great lengths to justify their equation of economic superiority with morality of their Hindu and Sikh

characters. As the political landscape of Punjab changes, the existing 'natural' order is challenged and Muslim characters begin to not only to assert the confidence that comes with acquiring a country of their own, some begin to threaten the non-Muslims.

The authors project their fear of the Muslim men and their supposed sexual threat to Hindu/Sikh women onto their Muslim female characters. A clearly defined binary opposition is used to create a divide between the 'pure' and 'chaste' Hindu/Sikh women and the 'prostitutes' and 'loose' Muslim women, who in turn are subjugated in forcibly construed events in alliances with Hindu/Sikh men. The Muslim women are thus portrayed as submissive or legitimate targets of the sexual aggression of Hindu/Sikh men. These women characters are presented as devoid of any personal, religious or cultural respect as they are targeted by the non-Muslim characters. A similar situation can be observed in Simona Sharoni's analysis of the predicament of Arab women in the conflict between Palestinians and the Israelis. In this case as well, women's bodies are physically and psychologically molested in order to show Israel's domination over every aspect of the Palestinian life. The Muslim women described in the novels under discussion take on the form, similar to that of Palestinian women, of nothing more than a 'territory' which men invade. They use women's bodies as open 'spaces' that they thus 'occupy' (Sharoni, p.58). Jugga's 'relationship', as has been discussed earlier, is a clear example of how Singh attempts to present this brutal act as something that Nooran had actually wanted, which was to be impregnated by a Non-Muslim during this tumultuous time. Given their concern to protect the 'purity' of Hindu and Sikh women, one fails to come up with any reasonable explanation as to why both the authors felt such a need to present Muslim women wanting sexual relations with Non-Muslim men.

An almost wilful misrepresentation of the existing records is thinly disguised and passed off under the semblance of a 'balanced' fictional account. It seems that both authors construct a rather biased grand narrative as the official story of the Partition. The stories contain numerous accounts of the barbarity of Muslims from Pakistan as a collective damning of the Muslims, whereas their own

communities are exonerated from any wrongdoing. One feels that such unproblematic accounts of this nature distance their own communities from their significant role in the massacres of the Partition.

Chapter 4

Anguished Bodies: Women, Violence and the Formation of the Nation in Qudrat-Ullah Shahhab's *Ya Khuda* and Rajinder Singh Bedi's *Lajwanti*

This chapter will explicate stories which delve into the issues of sexual and physical violence against women during Partition. In both cases, victims' torture and agony does not end once their ordeal is over at the hands of their tormentors. Their lives do not really become less traumatic just because they manage to return to their 'own' people. The emotional and psychological scars of these violent experiences have not been acknowledged beyond their representation of the brutality of the 'other' community. Trauma of the immediate victims, the women, is rarely allowed to be discussed by the wider community and they are expected to stay silent and to allow the patriarchy to articulate their pain and stories. Such a hijacking of deeply personal suffering, and an enforced silence of women continues to traumatise their lives and the resultant narratives offer a reflection of the male authors' biases rather than a deeper understanding of the pain that the women had endured.

The two stories to be discussed in this chapter will examine the brutalisation of whole communities, represented through individual characters from both sides of the divided border. Qudarat-ullah Shahhab's *Ya Khuda* is an emotive account, both passionate and compelling of the time and life of Dilshad, initially as a victim abducted by Sikhs and then as one who resorts to prostitution in Pakistan. On the other hand, Rajinder Singh Bedi's *Lajwanti* is a slow, deliberate and well thought-out study of the effects of abduction and sexual assault, not only on the victim (Lajwanti) but on her husband (Sunder Lal) as well. The novella reveals the repercussions of these experiences on the collective psyche of the community. These two stories effectively demonstrate the precarious position that women occupy during the communal conflict and their victimisation not only by men from the opposing ideology but also by those whose 'honour' they are supposed to safe-guard and 'protect'. These women who, in many cases had become emblems of nationalist and communalist

struggles, after the political aims were achieved, found themselves in worse situations than before the uprising. As certain political and social aspirations are achieved and women demand for the concessions which had been promised, patriarchy usually steps in to push through its own agendas. The violence and brutality suffered by women is rarely articulated as a tragedy in itself, instead, their predicament is used in the metanarrative to describe the viciousness of the 'other'. The aim of this chapter is to examine the lives of two women, and to focus on their plight without resorting to simplistic generalisations. As a result, individual stories discussed in this chapter will attempt to humanise what Sumit Sarkar articulates as the cost of break-up of colonial India into two postcolonial nations; 'a "peaceful" transfer of power was purchased at the cost of Partition and a communal holocaust' (Sarkar, p.446). What might have troubled the British officials with political and logistical irritation, was an event which had devastating physical, economic and emotional trauma for the citizenry of India. Sarkar points out the vastly dissimilar perspectives that different groups have of the events which occurred during Partition. While the Imperialist historiography focuses on the lengthy and contentious negotiations, the 'common' people's recollections are rarely about anything else but the suffering they witnessed and in most cases, experienced.

In both the novels under discussion, deliberate and extensive use of religion is made to highlight the emotional psychological plight of the main characters. The anger and intensity of the authors' feelings also seeps through as a distinction is drawn between different religions and characters' affiliations to a particular religious ideology. Most of the religious references are made during or after an act of brutality. It is essential that one examines the connection between religion and violence as well as the authors' attempts to link events in the lives of their characters to respective religious beliefs. The themes of both novels address two different notions of 'time' which are around Partition and its aftermath.

Emile Durkheim has described the dichotomy of 'sacred' and 'profane' times in religion and articulated that such periods have always been evoked in human history for different ends. According to him:

In all the history of human thought there exists no other example of categories of things so profoundly differentiated or so radically opposed ... The sacred and the profane have always and everywhere been conceived by the human mind as two distinct classes, as two worlds between which there is nothing in common... In different religions this opposition has been conceived in different ways. (Durkheim, p.38, Juergensmeyer, pp.72-3)

These opposing ideologies set out above form the bedrock of conflict with and violence against the 'other'. Everything and everyone belonging to one's religion is presented with the dire scenarios of not only their physical but also spiritual destruction by the enemy. Commenting on Durkheim's definition, Mark Juergensmeyer crystallises the theory of beliefs of each warring community:

The conflict between the two is what religion is about: religious language contains images both of grave disorder and tranquil order, and often holds out the hope that despite appearances to the contrary, order eventually will triumph, and disorder will be contained... There is nothing in this definition that requires religion to be violent, but it does lead one to expect religious language to make sense of violence and to incorporate it in some way into the world view it expresses. Violence, after all, shocks one's sense of order and has the potential for causing the ultimate disorder in any person's life: physical destruction and death. Since religious language is about the tension between order and disorder, it is frequently about violence (Juergensmeyer, p.73).

Ideologies similar to the ones articulated by Juergensmeyer were used during Partition and will be highlighted in the novels under discussion. However, one needs to develop these theoretical frameworks further to fully comprehend the emotions and events of this 'time'. The sacred and profane moments are no longer confined to situations of conflict with the enemy, they are somehow internalised within characters in each community. When Lajwanti returns to her husband, her 'body,' in her husband's eyes, becomes a virtual manifestation of the 'profane' period when she was with her kidnappers. It is precisely to disguise the intense shame he suffers as the husband of a 'dis-honoured' woman that he elevates her to the 'sacred' status of Devi (a goddess). He thus denies her the physicality that he had imposed on her body during her stay in Pakistan. It is

ironic that Lajwanti and Sunder Lal's notions about these particular 'times' are totally different once she is free.

Similarly, in Shahhab's *Ya Khuda*, the most profane moments in Dilshad's life confront her when she is in Pakistan, what is supposed to be her homeland. Shahhab, it seems, turns Durkheim's theory on its head when he invokes a moment from Islamic history, that of the 'Ansars' and 'Muhajirs'. The former were the residents of Medina who had taken in the latter (who had been forced to flee Mecca because of their persecution). Upon her arrival in Lahore, Dilshad might have expected a fate similar to the 'Muhajirs' for her condition was not very different from theirs. Even though Shahhab uses the same religious terminology of a 'sacred' moment, it is actually to describe the profane circumstances that Dilshad has landed in.

Ayesha Jalal describes the fluidity of the situation as she comments that "[T]he sacred rapidly turned profane in the process of advancing the battle for sovereignty in different *tehsils* and districts" (Jalal, 2189). She cites a few incidents from the writing of Sikander Hiyat Khan, which help to provide examples of real events as compared to the 'fictional' situations described in the two novels. These examples illustrate women's vulnerability as they become prime 'targets' of 'other' communities' men. The ferocity of violence was to test every form of social and familial ties which existed between individuals:

Sardar Shaukat Hayat Khan has recalled his shock and horror at the painful discovery that Muslim men in Amritsar had abandoned their women and children for the safety of Lahore. Callousness was matched by cowardice in one village where Muslim men hid in the sugarcane fields while a band of Sikhs carried away young girls and set fire to a house where they had pushed all the old women and children. In one instance, a terrified young woman left her child on the road side when told by the driver of a bus full of Muslims that there was space for only one person (Jalal, p.2189; Khan, pp.184-86).

This observation indicates, firstly, the horror of that time and secondly, the incomprehensibility of those in the upper echelons of society who have never really been unfortunate enough to be put in the same desperate situations as the people he seems to be able to talk about. Even though Shaukat Hayat

might have escaped the predicament that the villagers might have been in, and the choices they had to make, his description none-the-less offers a brief glimpse of how the social, cultural and familial values and expectations had fractured under this enormous pressure of the violence of Partition. Men, who in 'normal' circumstances would have been the protectors and the guarantors of the old, young and the female members of the household, seem to have been so terrified of the carnage going on around them that they turn back to the primeval instinct of self-survival. Hayat continues to judge the actions, especially what he considers to be the 'cowardice' of villagers through his 'normal' modes of behaviour and fails to understand the limited choices they were faced with. His rather simplistic attitude somehow implies that he would have desisted from any of the actions taken by the villagers, which can be construed to suggest that because he occupies a higher social and economic position in society, his love for his family might have been more than that of the individuals in question.

The two new countries raised new categories and certain expectations that had to be taken into account by those belonging to each geographical entity. Anwar Pasha highlights the cultural and historical struggle that the writers of Pakistan and India have had to undergo before they could begin to express their 'new' identity. There was, according to him:

A much more intense struggle for the Pakistani writers to trace and establish their cultural roots. After the Partition, a large segment of the Pakistani society felt let down, the events of the Partition, and any lack of direction resulted in a sense of alienation. These people had been cut from their roots and were now involved in searching for an identity for themselves. They had lost their 'Past' but their roots were still imbedded in their past. Therefore, there was an intense effort on their part to re-discover these roots (Pasha, p.21).

Because of the shared experience of their 'previous' lives, many of the Pakistani writers still longed for the Past and felt that to be a Pakistani, they somehow had to disavow their lives and memories of United India. Such a 'forgetting' would have been easier to achieve had Pakistan provided them with the surroundings of a homeland they had yearned for. This was not the case, and as a result, one is able to observe a decisive trait of difference in how

writers view their past. For some, like Abdullah Hussain, Saadat Hassan Manto and Intezzar Hussain, life before Partition was somehow more vibrant, more stimulating and therefore it was sorely missed. On the other hand, for writers like Nassem Hijazi, the creation of Pakistan was essential if the Muslims of South Asia were ever to have a place where they could live their lives according to the teachings of their religion.

Both Shahhab and Singh have thematically focused on the subaltern 'fragments', which are histories most commonly omitted from the 'historian's histories' which focus on the written and preserved accounts of the ruling classes. These fragments supplement or, at times, are at odds with the State's linear and totalising metanarrative. Gyanendra Pandey, in discussing different narratives of Partition points out that:

There are fragments of a similar kind found in unofficial records, too. Such for instance, in the evidence of two Muslim women being transported to Pakistan is the course of the abducted persons' recovery programme after Partition, who told an Indian social worker when they were 'recaptured' after running away from the transit camp *en route*, that all they had wanted was 'to see, for one last time the respective [Hindu or Sikh, "Indian"] fathers of the children they were carrying [in their wombs] before being taken away forever' (Pandey, p.225; Das 1995, p.79).

Both of the female protagonists' stories follow somewhat similar turn of events, sharing the pain of captivity, physical and sexual violence by 'others'. Even though the eventual outcome is quite different, they never-the-less are characters whose stories would not have found a prominent mention in the State's version of events, as in both cases, they end on notes which the State would feel undermines its version.

Women's narratives are flagrantly absent from the State's history unless they can be brought up for purely propaganda purposes of the State to villainise the 'other' community and to provide a common front against the perceived or real threat to its women's sexuality. The emphasis is never on women, rather it is an obsessive focus on denying their accessibility to the polluting lust of the

outsiders. On the other hand, if one were to pay attention to 'women's' stories rather than to stories of their sexuality, a much more complex and realistic picture of their torment emerges. As Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin write about this aspect of their research with women:

In their recall, the predominant memory is of confusion, dislocation and a severing of roots as they were forced to reckon with the twin aspect of freedom – disintegration and bewildering loss: of place and property, no doubt, but more significantly, of community, of a network of more or less stable relationships, of community, and of a coherent identity. Overriding all these was a violence that was horrifying in its intensity, and one which knew no boundaries; for many women, it was not only 'miscreants', 'outsiders', or 'marauding mobs' that they needed to fear – husbands, fathers, brothers and even sons, could turn killers (Menon, p.3).

Qudarat-ullah Shahhab's *Ya Khuda* is a novella which he wrote after he had been waiting for his cousin on the Pakistani side of the border. The waiting had grown agonisingly long:

Naimat-Ullah was not just my cousin, he was my best friend. Both of us had played and grown up together, had done so much mischief while at school in Chamkor. He was currently teaching English in one of the villages schools and had been separated from the rest of the group, with his sharp featured beautiful wife. I had no idea whether he was alive or dead, or he was stuck in some Camp. Hope is a peculiar emotion, it does not break even when it has broken. At last he came one day, but I was unable to recognise him. Looking intently at the people who arrived, I had passed him by more than a couple of times. At the end, he called out my name.

This Naimat-Ullah was someone else. Instead of his smiling young face and carefree manner, this was a very old man, a bundle of bones, blood splattered dress, face covered with dust. When I asked him about my sister-in-law, he started crying and pointed to the woman sitting by his side. Her face was covered with hideous scars. It was as if her skin had been mutilated with hot iron rods. That is what had actually happened. This courageous and honourable woman had done that so that she could escape the lust of 'hunters' who roamed the Camp. If she had not done that her body would certainly have been scarred.

Naimat-Ullah's condition had reached this stage because some people had put acid in the drinking well. Many of those who had drunk that water had died immediately. His intestines and veins had been cut with that drink. On that same day – a few hours after reaching his destination, Naimat-Ullah died. His wife, Afifa, died on the third day. I, who had been waiting for them for so many days, returned, empty handed to Karachi (Shahhab, p.8-9).

According to Shahhab, *Ya Khuda* was an extemporised story, of the events he had witnessed and the characters in it are based on real people. He tells us that he does not want to mention their names, but does mention that one of those characters who frequented such camps to pick up women, ended up becoming a government minister.

The story is based on his village Chamkor, on the life of Dilshad, the daughter of Mulla Ali Baksh, the village's *Imam* (the caretaker of the mosque, and the person who led the prayers). He has already been killed and his body thrown into the mosque's well, where the Sikhs of the village now throw their refuse. Dilshad is kept in the mosque which has now been converted into a communal space for the non-Muslim men of the village. In 'sacred' times, this was an exclusive place of religious gathering for the Muslim men, and now it holds one Muslim girl and Sikh men who repeatedly and indiscriminately rape her.

As a result of emotional attachment to the subject as well as the timing of *Ya Khuda*, the tone used in it is one of extreme cynicism and bitterness as well as being brutally direct. People who happen to be in positions of power and abuse it do not escape Shahab's vitriolic criticism of their lack of morality. Men from a variety of social and economic backgrounds are shown to congregate around newly arrived women, most of whom are still trying to come to terms with the trauma they had suffered at the hands of men on the other side of the border.

Dilshad's terrifying story can also be read as an allegorical work which deals with the bitter disillusionment of the painful realisation of Pakistan, and how it was a complete opposite of the ideological State that it was expected to be. One of the telling examples of the unassailable gap between ordinary people and the bureaucracy is an incident of a mother who removes all her clothes to wrap them around her child because of the bitterly cold night; in the

morning, her corpse is frozen stiff. All the while, the person in charge of the distribution of clothing refuses to leave his heated room because it is past his duty hour, and instead, hums a line of poetry from Iqbal:

Rahmatain hai teri aghyaar kay kashon par
Barq gherti hai to becharay Musulmanon par
(God's benefits are directed towards the non-Believers
Whereas Muslims are only chosen to face His displeasure)

Through a stroke of bitter irony, as Anwaar Ahmed points out, "Shahhab is able to point out that we as a nation seem to have failed in amalgamating Iqbal's message into our lives, yet it freely served the purposes of those who used it to raise empty and hypocritical slogans" (Ahmed, p.446). Ahmed continues on the allegorical connections of this story:

This is no longer a story of Dilshad, Maulavi Ali Baksh's daughter who was kidnapped and repeatedly raped in the mosque by the Sikhs. It is not about Dilshad who had to learn how to become a prostitute, and who was taken on rides by Muslim politicians in their long and shiny cars. This not the story of fifteen year old Zubaida, who also learns how to sell her body in the Refugee camps. Instead this becomes a story of Pakistan, whose "respectable" classes, drunk, listen attentively to the theories of the foreign diplomats about the bodies of Pakistani women. It is a story of Pakistan where the pimps and contractors become elated to hear of the war in Kashmir, for they would be able to supply more women. The civil officers are filled with the greed for land and money. Most of all, it becomes a story of the unfortunate and the traumatised people who are busy fighting each other (Ahmed, p.446).

As Dilshad is raped repeatedly right next to Amrek Singh's house, the 'voices' his wife and sister hear from the well are of a man killed by their men. The ironic threat of the 'Other' to their sexuality is much stronger than paying attention to the brutality by men from their families. Dilshad would love to hear her dead father's voice for it would provide her with some sort of comfort and reassurance, yet there is nothing apart from deadly silence. The women are somehow, transferring the reality of Dilshad's pain into something supernatural which becomes much easier to refute in the clear light of day. Even though they know of her existence, none of the Sikh women come to help her or even talk about her. This is the same person who had spent twenty years as their neighbour and had probably grown up playing together with these women as

well as her tormentors. However, the sense of power that she now provides for her neighbours-turned-rapists outweighs any other human or social feelings which she might otherwise arouse. The indifference of the Sikh women to Dilshad's plight is a glaring example of the patriarchal control exercised in Punjab. The political climate of religious hatred seems to outweigh any concern for a fellow woman of the same ethnicity, as the women hear Dilshad's anguished cries and yet fail even to mention her name in their men's presence. The rapes carried out within the 'sacred' communal space also highlight the extent of enmity which seems to be directed against one another's community. Such collective targeting of women is not only confined to the happenings of the Partition, it has been executed brutally in a number of civil and ethnic conflicts where women take centre stage when it comes to meting out punishment on the other's community. The most recent and perhaps the most violent example of this brutal selective punishment has been in the Balkans conflict, where a large number of civilian Muslim women were targeted for sexual molestation by the Serbian military and para-military units.

There has been an increasing urgency to note and document targeting of women in most of the violent conflicts of the twentieth century. Ruth Seifert has examined the frequently used weapon of sexual violence against women during military, communal and ethnic conflicts (which are almost always between men). In her study, she shows that empirical evidence largely does away with the most prevalent claim of 'sexual urge'. Instead, she cites certain rape studies which:

. [U]nanimously come to the conclusion that rape is not a sexual but an aggressive act (i.e., in the perpetrator's psyche it does not fulfil sexual functions). What does, however, give him satisfaction is the humiliation and abasement of his victim and the sense of power and dominance over a woman. Some studies therefore describe rape as a "pseudo-sexual" or "anti-sexual" act: it has nothing to do with sexuality but with the exertion of sexual violence directed against women (Seifert, p.36).

The fate that Dilshad suffers eventually leads to her getting pregnant; one of the aims of collective communal rape is the desire to 'spoil' the reproductive functions of the 'other's' women while keeping a watchful eye over their own. As

the threat of a 'bastard' child being born in Chamkor increase, so does the destabilisation of the social and civic set-up of this village. To avoid any 'physical evidence' of this mass rape, Dilshad is handed over to the police for transportation across the border. Amrek Singh hands her over to the police to show his part in the effort to recover the missing women. This apparent act of kindness does not improve Dilshad's situation, as instead of the villagers, now the policemen use her to satisfy their lust and to assert their power. Even though she is six months pregnant, her sexuality can still be exploited by these men; the policemen also rape her for no other reason than her being a Muslim.

Finally, she is able to leave India on the refugee train to Pakistan, the land of her dreams where she believes she will encounter nothing but happiness, a place where she would be able to put her misery away. She gives birth to her baby in the train. Lahore and Lahoris are not what she had imagined them to be. She starts her life in the Refugee Camp. Soon afterwards, with the camp manager's blessing, men pick her up for sex, and give her some money to buy food for herself and her baby. This is the ultimate betrayal of the common people by the newly founded Pakistan. Eventually she moves to Karachi, and as the story ends, she has become a prostitute.

I

Rajinder Singh Bedi's *Lajwanti* deals with the violence against women and the psychological havoc such a traumatic ordeal played on their lives once they had been re-united with their families. Lajwanti, whose name means a rather delicate and sensitive plant, has been kidnapped during the Partition. Even though we are not told directly about her abductors, because she is a Hindu, that, in the context of this Partition, makes them Muslim.

In an interview, Bedi told his interviewer on how his work was different from others:

[Saadat Hassan] Manto, for instance, was a person, I think, who had the finest sense of form among all our writers. He really knew the essence of what he was writing about. He did not ponder over his work; he wrote

easily. He once wrote [to] me and said, " The trouble with you, Bedi, is that you think too much"... And what he said to me is absolutely correct (Mehfil, p. 150).

Bedi was a fervent believer that the "expression of reality requires a romantic point of view," and he practised this maxim in his writings. He also did not have faith in abstract notions of the 'Truth' and 'total realism,' for he felt they could not be achieved in a work of fiction. It is in response to such statements that Azad Gulati believes that Bedi is a "romantic and a psychological realist rather than a mere 'naturalist'. But his romanticism has neither the idealised, didactic dimensions of Munshi Prem Chand, nor affiliations with any specific cult as in Krishan Chandar. He seems more akin to Manto in depicting the reality of existence" (Gulati, p.29). Yet the violence suffered by the women characters in the novels under discussion push them into an almost super-natural dimension, for it is only then that they and those around them seem to comprehend what they have endured. The religious aspect is brought in to gain some perspective in order to understand the 'un-natural' events which were taking place during the Partition.

The identities created in this novel are more along religious rather than nationalist lines, and they are male identities linked to militaristic notions of masculinity. Kathryn Woodward, talks about 'specific historical moments' which become the defining moments of a particular conflict (Woodward, p.10). She analyses this particular moment in the conflict in the former Yugoslavia, although her findings could very well be applied to the situation which resulted during the Partition. Talking about connections between identities and historical moments, Woodward argues that:

In this sense the emergence of these different identities is historical; it is located at a specific point in time. One way in which identities establish their claims is indeed through the appeal to historical antecedents (Woodward, p.10).

In *Ya Khuda*, Dilshad's repeated rapes' trauma, somehow forces her mind to become deadened and she is almost at another place. Her mental faculties take

her into an almost delirious dimension, where she feels a perverse sense of pity for her tormentors, in some way sacrificing herself to become a 'dressing' for the 'wounded' or 'burning' desire of these men. Her mind, which is in denial at the atrocities being committed on her, assumes another identity, in which she fails to register any pity or concern for herself. Her insistently saintly manifestation constitutes a challenge for the characters who have survived brutal rapes and are unable to forget their experiences. However, one wonders as to how much of these emotions are of the character, and what kind of a role is being played out by the author. Indeed, it is obvious in both the novels that the victimised women are not given any opportunity to forget their ordeals. As the events in *Ya Khuda* unfold, a number of the 'fallen' women, which include Dilshad, are crammed into refugee camps where they are forced to fend for themselves through prostitution. Because most of them are on their own, they become easy sexual targets, this time, of men of their own community. They are shipped out to the houses of 'respectable' people for a night, and dropped back the next day.

In Lajwanti's case, she is denied a public forum to express her individuality in order to recall and recount her past, the result of which is the internalisation of her trauma which would manifest itself in her habits as well as her mental state of being as time passes. She receives no space in which any semblance of sympathy from either her family or neighbours is extended to 'listen' to her version of what she has been through. Instead, Lajwanti is kept in isolation and encouraged not to talk to anyone in the community throughout the entire novel. Her silence is tacitly supported by the whole society as no-one really comes forward to share her pain. She could have benefited a great deal from interaction with others, especially the women. Such a forum is never mentioned either by her or her husband, who seems to have constructed an artificial wall of silence around her. She continues to be a manifestation of a 'body' that has been 'dishonoured' and is thus reminded of that through her 'respectful' ostracisation. There is no doubt that the events of her captivity would play themselves over and over again in her consciousness, until a possible mental breakdown would occur.

One of the foremost and striking characteristics of Bedi's work is the almost surreal realism of his stories, in which he was able to capture the innermost feelings not only of his characters but of the community they inhabit. The realism with which he is able to recount Lajwanti's helplessness becomes suffocating not only for her, it envelops the readers into the desperately nightmarish situation that surrounds his character. She is caught up in a nightmarish reality in which she is unable to reach out to anyone to relieve her suffering. Bedi seems to possess the ability to portray his characters in such a way that they reveal a lot about themselves and their social and communal surroundings without the use of conversation. The characters reveal different aspects of their personalities through the different personas they adopt throughout the duration of this novel. Muhammad Sadiq provides a concise and telling account of this story and of Bedi's art in providing us with an insight to the workings of his characters, and how he is able to provide his readers with a 'living' example of the great suffering that had been unleashed on all the communities:

The Story is told with tact and feeling. Told against the background of the cruelty and inhumanity of relatives who refused to accept these 'contaminated women', as they were called, into the bosom of their families; and the shocking barter system prevalent at the border where women ceased to be human beings and were exchanged according to their beauty and age, the story gains in pathos and acquires a universal significance. Ordinarily, stories gain by the exclusion of irrelevant material; Bedi's story acquires an added significance by the deft interweaving of things which, though not an integral part of the story, add, nevertheless, to the pathos of the situation (Sadiq, p.309).

As has been pointed out by Sadiq, Bedi's enhanced creativity manifests itself by using Lajwanti's story to explain the situation that thousands of abducted women had faced during the Partition. Whereas the State concerned itself with collective 'facts and figures', Bedi's story 'humanises' the tragic perspective of the victims.

The governments of both countries had agreed to 'recover' the abducted women, for their continued detention in the enemy's captivity was perceived to be an affront to their respective religious societies. What was at stake was the

reproductive bearers of their society in the clutches of those barred from such a proximity if normal circumstances had prevailed. This distinction of getting only the 'reproductive' (read as young) women is revealed in this brutally succinct incident in *Lajwanti*:

Lal Chand continued his story "On the Wagha border Pakistanis gave sixteen women and were given the same number in return – then a quarrel started. Our volunteers were objecting that most of the women returned by the Pakistanis were middle-aged, old and useless. People gathered. At that time, the volunteers on the other side showed Lajo to the crowd and asked if they thought she was an old woman? One of them said "Of all the women you have given back, is there anyone as beautiful as her?" Lajo was trying to hide herself from the gaze of so many eyes.

"Then the quarrel escalated and both sides were thinking of taking their 'goods' back. I shouted – "Lajo-- Sister Lajo... But the soldiers of our Army started beating us and pushed us back" (Bedi, p.45).

It is the explication of incidents such as these that has led Shamsul Haq Usmani to call *Lajwanti* a novel which is much more than a commentary on the patriarchy of Punjab rather than just an exposition of the events of Partition. He concludes that:

If one reads this story carefully, one feels that Rajinder Singh Bedi has made neither the Partition nor the terrorising communal violence as the main theme of his novel. In reality, Bedi has concentrated on the changes which people undergo as a result of a tragedy. He has used Sunder Lal and the whole society to demonstrate his point of view (Usmani, p.230).

Sunder Lal's behavior demonstrates the subtle and obvious changes that many people underwent when confronted by the victims, especially the 'recovered' women who had been molested. As far as Lal is concerned, it was almost natural and reasonable for him to exhort others to accept and help in the rehabilitation of women who were being 'recovered'. However, when Lajo returns, one is able to observe the differences between believing in a particular ideology and actually practicing it. Because the returnees had been subjected to such traumatic and incomprehensible treatment, the community as whole did not have the means to understand the complexities involved apart from a rather simplistic plan in helping the already persecuted. The resources of both States,

especially Pakistan, were never enough, to cope with and offer psychological help to the newly arrived victims of violence and bloodshed. Lajjo, on her return, faces similar dilemmas outlined above, and is thus left helpless and, because of her husband's narrow-mindedness, unable to talk about her painful experience.

Abu Alees Siddiqui acknowledges Bedi's unique style of writing about the 'people' who are unseen, who are in every society, but whose stories are not considered worthy enough to be written about. It is Bedi, with his particular insight into people's lives, who is able to form not only a credible but also a moving portrayal. It is in light of such achievement that Siddiqui characterizes him such:

Rajinder Bedi is considered to be the representative of 'character' fictions in modern Urdu literature. His characters are impressionable and emotionally caring who are caught in some mental confusion and the source of this disturbance lies in their psyche. It is only in this fashion that he is able to fully understand the characters as well as their surroundings (Siddiqui, p.224)

The readers easily identify themselves with these characters, for one is able to understand and sympathise with their pains and struggles as they try to make their way through the adverse conditions of their otherwise unremarkable lives. However, Siddiqui fails to understand the enormity of the trauma suffered by Bedi's characters before their 'psyche' is disturbed.

Even though *Lajwanti* was written after Partition, it carries within it much more than the violence of that fateful time. It also delves into the long-term effects that victims, especially women who had been raped, continued to suffer. Novels such as this act as social commentaries not just about a particular event but on all occasions when injustice is carried out. Charan Jeet Kaur has written about this quality of Bedi and his perception of the events and people around him. She says that:

Rajinder Singh Bedi... kept gathering scattered events in the shape of stories. From this treasure of stories he sculptured those colours of human beings' childhood, youth and old age that even after such a long time, they continue to shine. Since these stories were conceived, the

world has undergone tremendous change. But it is Bedi's universal craft that these stories still convey the truth with the same starkness as when they were originally written (Kaur, p.19).

Kaur points out qualities of Bedi's craft that still make stories such as *Lajwanti* one of the best stories written about the lasting legacy of Partition. However, the 'truth' that Kaur mentions is not the perfect 'Truth' as will be discussed later in this chapter, for Bedi refused to be confined within any 'absolutes'. The truth is more important in cases of specific incidents and characters, even though others might have faced similar traumatic experiences, Bedi would not claim to speak for everyone with his account outlined in *Lajwanti*.

The niche that Bedi was able to capture and thrive on is brilliantly elucidated by Gulati in his essay on Bedi's art, as he highlights the combination of qualities which made Bedi accomplish such a high stature in modern Urdu literature. According to Gulati, Bedi's:

[S]uccess as a craftsman consists in creating a peculiar climate for his stories by sketching the milieu through subtle touches of the beliefs, traditions, legends and superstitions that nourish the psyche of the vast chunks of society constituting the matrix of his stories. Never insulating his characters from their cultural, economic and libidinal compulsions, he presents them as sons of the soil... In fact, Bedi's art is that of a miniaturist. With a vision, both telescopic and microscopic, he focuses on seemingly insignificant details for suggestion of the immensity and intensity of his theme, for highlighting the subtle nuances of characters and building up a characteristic climate for the story. Believing that all that meets the eye is but the tip of the iceberg, his dextrous handling of the detail not only enhances the cumulative impact of the story but also gives it the lyrical cadence of the Ghazal. He uses the detail as an artistic device for building up the edifice of the story and for imparting an emotional intensity to the stark realities of existence (Gulati, p.30).

The distinctiveness of Bedi's craft outlined above is adequately illustrated in the characterization and theme of *Lajwanti*. The reader is invited into the highly complex and psychological study of not only the victim, but of those around her, her kidnapers, the border guards, the society she has come back to, and most importantly, her husband. It is to Bedi's credit that he is able to maintain a very tight control over the impulse to sentimentalize Lajjo's plight.

Sunder Lal's dramatic transformation, when it came to accepting Lajwanti, is a manifestation of the internalized biases of his whole society. It seemed quite a principled position to preach tolerance towards victimized women; those sentiments could be spread, even sincerely, as long as such indulgence did not include his wife. However, the true hypocrisy of his character as well as that of his whole community is laid bare when he fails to make any sort of an effort to 'accept' Lajwanti. It is a credit to Bedi's creative talent as a great writer that readers are able to examine the fragile and one-sided control of marital relationship practiced by Sunder Lal. It is Bedi's deft craft that inspite of acting in such a lowly manner, Sunder Lal escapes the author's censure, thus highlighting his creator's generous and understanding outlook towards the Punjabi society of which he himself was a member.

One of Bedi's greatest skills, according to Gulati is that he:

[E]xcel[s] in the delineation of female characters. His women are of real flesh and blood, swayed by their familial concerns and detest idealisation and elevation to the pedestal of a goddess (Lajwanti), for a woman may be a goddess but a goddess cannot be a woman. Most of his stories present various nuances of Indian womanhood. Economically dependent on man, and nourished by Indian malaise of resignation to his will and whims, they do not revolt against their lot (Gulati, p.32).

Some of the characteristics of Bedi's heroines outlined by Gulati manifest themselves in Lajjo, along with the realistic expectations of herself that she is able to survive her abduction and return to her husband. It is the men who, it seems, are unable to cope with traumatic experiences without resorting to religious or supernatural incantations to help them cope with what is perceived to be something outside the understanding of human intellect.

As Lajjo returns home into the sacred 'private' space, her suffering, as she had imagined, does not end. Her traumatic personal ordeal is denied a 'space' of discourse by Sunder Lal who refuses to let her talk about it and, in so doing, imposes *his* feelings of hurt and shame on top of what she has been through. The patriarchal impulse to enforce control over the woman denies her the very basic right of at least sharing her trauma with the supposed partner of her life. She has

to bear the triple burden of having suffered at the hands of her abductors, of her society's rejection, and most importantly, her husband's callous refusal in allowing her to verbalise her pain.

Lal's reaction to Lajwanti's return is not unique at all. Patriarchy in each of the three communities had to re-establish its stranglehold on women's voices and bodies as soon as the immediate upheaval of Partition was over. The most effective means of achieving both of these aims was to exercise a ruthless control over the discourse surrounding the painful and personal experiences of these women. To find an example of this control, one just needs to observe the dearth of women writers writing about other women's experiences during Partition, compared to the domination of this genre by male authors. As a result of such concerted efforts by the patriarchy, one is left with a whole generation of 'silenced' women who have been forcibly coerced into 'forgetting' their harrowing tribulations. Such a denial of articulation, alongside the ignored or at best understudied subject of domestic abuse continues to perpetuate an atmosphere of extreme tension in one half of the general populace of Pakistan. Unless further steps are taken to break this vicious cycle of collective bullying, Pakistan will continue to falter in her steps to fully comprehend a sense of her national history as well as national identity. However, if the country persists in such a lop-sided view of history, one fails to imagine a way in which a realistic and a more problematic discourse of her present and future identity can ever be achieved.

Thus one may legitimately conclude that both authors discussed above have dared and significantly succeeded in lifting the false shroud of honour to reveal the deceitful moral values of Punjabi society on both sides of the divided border. The sadistic acts committed against helpless women become even more ironic as Punjabis consider themselves to be fervent believers of the social sanctity of their families and are supposed to give utmost deference to women. Both Bedi and Shahhab decisively reveal the hypocrisies of these idealised notions, rarely carried out in everyday life. Respect, which can be read as control, is exercised with society's consent on its own women as long as they are under the domain of their own men. Women from other religions or even outside their

families are not considered worthy of such esteem and there are enough incidents in these two novels to verify this claim. In both novels, women take on the shapes of markers which are callously used to satisfy religious, political and personal lust indulged in by men of all communities.

The second significant similarity between both authors' works is the apparent reluctance of their women characters to fight back once they have reached their own homes and to clear the supposed mark of shame they are expected to carry. This 'burden' has been discussed earlier and shown to be much more difficult and hazardous in practical life than in theoretical discourse. These women are forever cast in the dye of their family's shame and come to represent their collective community's 'lost honour.' There is never any attempt to acknowledge their pain and suffering, not by their captors and most certainly not by their family members. The insulting sceptre of shame is left hanging on the already victimised women to keep them silent. For if that silence was ever to break, the patriarchy realises that it would have to confront its own ugly deeds which were carried out by men on both sides of the border. The religions might have been different but the brutality and the violence was the same.

The true shame and loss of honour is not that which has been imposed by the patriarchy on the women, but of men who chose to act without honour and shame towards women from 'other' communities. The only shame that individuals and communities should suffer from is not that of victims but of those responsible for brutal acts of physical, sexual and psychological violence, who, in almost every case, happen to be men.

Chapter 5

Public and Private Narratives of Partition in Quratulain Hyder's *Aag Ka Darya* and Khadija Mastoor's *Aangan*

Fredric Jameson's much discussed 1986 essay, 'Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism', positing third-world literature about 'self' as always being a national allegory raises an apt point when one scrutinises women's literature of Partition. The women's 'suffering' as the social and cultural norm was shattered and thus offers an insight into the collective trauma that both India and Pakistan underwent as two geographical and political entities were artificially created. As he points out: "The story of the private individual destiny is always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public third world-culture and society" (Jameson, p.69). Jameson's view is uncompromising to the distinction between the authenticity of the individual's 'private' experience and its' impact on the community. Post-colonial literature clearly cannot but be an allegory as it seeks to implement wider political discourses. However, this does not mean that it is intentionally political or that the writing should not be valued for its 'private' personal story that it has to tell, for how else is one to learn about the suffering of the 'other?' The private lives and religious identities that subjects had grown up with and which they had considered to be their own were suddenly, during the Partition, declared to be alien and as belonging to the 'other' and thus to be completely rejected. Individuals and communities in both countries invented new versions of selective histories in order to create alternative ideologies that point out the uniqueness of their political and cultural ideologies. Even though Jameson's theory may seem accurate if one uses it to examine the inter-connections between women's stories and creation of both the nation-states, it cannot be applied to a wholesale representation of all 'third world' literatures.

Quratulain Hyder and Khadija Mastoor's writings reflect the breakdown of social order during the Partition of both community and country and as an

allegory of brutality meted out to the women. These stories are comparatively more realistic because of Hyder and Mastoor's affiliation with the female characters in their novels. Narratives which will be discussed in this chapter do not necessarily fall within the dogmas of the patriarchy and in fact provide another perspective for viewing the historiography of Partition.

The novels (both written in Urdu) to be discussed in this chapter offer two vastly different historical contextualisations of Partition. Quratulain Hyder's influential study offers a social and political commentary on ancient and modern India in *Aag Ka Darya (River of Fire)*. She is a Muslim Indian writer who had moved to Pakistan after the Partition, but then went back to live in India. She surveys the social, economic and political interaction between people of different religions through India's history which culminates in the Partition of 1947. The second novel to be discussed is Khadija Mastoor's *Aangan (The Courtyard)*. She examines the immediate events surrounding Partition and their influences on a Muslim family. Her novel is less about the religious and political violence and more on the impact of 'public' violence on the 'private' psyche of individuals.

Women's plight during the violence of Partition forms the considerable base of the literature written by men about that event. This violence was not carried out on women because they were considered to be vulnerable; instead, physical and sexual violence against women was employed as a systematic tool of communally induced ethnic cleansing, in which the 'purity' of a particular community was destroyed. Violence is directed to inflict damage on a number of fronts: firstly, it is a violent act of aggression and violation of the physical as well as psychological space of the women; secondly, it brings humiliation on the men in particular and the victims' community as a whole. During Partition, as the social and communal order disintegrated, the suffering and pain was not inflicted only by the members of opposing communities; in a number of cases, as discussed in the third chapter of this dissertation, the threat of violence came also from the immediate family members. The male authors have somehow tacitly agreed with the harsh and cruel attitudes of male members towards their

women whenever there was an imagined or a real danger of their abduction by Muslim men.

However, it seems that there is a particular absence of writing by women, about women during Partition. Such enforced silences are not just limited to the subcontinent, but are prevalent in other post-colonial regions. As colonialism ends, the existing, indigenous patriarchy immediately moves in to fill the power vacuum to articulate what it considers to be the 'important' agendas, which are then equated with the process of national re-building. Carol Boyce Davies and Elaine Savory Fido note a similar dearth in Caribbean literature; their comments on this subject can easily be applied to the situation in the subcontinent. In their introduction, they describe the connection between voicelessness and critical context of a national literature. Their articulations seem particularly pertinent to the events of the Partition and the control being exercised by men over the narration of violence and the trauma suffered by the women. By voicelessness, the authors state that they mean (in the context of the Caribbean) that there is:

... [T]he historical absence of the women writers' text: the absence of a specifically female position on major issues such as slavery, colonialism, decolonisation, women's rights and more direct social and cultural issues. By voicelessness we also mean silence: the inability to express a position in the language of the "master" as well as the textual construction of woman as silent. Voicelessness also denotes articulation that goes unheard. In practical terms, it is characterised by lack of access to the media as well as exclusion from the critical dialogue (Davies & Fido, p.1).

The women from the Indian subcontinent have faced a similar predicament to the one mentioned above. More is written about them and their social and cultural signification by men than by women themselves. Even though the latter may "carry" stories of Partition in the private domain of their homes, there is no public platform for them to voice and share their pain. It is almost as if they are expected to forget their own experiences so that the male writers can articulate and create narratives of a rich mixture of fact and fiction about their suffering and pain. The State's narrative uses their stories as examples to point out the brutality of other communities, and yet there continues to be a strong perception that women's own articulation would somehow

destabilise the social structure. This form of double standards is carried out and further perpetuated by those safeguarding the patriarchal notions of 'honour', 'shame' and other abstract, all encompassing notions of propriety that women are burdened with and expected to uphold. This denial or voicelessness is an example of women's own community enforcing consensuality on them and thus inflicting a different and more sadistic form of violence.

Violence tends to rupture the social and cultural fabric of any society, as the cohesion and trust built over a considerable time is severely challenged and in certain extreme cases like the Partition, its break-up can be permanent. The ferocity of violence during this period, because of the unprecedented level and its suddenness, resulted in forced transgression of the ritual taboos of different communities. As discussed earlier, it is women who invariably tend to be deliberately targeted during such communal clashes. The whole process of their 'recovery' revealed the true nature of the kind of regard assigned to them; they assumed the roles of 'ideological and religious' commodities which could be traded between countries to somehow restore their and society's honour. No visible effort seems to have been undertaken by either country's government to provide any kind of psychological or social support for these 're-covered' women in order to re-integrate them into their respective families and societies. Not only were they not given the choice to stay back, they were compelled to return to their families and communities which considered them dishonoured and in some cases even immoral. As Tanika Sarkar points out:

... [A] very different logic of state-sponsored patriarchy unfolded when Hindu women, abducted into Pakistani territory [and vice versa] during the riots, were collected by state agencies and returned to their families without their consent being solicited (Sarkar, p.58).

Many families felt that these victims of horrendous violence had somehow brought shame by not killing themselves instead of allowing themselves to be captured. The fact that they were alive was somehow construed as consensual participation, on their part, of their community's dishonour. Their daring to return too was viewed less with happiness and relief and was considered more as a mark of shame for their respective families.

These women could never be in a situation in which their pain and suffering could be measured or understood. Many had been raped, and some eventually got married to their captors, not necessarily willingly but because they felt that this option was less painful than returning to their families. Susan Brownmiller, in her book, *Against Our Will*, states that rape “is nothing more than a conscious process of intimidation by which all men keep all women in a state of fear” (Brownmiller, p.5). In the subcontinent, sexuality is considered a very private matter, closed to open discourse and inappropriate for the socialisation of children. Hence a woman is perceived to be asexual until marriage. Moreover, her sexuality (particularly if she is unmarried) is perceived as an obstacle and a constant threat to her family's reputation and honour. Patriarchal literature articulates and perpetuates such sexist and often time debilitating burdens on women.

Women's literature is significantly different from the male authors because of the manner in which they, more than their male counterparts, can in a dynamic and troubling way vivify the conflicts and paradoxes inherent in the debates as well as the events of Partition. Their writing resists the social silencing and political marginalization in the colonial and post-colonial societies. By placing women at the centre of textual representation, this discourse refuses their relegation to the 'matrix of marginality' which oppresses according to race, class, gender, and culture, and restores women's centrality in culture and self-definition. A number of women in these novels are presented as active characters who refuse to play the passive victimised roles assigned to them in most of the literature written by men. In these stories, the multi-dimensional characteristics assigned to them allow for their development in diversified direction so that they don't always end up playing the inevitable roles of patriarchy's victims.

Even after suffering in consequence of the patriarchal ideologies, women are subjected to an even more injurious fate as they are denied the opportunity to talk about the hurt they have suffered. The stories of women, as discussed in the earlier chapters of this thesis, continue to be dominated by a clear and

strong bias of what the patriarchy deems to be important. Women's life-stories become less relevant on their own, and are mostly referred to as examples of the wrongdoings of the members of the 'other' patriarchy. The patriarchal control over the articulation of individual and national ideologies is not limited to the subcontinent, it is a universal phenomenon rigorously practised universally. In *Life/Lines: Theorizing Women's Autobiography*, Bella Brodzki and Celeste Schenck argue that notions of self-articulation and narrative identity have been inscribed by a wholly masculine tradition:

[The] assumption has been that autobiography is a transparency through which we perceive the life, unmediated and undistorted...The (masculine) tradition of autobiography beginning with Augustine had taken as its first premise the mirroring capacity of the autobiographer: his universality, his representativeness, his role as spokesman for the community. But only a critical ideology that reifies a unified, transcendent self can expect to see in the mirror of autobiography a self whose depths can be plumbed, whose heart can be discovered, and whose essence can be definitively known. No mirror of her era, the female autobiographer takes as a given that selfhood is mediated; her invisibility results from her lack of a tradition, her marginality in male-dominated culture, her fragmentation - social and political as well as psychic (Brodzki, p. 44).

Going back to Jameson's point, is one to assume that the idea of 'allegory' is ironically too sophisticated for women who can have a little subjective reflection as this quote argues. Even though the above-mentioned factors are related to the Western Canon, their determinants can also be applied to the situation of the obstacles in women's attempts to write about the Partition in the Indian subcontinent. Their writings set out to challenge and destabilise discourses centred around the locations saturated with national myths of 'Mother India' and 'Islamic Homeland' perpetuated by the patriarchy. Not only that, they articulate alternative vision to view the events of Partition in which they or their bodies are not the contesting grounds of national and/or communal ideologies. The discussion in this chapter will attempt to examine the effectiveness of their unorthodox vision.

Both Hyder and Mastoor take Partition as a subjective event crossed by divergent histories, perceptions, and ideologies which are traced as partial

evidence, inviting readers both to attend to the difficulties of the text and to pursue their own lines of inquiry as to what caused such mayhem. The above-mentioned quote seems to suggest, in relation to Jameson's argument, is that both these authors see Partition as an event not instigated by *them*, they are not the perpetrators of it and does not reflect their personal histories and desires. As that is so, they are then in a position to be more critical and thus do not offer an allegory as Jameson would suggest. Both authors offer a study of the combination of individual and collective reasons that resulted in the creation of two separate nations. They offer a much more personal account of the factors and the processes which individuals had to undergo as the public manifestations of religious and political ideologies intruded into their private lives. Their accounts focus on the deep physical and psychological scars suffered by ordinary people as forces of communalism and nationalism collided to take the centre stage in the struggle to achieve freedom from Imperialism. The issues raised by both the authors offer an alternative to the rather dispassionate account put forth by revisionist historians such as Ayesha Jalal.

I

In attempting to provide a summary of *Aag Ka Darya* and *Aangan*, one is acutely aware of the resulting skeletal caricature for the reader. Both novels deal with the lives of characters, and how they are shaped by the forces of events taking place outside their spheres of influence. As events outside the characters' lives determine directions and stances taken by them, we are shown their lives in different parts of the now broken up India. The shock of the reality of Pakistan is very real and easily shatters the imaginary illusions that the characters might have had about their new homeland.

Such a summary will lead many a reader to assume that they already know the story, the linear plot seems hardly different from many stories that one comes across. However, what are most certainly not revealed in these summaries are the delicate and subtle shifts that individual characters undergo

as a result of the events taking place in public sphere, which will be discussed in more detail in this chapter.

In talking about the changes in 'times', Scott Lash uses Alphonso Lingis' theorisation of the different phases in an individual and a community's existence. The two categories (*Intelligible* and *Catastrophic*) are also at play in the novels of Partition. According to Lingis' theory:

Intelligible time is moulded, is shaped in the face of, in the encounter with, catastrophic time. According to Lingis, intelligible time takes its shape according to the logic of work. Work activities are shaped by perception, by the 'order of means and foreseen results', causes and effects, a sense of purpose and a consciousness which is subordinated 'to an anticipation of the future'... Catastrophic time, for its part emerges with the imminence of disaster. It erupts in the imminence of death, of astonishment in the face of the sublime, in 'exhaustive' love, in violence. Yet the very imminence of catastrophic time drives us into intelligible time (Lash, p.161).

Both the novels discussed below are essentially about Partition, even though at first reading they may appear to be discussing lives and events far removed from the horrors of that event. Both of these novels are unique in the genre of Partition literature because they avoid direct references to actual events of this time. However, they treat the impending doom of Partition as the 'catastrophic time' as articulated by Lash and it is through the misery and destruction of this event that 'intelligible time' is achieved once more. Even though both writers may agree upon the annihilation of the social and traditional norms of the Indian society during the catastrophic/profane times, their interpretation of the resulting intelligible/sacred time is diametrically opposed. These positions will be explored further as particular themes and incidents are analysed more critically later on in this chapter.

The novels also elucidate the events of Partition from opposing directions. Whereas Quratulain Hyder's *Aag Ka Darya* stretches over two and a half thousand years of cultural and social history of India, Khadija Mastoor's *Aangan* rarely ventures out of the private realm of the protagonist's house. Hyder traces the intrusion and development of several foreign and domestic

influences on various sections of the Indian community. Even though she focuses on individuals at certain times, the general impression one has is of a narrative that encompasses the whole community. The collective psyche of the community responds to various changes, like the overthrow of the Hindu rulers by the Muslims, the effects of the introduction of an alien religion of Islam, the arrival and consolidation of British Imperialism, and ultimately, the Partition of India. These influences constantly alter the social and cultural composition as well as the attitudes of the individuals as their lives are transformed by forces beyond their control. As things change around them, so do the people, as well as their relationships, both in their family and the community. Hence, the author implicitly suggests that interaction between different religious communities had not changed radically, as it has been alleged by a number of other authors discussed in this dissertation, during the British rule. This is a radical shift from the opinions of authors writing about Partition as has been discussed in the previous chapters. People like Singh and Nahal present an unrealistic and idealised sense of communal harmony before Partition. The social tension between different religious groups had already existed, it was something that the British used to create further hostility, especially as these groups were deeply involved in the struggle to articulate their aspirations for independence (as discussed in the first chapter).

Quratulain Hyder's stories written after 1947 reveal her emotions as well as the characters' in an intense pain and loneliness after the experiences of Partition. These feelings result from, among other factors, the emptiness created in life because of the *Hijrat*. Sentiments that established a religious linkage to the dislocation suffered by the Muslims and the *Hijrat* of Prophet Muhammad, are still used in the metanarrative of Pakistan. However, just because that 'sacred' time is recalled does not mean that Muslims migrating from India were greeted with similar enthusiasm in Pakistan. As Abu Alees' comments suggest and as has been clearly demonstrated by a number of other narratives discussed earlier, the fate and welcome which greeted these Muhajirs was very different from those in whose footsteps they seemed to have followed:

Millions of people were forced to leave their relatives, houses and emotional attachment with their familiar surroundings to a completely new place where they became refugees, un-wanted guests, opportunists or even attackers. Their lives can be compared to those delicate plants which are plucked from their garden and thrown into a wasteland when the air is hostile. These feelings of isolation are very personal and deep in Hyder's work. Her stories are of a generation which is going through sadness and anger at being cut from their cultural and historical traditions (Abu-Alees, pp. 230-31).

Hyder's fiction examines the often-ignored connection between history and historiography of the literature of Partition. These concepts of individual narratives, as has been discussed earlier, are often displaced in the metanarrative of the State. These marginalised chronicles reveal the human cost of upheaval that many post-colonial nations went through as they worked towards ending colonial rule and achieving freedom. Her fiction was among the very first to break away from the rigid literary conventions of the past decades. Vinay Dharwadker discusses the reasons behind this sudden and deliberate shift in the genteel and almost unchallenging Urdu literature:

Like other major subcontinental languages, Urdu went through a phase of concerted radical experimentation, aesthetic upheaval, and discursive innovation ten to fifteen years after Partition (its first large-scale reaction to the disasters and disappointments of "postcolonialism)" (Dharwadker, p.172).

Hyder's work, it has been said, has drawn from the influences of, among others, Virginia Woolf and James Joyce, and successfully re-works religious and cultural myths to create a hauntingly hybrid narrative. The connections between the distant and immediate past are put together to examine the continuity of social, religious and cultural interdependence of communities living together. Among other implications, Hyder sets out to dispassionately trace the interwoven quilt-like fabric of India and how it seems to have been recklessly torn apart during the Partition. Her lack of a didactic style, which is present in so many other narratives of this time, actually re-enforces the pain and loneliness, and not only of the characters; it goes a long way in providing an insight into similar feelings also experienced by the author. Like a number of other women writers, Hyder's fiction is not exclusively focused on the gut-wrenching experiences of violence and pain. Her novel painstakingly allows readers to

scrutinise lives and emotions of the characters caught up in this great struggle which will ultimately result in the break up not only of their country but of their lives as well.

Aag Ka Darya is one of the most celebrated of modern Urdu novels. The title's literal translation (River of Fire) offers a veritable reflection of what India would go through before it became an independent and a sovereign nation. When it was published, it was immediately hailed as a milestone in the development of modern Urdu literature in the subcontinent. This was novel offered an intertwined history of a community as well as individuals as both passed through successive political eras. Readers of a wide variety of ideologies felt addressed and they reacted accordingly. It is a novel which is almost impossible to pinpoint as belonging to a particular genre because it incorporates such vast and varied fields. It is an epic and a historic commentary on more than two thousand years of Indian history, starting from the reign of Bimsaar (the first king of India), the arrival and establishment of the Mughals, the British Raj, the Partition and the eventual creation of two separate States.

The present hostilities between Pakistan and India need to be addressed and understood as problematic issues and they are in the novel. There is a dire need to move beyond easy and convenient answers for problems facing them and to replace this discourse by genuine efforts to trace the development of relations between different communities throughout their long and often times uneasy co-existence. *Aag Ka Darya* remains the subject of many such debates and discussions, in close correspondence with many voices that emerge from the novel itself: Muslims, Hindus, nationalists, men and women.

This novel is meticulously constructed in a language that is well chosen, full of odd but appropriate metaphors and similes as the narrative moves through centuries of Indian civilisation, and often, it seems, to stop and to take the readers on yet another strand of the protagonist's life. The explicit and conflicting ideas about the history of India as well as the communal relations comprehensively undercut the more simplistic claims by a number of other

authors writing about Partition of India, who have not ventured further into history, and seem to have chosen to lay the blame squarely on the British.

The first section of *Aag Ka Darya* follows Gautam Neelamber's journey from his birthplace of Sarawasti to Taxila (now in Pakistan) for education and formal training. He is leaving home to study Philosophy and Art. The journey takes many weeks of travelling. His education at the *Ashram* (temple) combines a variety of disciplines; religious and moral education is interspersed with physical work of cleaning and sweeping their classrooms and the surrounding gardens. He also has to travel widely to find out more about the social and cultural interaction taking place between people from different economic backgrounds. Neelamber's education includes studying and understanding of the whole society so that he learns to adjust and adapt to the situations around him. Hyder captures the long history of linkages between the formal education and social conditions faced by those living in that society. Her detailed account of the sophisticated level of organised education seems to refute British imperialists' claims that Indians were ignorant and in need of education and enlightenment. Hyder provides a comprehensive picture of an educational system which was in tune with the needs of that particular time. The text delves into the personal as well as national identity of India as she would be confronted with moments of conflict, foreign and domestic dilemmas before the country is finally split up. Neelamber's eventful and formative phases of education and travels also reflect India's inward examination of her values and sense of pride in her history and culture.

The novel describes King Chandargupat's reign, considered to be one of the most prosperous times in ancient India's history. A scene from that time demonstrates India's economic and political power:

Chandargupat is a very powerful king. The whole world knows of his reign. His throne is considered to be among the most noblest in the world. The other countries are afraid of his military might.... The whole city is adorned like a bride. In the large coliseum, there are chariot racing and lancing competitions. Among the large caravans on the road, there are many musicians and people are dancing on the pavements. They

are being showered with petals from the balconies. People are speaking happily to others (Hyder, pp.114-120).

Hyder paints a very cogent picture of the social vibrancy of this particular time. According to historians, during Chandargupat's reign, there was development in almost all facets of life, but especially so in philosophy, stone carving and music. Once Partition approaches, as it does towards the end of the novel, the reader is expected to re-visit this gathering of people being described above. However, irony sets in as gatherings of even a greater number are fleeing with none of the gaiety being expressed in this scene; instead people appear scared, hungry and tired after having walked for days and days. Rather than the happiness of the scene being described, strangers deliberately attack others, killing and injuring people in their thousands. This period represents the golden age of India as the whole country flourishes in culture and craft and there is an air of general amity in society. However, as time and narrative progresses, there is tyranny and anarchy which divides communities along several narrowly defined ethnic, religious and economic groups. These divisions eventually result in the final break-up of this extremely prosperous period. This violent transition becomes, as will be discussed later, the paradigmatic shift from a sacred to a profane time.

The narrative soon moves on into another period and social setting. Gautam has finished his studies and is looking for Champak, his childhood sweetheart, but there is no trace of her. Eventually he starts to work with a touring theatre company. During his travels, Ambeeka, one of girls from the company, falls in love with him and they get married. During one of the theatrical performances, Gautam notices Champak in the audience. She has a child with her. As soon as the show ends, he frantically searches for her, but once again she disappears without a trace. He leaves everything and starts his quest to locate her. It's during his quest that he tries to swim across a flooded river when a thunderstorm strikes. He desperately attempts to hold on to the rocks, but the extremely turbulent waters of the river overwhelm him. We are never told anything about him apart from the fact that he has drowned. His passing away ends this particular era of India's history. His sudden death is used as a

metaphor to describe the sudden end of the golden age when India was ruled by the indigenous people. Like the sudden end and ferocious thunderstorm, Muslims invade India. Their arrival, for the first time, ends the existence of a homogenised and singular community. Even though the indigenous monarchy tries to hold on, like Gautam, it is inundated by the turbulent waters. Just as Gautam is unsuccessful in his attempts to get back his beloved and thus his sense of contentment and happiness, India would also follow the same path but over a considerably longer period.

Hyder is amongst the first authors from the subcontinent to use magic realism in her narratives, three decades before Salman Rushdie. She is very successfully able to interweave the personal stories along with the socio-political events taking place in India. Dramatic moments in Indian history are revealed at the same time as those occurring in the protagonist's life in that particular section of the novel.

As the Muslim rule of India begins, we are introduced to Kamal-uddin, a new protagonist who is employed to write History by Sultan Sharki, the new ruler of India. He travels to all parts of the country to find historical documents. In Ayodhya, he meets Champawati. Kamal-uddin, finally reaches Ganga, the holy river. It is at this time that Hyder is able to combine fiction and history together as she describes the most important social movement of that time, whose effects are still very much in the popular Indian psyche. Bhagti was the social movement headed by Kabeer Das. Kamal-uddin meets him at the banks of Ganga. Hyder describes the life of this remarkable person:

Kabeer would sit on the bank and make bundle of his washing, which he would put on his back and go through the streets of Benares to sell them. On his return to his house in the evening, there would be huge gathering of his followers. They would all listen to his talks and pray at the end (Hyder, p.177).

There was a mixture of people among Kabeer's followers, both Muslims and Hindus came together to pray as a distinct mystical group, without any hatred. The emphasis seems to be more on spiritual rather than dogmatic

interpretations of each religion. As these are the initial years of the Muslim rule, even those who have converted to Islam still carry out some of the practices they had grown up with. Kamal-uddin also joins their company. Hindu and Muslim religious leaders were both upset with the tolerant community of people that Kabeer had been able to build and sustain. He preached rejection of inflexible doctrine in both religions and commanded his followers to cast away the pretentious attributes of both Islam and Hinduism. The religious leaders viewed this development with alarm, set aside their own differences, came together and used their combined influence with the King to force Kabeer into exile. When Sultan Sharki's reign ends, Kamal-uddin heads towards Bengal and gets married there. His two sons become engineers during Babar's rule. While they are away in Delhi, their father is killed by the invading soldiers of Sher Shah.

India seems to be confronted by the first major test in which foreign and domestic troubles seem ready to test the social and religious unity of her vast and diverse community. The resilience of this cohesive society comes through as this particular phase is met head-on and successfully overcome. Even though there are social and religious tensions, most of them are confined to a comparatively small geographical area and the Indian society on the whole is able to move on.

It is around this time that the first British characters are introduced. The East India Company is established and Cyril Ashley is introduced in the narrative as their representative. He travels to Madras and an Indian girl falls in love with him. He refuses to take her back to Calcutta even though she has given birth to their child. On his return to Bengal, we learn of his harem of Indian women. Very soon he rises to a position of power by becoming the owner of a very large warehouse. He lends money to the farmers at exorbitant rates and is very quick to confiscate their lands if payments are not kept up. Kamal-uddin is one of the farmers indebted to Cyril.

This is the second major foreign interference from completely alien settlers. Theirs is a much more sustained, systematic and comprehensive overthrowing of the fledgling remnants of Mughal Empire. The British are different from all the Indians, be they Muslims, Hindus or Sikhs, and they have not come to live alongside the natives; their aim is to control and rule India. From the very beginning, we see Cyril Ashley establishing a position of economic stranglehold on the natives. At the same time, his moral hypocrisy is also revealed. Even though the British accuse the Indians of lax moral and sexual practice, they themselves show no qualms about exploiting their positions for personal and business gains.

Gautam Neelamber is introduced once again into the narrative as he joins Cyril's office as a clerk. He had 'died' in the first section of the novel, but faithful to the Hindu belief, he is re-incarnated. His re-appearance in the narrative offers a circularity in the events of the novel, as he represents the 'ordinary' person, acting out roles in different times. This stylistic method of Hyder offers the first example of magical realism in this novel, as the distinction between the 'real' and the supernatural is blurred. Readers are not given any reason by the author for Neelamber's re-appearance, making it an almost the most natural action on her part. His different avatars will continue to act as the thread that holds the whole plot of the novel together.

He travels to Lucknow as part of his duty and is very impressed with the prosperity and culture of the city. He is quick to sense an atmosphere of general amity between Hindus and Muslims. He also observes the large gathering of farmers who are upset by the high rate of taxes imposed by the Company. The coloniser-colonised dichotomy becomes more polarised as the British establish their control over all aspects of Indian life. Transcultural interaction between the newly arrived and all the natives is only in one direction, and that is in the favour of the Imperialists. On his return to Calcutta, Gautam resigns from his position and enrolls in a Hindu College for further education and joins Brahma Samaj. Cyril finally gets married and has a son. Soon after his son's birth, Cyril dies, and his wife leaves for London. In 1857 the British Crown formally takes over

from the East India Company, India comes under Queen Victoria. The British who had come in as traders have now become the rulers of India. Gautam returns to Lucknow, but the whole city has changed, the native Nawabs have been deposed. Old values have given way to new ones. Modern education has become very popular, and Gautam becomes a professor. The rapidity and speed of change seems to gather pace.

In the last section of the novel, three families are used, initially, to describe the shared, and eventual dis-integration of social life through the Partition of India. The first family is of a barrister, the second is of Nawab Taki Reza Bhadur and third of Champa Ahmed. The second family is given the most importance amongst the three of them. The daughters of the Taki family are students in Meerus College where they meet Champa Ahmed, among others. Champa comes from a middle class background, her uncle belongs to the Muslim League and is in favour of Pakistan, a separate homeland for the Muslims. Other members of her family belong to Communists and Nationalist parties.

Alongside these events, there persists a famine in Bengal and the characters from the three families volunteer to provide some much needed relief. Kamal-uddin, who belongs to Nawab Taki's family lives in Bengal with his Grandfather. They perform a stage show, and Gautam is also part of it, thus continuing his character's sense of cultural heritage and social responsibility throughout the different eras of India's history. This is his third and final appearance in the novel. He is an established actor and has come here for further education. Kamal-uddin and Gautam return together to Lucknow and there is a very large gathering of students. There are a number of political meetings of young people from all cross-sections of society and they discuss the political and social upheavals facing India. This group wants a peaceful and socially cohesive India, and they go around to preach their message of unity to different sections of the society. Despite all their efforts, there are horrendous communal conflicts and the resulting Partition divides the country. The Lucknow

group of friends breaks up. Gautam is appointed as the Indian ambassador to the Soviet Union.

The scattered group of Lucknow gathers once again in London where most of them have gone for higher education. Cyril's son is also a student and joins their group. When Kamal-uddin returns to Lucknow, the whole cohesiveness of the society is gone. The feudals have been removed completely, and his father is living off a pension of just 200 rupees. On a personal level, he is confronted with the radically changed situation and bears witness to the strained relations between individuals and how they have become institutionalised. Even though he is very qualified, because of the religious discrimination, he is unable to find any sort of a job. He is turned down for a teaching position in Lucknow University, a Hindu with much less qualifications is given that same job. After trying and failing to get any of the jobs for which he is qualified, he becomes a farmer.

Through a lengthy court battle, Kamal and his family become refugees in their own city as their property and house are taken away from them. Kamal gets the Pakistani visa and migrates. As he is travelling again, he comes across trains full of refugees and tries to comprehend his as well as others' identities:

Now I am in Pakistan. I have come from India. Refugee, a Muslim from U.P. (Uttar Pradesh), Refugee, asylum seeker, without identity (Hyder, p.778).

Kamal poses questions which probe his sense of identity, his perceptions about himself and ideologies that he had held dear. As the colonialists leave, one cannot continue to blame them for the break-up of India, and so the process begins, first of all of understanding the predicament of multiple identities in postcolonial nations. Kamal, another avatar of Gautam Neelamber seems to have come through a long and difficult journey from where he started at the beginning of the novel. The strong sense of identity and purpose he possessed once he had set out for his education is all but gone, he is once again on a journey, but this time, he neither has any sense of direction nor a particular objective in mind.

Gautam's story is central to the whole narrative, as he is present during each momentous phase of India's three thousand years old history encompassed in this novel. His female companion, Champa is also present in most of the novel, even though her guises change during different times. These two characters are representative of the necessity of the companionship in human relations as societies make social and cultural progress through the ages.

Hyder traces India's history into a much more distant past than had been ever attempted by any other Urdu writer and no one has been able to achieve this feat since then. She is able to show the existence of foreign influences on the Indian way of life as they came into contact with and traded with merchants from the Middle East, Afghanistan and Iran. These interactions were responsible for the foundations of the multicultural society which became evermore diversified as successive dynasties ruled India.

Long before Muslims established their control over India, she had her own dynasty of Hindu rulers who were loved by their subjects because it was considered to be a religious duty. When the Muslims came, they made efforts to integrate theirs' and natives' customs and languages, with a passage of time, these changes were generally accepted. Rulers like Akbar made integration one of their utmost priorities as high positions in the government and military were given to non-Muslims. The Sufis were another very important factor in creating a sense of cohesion between different communities. By the time Kamal-uddin, the first Muslim character, is introduced, the idea of a shared culture is securely in place in the collective psyche of the populace:

The stream was flowing and there were two thatched huts. The bells were being rung by those who had come to pray. The [Muslim] Saint's grave was beneath the Oak. The [Hindu] women from the village would come, with their faces covered and leave offerings in the form of fruit (Hyder, p.137).

Even though such tolerance and acceptance of religious diversity continues, differences in the national ideologies of two major parties, Congress and Muslim League, result in institutionalising tensions between the two communities. The tension is on a scale much larger than ever experienced in Indian history before.

The uneasy relations between the different communities become evermore apparent and each side begins to harden its position. The advent of Indian nationalism, as stated earlier, also coincides with the Muslims' aspirations of a separate and a distinct identity. These feelings are clearly captured by the author:

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 an Indian culture to be defined. Was it a ruse for Hindus to enslave the Muslims? Could 'real' Indians only be Hindus? Were Muslims unholy intruders who should be treated as such (Hyder, p.259, Palakeel, p.300).

Each community begins a phase of selective memory by placing their perspective in the centre of discourse. Such an evaluation invariably articulates the history in a very narrow and simplistic progression of events, without providing any space for those episodes which might contradict this unsophisticated representation. Each ideology becomes more entrenched as the British are ready to leave, and thus it is quite unsurprising that with the approach of Partition, proponents of these diametrically opposed dogmas take on much more belligerent and violent manifestations. Hence the enormity of violence perpetuated is more of a saddening reality than a surprising outcome.

Hyder does present a comprehensive analysis of a composite culture of the Indian society during different stages of her history. The strands which held this fabric together were strained and stretched during times of difficulty and tension, but the organic and social nature of the community invariably ended up repairing the damage. This intricate process of self-healing, as *Aag Ka Darya* illustrates, was the case on most of the occasions until the Partition. Because there had been a consistent trend towards worsening of relations between

different religious communities, there was no break in which the society or people could repair the afflictions caused by these conflicts. The 'outsiders' influence on the destiny of India was coming to a close, so too was the hitherto existent composite culture. The intensity of the violent conflicts between different communities increased and the resentment towards one another rose to the point that it became impossible for the Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs to live together.

The narrative of *Aag Ka Darya* results in providing the context and history of violence unleashed by men from different communities as the interconnectedness which had existed between their communities was progressively destroyed with the passage of time. This break up of culture and the resultant carnage has become inexorably linked with the Partition of India and has become the most significant theme for most of the writers attempting to describe the context in which the violence took place. Whereas male writers have paid painstakingly particular attention to the forces at play as the composite culture disintegrated with the advent of new national, postcolonial, communal and political discourses, Hyder provides a dispassionate study of the demolition of a culture which had been built, developed and sustained through several millenniums. She has depicted the social background of relations between these communities and how they had arrived at the present juncture. One can grasp a reasonable understanding of the anguish that the collective community went through as an essential component of its historical existence was irreparably damaged. The actions of individual characters seem quite realistic as violence is acted out as a manifestation of the anger, fear and the lack of a clear understanding of what the future holds for them as well as the society.

Hyder's almost cinematic sweep through the more than two and half thousand year history provides a panoramic view of the different phases of India. Most of the events are connected with one another through the continuous presence of certain characters in one form or another. Thus the story is a metanarrative of India, even though certain stories and characters

branch off, the narrative of the nation follows a linear progression of events. The emphasis is on the progression of Time, both in the lives of the characters as well as that in the life of the nation. India is shown to emerge from different and difficult eras, but still intact, and it is not until the British are leaving that the country, which had been through millenniums of upheavals and stability, is finally broken up. Hyder seems unable to commit her final verdict on the Partition and its effect on her theme of India and Time. That seems to have affected her personally as well, as according to her, the disoriented nation split itself into two parts, she tried and failed to live in Pakistan and eventually returned to India.

For Hyder, the tragedy of a nation is closely linked with that of the individuals who make up the community in it. This is clearly demonstrated in the last section of the novel, as Kamal comes from England, upon his return, Time seems to have changed as there are overt examples of discriminatory bias against the Muslims. The apparent cohesion which existed between Muslims and other communities during the struggle for freedom in which the common target was British Imperialism is shattered. As is the case with almost all other postcolonial struggles, the ideals of this period are unceremoniously put aside once independence is achieved.

The other significant theme is that of Memory, both of individuals as well as that of the whole nation. As a postcolonial nation, Pakistan had an urgent yet an unfilled need to commemorate emancipation and sovereignty. This has taken place mostly in the form of hollow celebrations in the public discourse, mostly by politicians who wish to make capital gain out of these serious and problematic issues. This should have been the time to retrieve the lost or suppressed histories of the nation, histories which are still waiting to be explored and brought into the public domain. Unfortunately they have been marginalised even further. The State's metanarrative supersedes all other narratives, and there is no room for dialogue about those stories which may present an alternative history. Contradiction is equated to a challenging of State's authority, and that is not allowed.

Nalini Persram uses Frantz Fanon's articulations on the struggle for decolonisation and the obligations and the duties of a postcolonial State. According to Fanon:

[I]t is national liberation which leads the nation to play its part on the stage of history. It is at the heart of national consciousness that international consciousness lives and grows. And this two-fold emerging is ultimately the source of all culture (Fanon, 1967, p.199).

Persram elucidates Fanon's idea that culture depended on combined efforts of the nation and the state and how during colonialism, culture was denied the space to exist. However, as a country achieved its independence, it was imperative that the notion of the culture was reintroduced into the psyche of a nation. However, as Persram explains:

But it was not a simple matter of reviving it; retrieval involved an active struggle for freedom through which its creative potential could be unleashed (Persram p.209, Fanon, p.199).

As has happened in a number of other postcolonial nations, the priorities of issues raised in public discourse are very different before and after independence is achieved. Whereas during the struggle, women might have been actively encouraged to take part in the national movement, the patriarchy expects them to cease their participation in the public arena and move to their pre-struggle times. This is felt to be important because other matters of 'national' importance need to be given a higher priority.

II

In Khadija Mastoor's *Aangan*, the narrative is set around the time of Partition. It is different from writings on the same theme in that it focuses less on the immediate issues facing the whole community. Instead, among other things, the stories are of characters in a particular household as they get on with their lives during this politically and socially turbulent time. This novel offers a damning critique of middle class sensibilities. The direct and indirect events

leading up to the Partition are 'brought' into the lives of characters and readers are told about their particular reactions to political and social upheavals taking place in India. The Partition is represented as a metaphor in the character of Israar Mian. He lives in the household of Baray Chacha, a Muslim political leader of the Congress. Israar had been adopted by the family and in a sense passed onto the next generation. However, Baray Chacha's wife has nothing but utter dislike for this gentle, caring and loyal man. He is treated even worse than the servants which is reflected by actions of Kariman Bua, a maid, who is given full rein to mistreat him in every possible way. Israar is never allowed to enter into the house, and the only conversation he has with the people is to ask for food before going and then upon his return from the family shop, where he works without any wages or gratitude. He occupies a liminal position in which he is the ultimate outsider, being part of a household and yet not really given enough space to have an identity. His marginalization can be construed, according to those demanding a separate homeland, as the position occupied by Muslims of India. He, like them, is treated worse than a second class citizen in a home where he performs his share of the civic and social duties and obligations. The Muslim nationalists felt that they were supposed to be part of India but most of them were never fully accepted as citizens with equal rights and freedoms as the Hindus who formed the influential majority of India. It is made abundantly clear that Israar has been allowed to be part of the household because his services can be exploited without him raising any voice to protest. His presence is tolerated because he provides a link with the past (respect for the father-in-law's wishes). Other than that, he is denied any kind of presence.

It is Mastoor's brilliance that she is able to create and develop Israar's personality and to hold the readers' interest in him as a genuine character and does not slip into convenient sentimentality which would have resulted in his being nothing more than a caricature. Her reflections offer an analytical perspective indicating that identities and culture always entail a particular way of comprehending the issues confronting the characters. Israar's social interaction with his 'family' is an indication of the distance that he is made aware of constantly because he has been adopted. He is a part of the family and is yet

an outsider, and his character vacillates between these binary oppositions. The character's social standing, religious, political and personal beliefs combine to offer reasons for the particular manner in which he/she behaves in certain situations. However, Mastoor is at pains to make distinctions for those characters who might have similar standings and yet behave in totally different ways, these degrees of differences are attributed to each character's individuality. Characters in the same household express their distinctiveness through the manner in which Israar is treated by them.

By refusing to summon up exaggerated scenes of violence, Mastoor keeps Partition's physical effects in the public domain, yet reminders and presence of the brutality outside are ever-present. For most of the time, the social turmoil is subtly achieved by the restlessness which overcomes Aliya's family members. It is therefore not surprising that even though women don't fully participate in the public sphere of politics, they are acutely aware of damage being caused to the social fabric of their society. As the troubles of Partition gather momentum, so does Israar's mistreatment at the hands of Aliya's family. His character focuses on the events outside the house and refuses to let the ubiquity of ill-treatment tamper with concern he has for the members of the household. The loss of Israar's rights is directly connected to the increasingly chaotic situation outside, as murder and looting become the norm. As the Partition is completed after such bloodshed and the last remains of a 'whole' and socially cohesive society are destroyed, Israar disappears from the narrative and is not heard of again. As noted earlier, the antipathy expressed towards Israar by his 'family' was similar to that experienced by a majority of those who wanted a political change and who were tired of being a perpetually exploited minority. The myth of a whole society as a singular unified identity and culture is irreparably broken by Partition, and so it is not surprising that subaltern Israar is completely dropped from the picture as the whole society, of which his family was a part, is broken up.

Israar's disappearance is quite a significant development in the narrative and is not wholly unjustified. His main role is not only to reveal the injustice and

cruelty suffered at the hands of some of his supposed family members, but to offer an unflinching study of the power relations in the private space of a household. However, as Partition takes place and alters the balance of power of people in Israar's household, he finds no reason for the women to exercise their spiteful control over every aspect of his life. It seems that Mastoor is acting out the anger and disappointment of the readers as she takes the most sincere person away because he has been unfairly exploited. Israar is not given any space to express his own feelings, and self, and it seems that Mastoor removes him from the happenings around the lives of the characters in the novel in order for him to live his own life.

Mastoor's novel allows readers to feel pain and a sense of alienation without focusing directly on the events of Partition. She does not seem to hold the simplistic view put forward by many other authors that 'authentic experience' is the only legitimate guarantee of objectivity and truth, thereby again, implicitly though not consciously, criticising Jameson's view. Her approach to capturing the trauma of Partition is much more subtle, as she is aware of her responsibility of evoking the anguish through Israar's life, which makes the narrative much more complex and original. Her writing endows her narrative not only with political meaningfulness, but more importantly allows her to expose the indirect effects of that time on people's lives, and thus produces a powerful social commentary. It is as if Mastoor seems to consider the exercise of writing directly about Partition quite futile.

Mastoor seems to regard the collective pain of Partition as a privileged realm outside discourse and outside representation. Yet she seems to feel that total abstention from describing its actual events, and instead, focusing more on resultant effects will guarantee her creative responsibility a certain degree of freedom. As a result, she takes on the duty of presenting Israar's fate. Without allowing discontinuity to infiltrate the narrative, the readers are presented ever more with parallels between Israar's life and the effects and intensity of violence in the public sphere. As a result of this unconventional portrayal of life around the time of Partition, where women control the private space and control a man

who is able to move in and out of public sphere, one is able to widen the discourse of victims, as it is no longer women who are passive sufferers at the hands of men from other religious communities. In the context of this story, roles seem to have been reversed as Israar is traumatised by women around him. This novel attempts to rectify the general lack of representation of individual and personal trauma suffered by ordinary people. Even though Partition shattered the social and communal hierarchical systems, as demonstrated in this novel, exploitation and mistreatment was still carried on many level in different social settings. Mastoor's narrative added a further complexity to understanding what different characters would have felt during the Partition, for we are not given an opportunity to gauge Israar's feelings on this issue which affects his position as much as that of other characters. It could be that for some people, especially those who were extremely marginalised this upheaval and dis-location of those with control over their lives would have been a longed-for event, as only such a massive turmoil could disturb or even destroy the existing social and economic order. Mastoor is unique among all those writing about Partition in raising the profile of characters whose lives are otherwise unacknowledged.

Mastoor's narrative is innovative in another way as well, as discussed earlier, almost all of the victims represented in the stories of Partition are women. In this case, Mastoor reverses the roles assigned to and associated with gender. It is perhaps as a consequence of the enormity of social upheaval that such a turnaround takes place as Israar is not only victimised by Aliya's mother, but by the woman servant as well. This inversion once again undercuts another strand of State's metanarrative which always presents the women, children and old people as the victims. In *Aangan*, it is old and supposedly weak women who victimise a young, strong and healthy man. Perhaps Mastoor believes that victimising others is not the sole domain of men. However, it does not necessarily mean that by casting a number of women in this role, Mastoor is somehow presenting them in an unproblematic manner, quite the contrary, for this is one of those rare novels dealing with Partition where women are presented as anything but weak. Their strong characterisation makes them

more human and multi-dimensional. Through this tactical relationship with her women characters, the author seems to make an unconventional political statement in her observation of the society around the time of Partition. By representing women in non-traditional roles, Mastoor succeeds in developing the complexity of relationships not only between genders, but on the issues of the generation gap as well as the chasm of economic exploitation. In this novel, conflict among warring communities and between the family members is unresolved and questions remain unanswered while all the major characters preserve absolute differences between gender relationships, thus allowing the readers to reach their own conclusions. Such an open-ended narrative reflects the author's maturity and strength, for in a number of cases, writers have felt and fallen into the temptation of the simplistic urge to point out the villains and victims of their novels. As a result, it can be easily stated that Mastoor has successfully navigated her way around the easy and convenient trap of sentimentality. A non-judgmental attitude towards her characters also adds to the power of the narrative. Even though Aliya's mother and Kariman Bua inflict continuous cruelty on Israar, the narrative voice continues to be coolly distant from all of them.

The politics of identity no longer run along religious lines, as there is social and cultural interaction between Muslims and Hindus on various levels. This economic and social cohesion is presented in a very factual manner and not as something forced on to people which would break up at the first hint of strain in relationships between the communities. Aliya has a number of friends, and the author is at pains to show the interaction on a basic human and not on a religious level. Just as there are differences of opinions between Muslims, the same criteria is used for dealings between people from different religious affiliations.

Gender relations are also portrayed in a rather distinct manner from those articulated by a number of male authors. In this novel, relationships between men and women are no longer confined to their interaction within that private space. The female characters are shown to have their own beliefs in

personal and political events going on around them. In most of the Partition novels, the social interaction between genders is always under the shadow of violence by the patriarchy, with a constant threat of aggression towards women of another community. As a result, the personal relationships between members of the same community, especially those focusing on the differences are not raised very frequently. Because the national struggle is given such a prominence, it is somehow assumed that personal differences between people from the same community are comparatively less important and can be solved at a later point. Not only that, it is felt that any other grievances which the minority, be it women or those belonging to a different religion might have, should be postponed until a more opportune period. In *Aangan*, the woman is no longer presented as a passive recipient of a man's desires. Aliya had been in love with another character, Safdar, since childhood, she had idealised him and wanted to be only with him and no one else in her life. Yet at the end of the novel, she refuses to be with him because he has lost the qualities which had endeared him to Aliya. His beliefs, which had led him to be a political activist and to be an essential part of the underground politics, his idealism for the future, were part of the persona that had made him so appealing to her.

Women, who might have been gullible and submissive have been radically changed by events taking place around them. Even though they might not have participated in the public arena as the men have, the female characters of *Aangan* possess a certain degree of strength and resolve to decide their own future. As Safdar seems to have compromised his political views because there were too many difficulties in his way, or just because he was seduced by the opportunities around him, Aliya refuses to have him. As a result, she makes a very bold, calculated and balanced decision to face her present and distant future on her own terms. Mastoor seems to attack directly the male-dominated political arena in which the patriarchy decrees that only men will lead the struggle, with the exception of a few token women. So many of these political activists begin their struggle in very idealistic and uncompromising manner, but are easily subdued by the length and the daily grind of their movement. Inevitably, it is mostly men, who want change to occur

very quickly as they have traditionally been in-charge of most of the decisions which are related to the well-being of their households. However, it is very difficult to carry on the struggle over a long period without gaining any tangible results. Mastoor and other women writers show the workings of the confined space of the house and how women have to graft slowly and over a long period of time in order to bring about a change which is much smoother and less disruptive. This is one of the characteristics which allows Aliya to continue with confidence while Safdar steps away from the political struggle for independence. It is this overt change that seems to have taken place in a number of women directly because of the severity of the events going on around them, and very few male authors have been able to present this fundamental change in a credible manner. The idealistic and headstrong beliefs expressed by Aliya would have rarely been given to any other female character in the patriarchal discourse of Partition. Even if women had been given such freedom to decide and express their individuality it is doubtful that they would have won any sort of approval from the male authors, as has been discussed in their representation of women in previous chapters.

In this novel, Aliya challenges not only the society but the whole ideology of the postcolonial state by asserting her identity without the presence of a man in her life. Such blatant confrontation by a woman is rarely seen in the other novels of this period. Aliya's desire to reject Safdar can also be seen as an affirmation and confidence in her ability to express her own sexuality through her identity. Such open assertion of a woman's own individuality and sexuality is seen as somewhat threatening to the patriarchal control of the emerging nation. One of the manifestations of the communalism is the sexual violence against women, and an attack on the 'honour' of the whole community by despoiling the 'purity' of 'others' women. A woman's sexuality assumed the primary focus in the struggle for separation and continuation of each community, because she was the only one who could maintain the purity of a particular race. As such, their 'legitimate' place was to be with a man from their own community, Aliya's desire to be on her own and to reject such patriarchal imposition could be viewed as a dangerous and a subversive move. Writing about the connection

between a woman's sexuality and a state's ideology, Jacqui Alexander says that those women who attempt to assert their individuality:

... [P]ose a challenge to the ideological anchor of an originally nuclear family, a source of legitimation for the state which perpetuates the fiction that the family is the cornerstone of society... And because loyalty to the nation as citizen is perennially colonised within reproduction and heterosexuality, erotic autonomy brings with it the potential of undoing the nation entirely, a possible charge of irresponsible citizenship or no citizenship at all (Alexander, p.64).

As Alexander points out, and as discussed earlier, the very notion of going against the diktat laid down by the patriarchy passed off as being good for the whole community, can lead to serious repercussions from one's own community. Aliya's rejection of a man, as pointed out by Alexander, could be viewed as a refutation of her expected role as a heterosexual woman. Her rebuff, especially during a period of strife, where she is supposed to be 'protected' from the men of 'other,' provides an example of women feeling strong enough to challenge patriarchal constructions even at the risk of physical danger.

Both of these authors have focused on Partition, and yet have separately provided a conclusive critique of history (Hyder) and social relationship in the 'private' space (Mastoor). Their writings fill an obvious gap in the Urdu literature of Partition, most of which is dominated by male authors. They have portrayed life outside the parameters of violence which seems to have dominated men's writings. In both novels, individuals, rather than communities, form the focal points around which the themes of each novel are discussed. In terms of Partition literature, most of the authors, as discussed earlier, focused on the binary opposition of victims and villains. Both Hyder and Mastoor successfully break away from this reductive model of understanding the effects of Partition on the lives of those who lived through it.

Both authors have not only portrayed cross-cultural interaction at the personal and familial level, they have also endeavoured to show in artistic terms how it affects society as a whole. A number of incidents have shown how

incongruous and tragic some of these relationships could be at a time such as Partition. In both *Aag Ka Darya* and *Aangan*, Hyder and Mastoor do not extol the virtue of one religious community at the expense of the other. Their 'mixed allegiances' enable them to examine the hybrid assortment of Indian society with a certain degree of discernment and dispassionate objectivity. The portrayal of events and characters in both novels is therefore comparatively realistic and unbiased.

Chapter 6

Ideology, Nationhood and Dis-Location in Abdullah Hussain's *Udhaas Naslain*

The articulation of history and the literature of Partition is a profoundly 'unsettling' endeavour. David Herzberger's views about Post-war Spain hold equal relevance to the events which took place in the Indian subcontinent. Herzberger's discourse is about the competing interests of 'history' and 'fiction' in order to lay claims of legitimacy on certain historical events. As the subcontinent's modern history is very much about contested versions of a national event, he could very well be talking about the Partition:

'Unsettling' here alludes to the recurrent and unresolvable tensions embedded in all attempts to write the past into being (the tensions of agency, power, and narrative perspective, for example), as well as to the specific paradoxes that arise when history and fiction together make contending (and contentious) claims upon the past (Herzberger, p.1-2).

Urdu literature's representation of the upheaval of Partition forms a significant genre of the collective consciousness of the trauma experienced by the three main communities of India - Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. The literature of this event, as has been discussed in previous chapters, continues to be haunted by history, memory and above all by extreme manifestations of violence. Though the brutality of human beings is dealt with in graphic detail, the victims and villains are more often than not defined by the author's religion, on the other hand, violence towards women, both physical and sexual is either grotesquely exaggerated or dispensed with through allusion.

In this chapter, questions relating to the pain and agony of dis-location will be raised, as well as the changes which occur in a character's perspective. There will be a concerted effort to scrutinise any transformation in the author's attitude or the representation of his characters. This chapter will also address themes of masculinist projects which have been articulated through novels, and show how they have been acted out internally (as in the 'private' space of

households, in gender relations) and externally (in 'public' space, in terms of relations to individuals or groups of 'other' communities). Bringing the household into relations with 'outside' groups reveals not only the structural and ideological linkages among these conventionally separated spheres but also demonstrates the pervasiveness and power of gender relations. The events of Partition and the violent breakdown of social, cultural and religious norms which existed and were generally accepted, forced an abandonment and a sudden re-evaluation of how individuals saw themselves and their compatriots. This chapter will examine how the above-mentioned issues are dealt with in *Udhas Naslain (The Lost Generations)*.

One could make a claim that history is the base on which the postcolonial novel is built. Even though such a generalisation, very rightly, invites arguments and citations of certain exceptions, it has a particular degree of validity in it. The Partition novel was 'born' at the moment India gained independence and was simultaneously divided into two nations. A number of such novels were historical - an indication that re-creating the past imaginatively was an essential part of a nation-building project. A majority of these novels actively dealt with the comparatively peaceful co-existence among different ethnic and religious communities, the subjugation and repression during the colonial period, the acute pain that individuals and the communities underwent as a result of the brutalities of Partition, and the difficulties of achieving post-independence stability. For Hussain, the writing of *Udhas Naslain* was not just a way of seeking a particular religious or class identity, but a search for identity itself. He has examined political and national identities of both countries which have been fractured by forces of ethnicity, religion and politics. This novel offers a detailed study of the literary character embedded in geography and politics, a character who has had a colonised past and is attempting to define and adjust to a post-colonial status. The effects of public events, be they political, religious or based on ethnicity play a pivotal role in the shaping of a private identity. This collusion between the public and the private spheres of influence forms the basis of understanding what took place in India during and after colonialism. Naim, the protagonist of the novel, offers the readers an insight into the wide variety of

events that helped to shape individuals' techniques of survival and of getting ahead.

Hussain discloses the psychology and sequencing of communal strife between the Hindus and the Muslims:

It was something related to the killing of cows. For a very long time, the cows are brought to Sai's place for sacrifice on the fifteenth of every month. Today the Hindus became adamant that they will not allow it. It was actually not them, but the pigs from the outside who started this mischief. The argument just flared up and the Master, who was not on either side, tried to intervene and the pigs killed him... Naim peeked over the wall. The Master lay dead under a Keekar tree. Both his hands were spread open and his pale dead face was facing the sky (Hussain, p.217).

This is the first instance of communal conflict in *Udhas Naslain*, the religious conflict which begins alongside the national struggle. As the speed of events gains momentum towards independence, so does the ferocity of violence between Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims.

Waqar Azeem, while examining the history of Urdu novel, highlights the sudden break which occurs with the themes that had been dealt with in the past. By the end of Partition, with almost everyone a witness to the barbarity of violence, the literature of this period becomes unique:

... One should examine the novels of communal violence. The themes of these novels incorporate that short space of time (little bit before and after the Partition) when Man played *Holi* with the blood of his fellow human being. The clothes, bodies and souls were bathed in it (Azeem, p.163).

Some Urdu writers felt that it was only through this brutally realistic portrayal of events that people would come to realise the full horror of what had happened and somehow attempt to come to an understanding and thus seek redemption.

Nisar Ahmed, in his critical work on the effects of Partition on Urdu literature, has highlighted certain distinctive thematic shifts which came about as a result.

The national tragedy of 1947 created two particular subjects for Urdu literature, they were – communal violence and Hijrat (Migration) (Ahmed, p.11).

'Hijrat' – for the Muslims of the Subcontinent is a religiously loaded notion, for it refers directly to the journey that the Prophet Muhammed had to undertake almost fourteen hundred years ago. This dis-location, from Mecca to Medina, was something which was forced on him because it became too difficult for him and his followers to live there as their way of life and religious beliefs were at odds with the majority of the citizens of Mecca. As the danger to their lives became ever more imminent with each passing day, they were forced to flee from one city to the other. The sudden and brutal dis-location of millions of people is one of the facts of Partition emphasised in almost all the fiction. Just like the journey undertaken by the Prophet Muhammed, the one undertaken during Partition was also fraught with very real and serious dangers, to the extent that the safety of one's life could not be guaranteed. This chapter will examine the manner in which the need for sudden and disruptive dis-location unfolded during this turbulent time.

Ahmed continues to list the sub-divisions of how the written literature fell into certain categories:

Few novelists suggested in their novels that Humanity had died on both sides of the border and all Human values had been destroyed. They were pessimistic about the revival of shared human feelings. There were some in this group who wrote about the cruel manner in which the refugees had been treated, and how in these camps, volunteers and government workers had sexually and callously abused these people who had already been victimised...Another group tried to prove that Humanity had not died, and tried to use cultural and traditional reasons to try to understand and explain as to what had happened and they also used examples of people from one religion giving their own lives to save their compatriots who belonged to a different religion...1Some in this group have passionately written about their particular community being wholly victimised by the wholesale barbarity of the 'Other' community...

Few novelists have tried to prove that all the communities had lived in harmony with one another for centuries and it was the British who were responsible for sowing the seeds of hatred between them. They also believe that the large scale bloodletting would have been avoided if the country had not been partitioned (Ahmed, p.11).

Partition novels, more than those concerning any other period in the modern history of the subcontinent, have instances of vicious acts of violence in them that leave the readers shocked and numb. The cushion of emotional distance is suddenly and violently removed, shattering the complacent belief in the "mastery" (as Julia Kristeva calls it) of a rational and hierarchical ordering of the world. Even though Kristeva's criticism is directed at western white males whose subversion she praises, her analysis can very well be applied to the narratives of Partition in which the authors deliberately choose to subvert the essentialist metanarrative of the State. The stories of marginalised figures prove to be more effective in undercutting the standard mode of representation and perception of the events of Partition.

The idea of a collective identification of a community on the basis of language, culture and tradition is violently shattered when the religious affiliations supersede all other codes of identity. The conceptualisation of religion as the primary basis of identity is rarely elaborated in the fiction or the criticism of partition literature. The simplistic discourse of a mythical shared past ends up providing a sharp contrast to the polarised identities which are deliberately appropriated as the threat of violence becomes imminent. The binary opposition of 'Us' and 'Them' is aggressively purported and selectively manipulated to justify a community's violence and simultaneously to vilify the 'other'. The images and representation of Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs are created on the basis of dichotomies arising from the opposition of essential characteristics that are presented as antithetical and mutually neutralising: barbaric and civilised, cowards and defenders, simple and manipulative, treacherous and honourable.

Christopher King outlines the reasons which can create the atmosphere of distinct individuality in a particular group, something that can simultaneously

result in defining everything else that does not become part of that group as the 'other.' According to King:

In any communal movement, opposing groups seize upon a wide variety of symbols to emphasise their differences. In many cases, symbols formerly accepted by all the groups concerned become the focus of intense controversy. What was once unquestioningly accepted becomes vociferously challenged on the one hand, or tenaciously defended on the other. Symbols in communal movements differ in one important way from ordinary symbols. The latter need not bear any essential relationship to whatever they represent. Such symbols as musical notes or letters, for example, show little resemblance to the concrete realities they represent. Communal symbols, on the other hand, do not come from conscious, rational decisions for theoretical purposes, but rather grow organically out of historical situations, and form part of the very things they stand for.

In the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, Urdu and the Urdu script, and Hindi and Nagari script, became such communal symbols in the second half of the nineteenth century and remained as such up to independence and beyond (King, p.111).

The genre of Partition literature is the result of a literary movement which had been founded about three decades earlier. According to Ahmed Ali, one of the founders of this movement, the Progressive Writers' Association (PWA) was:

[E]ssentially an intellectual revolt against the outmoded past... the outcome of the desire to revive literature and the arts and to relate them to life (Weir, p.138).

This deliberate effort to break from the past was felt necessary because it was only through this new mode of writing that literature and the writers could claim to have some sort of an affinity with the social, political and moral issues in their society. It was felt that the circumstances called for a change in the manner in which the writers looked at life around themselves. As Bisham Sahni notes:

The social orientation in literature was further defined and so was the role of the writer: that the writer was not merely a detached observer of life's drama but also an active participant in it on the side of struggling humanity. Man was still the centre of all writing, yet man is shown, not as

a mere individual struggling with his destiny, but in the context of his social milieu, who has individuality and his volition and yet is not independent of the social and economic forces that largely determine his destiny (Sahni, p.178).

Partition was to have a much more lasting impact on PWA than merely providing an avenue for writers to gain acceptance for their literary style and thematic contents of their stories in regards to the events they had witnessed or heard about. The division of the country ended up dividing the writers as well. Lowry Ann Weir has discussed the personal impact of this political action:

The Progressive (Writers) movement, which by this time had been distilled primarily to its socialist realist component, was particularly strong in Urdu, Punjabi, and Bengali. The fact that writers in these languages suddenly found themselves divided and uprooted was a blow to the movement. The emotional effects of the sudden independence, partition, and communal strife had profound effects on the psyches of all South Asians, including literary figures. Ironically, the achievement of freedom served to weaken progressivism in South Asia, for after 1947 writers had to find another primary concern (Weir, pp.41-42).

As the Progressives' literature was a new genre, it had to invent its own mode of cultural criticism. This is an aspect of literature which is still in its infancy and something which needs to develop quite considerably in order to be given serious attention. However, the current situation is still better than it was, as Weir explains:

... Among scholars it is important to note that South Asian literary critics were virtually non-existent until the advent of the progressives. As Carlo Coppola has stated, "At best 'criticism' was either appreciation chronicled in long literary histories or simply fault-finding... The Progressives, however, were given the complete critical apparatus of Socialist Realism with which to appraise not only their own writing but the writing of earlier generations as well" (Weir, pp.147-48).

In Urdu literature, emphasis had been placed on close inter-communal existence before the Partition. The sudden and violent break-up which occurred between the communities was something that many of the writers had tried but

failed to comprehend, and thus were unable to explain the actions of their as well as the 'other' communities. Aslam Azad highlights the major trends in the Partition literature:

After independence, the communal riots which had preceded it, emerged as the main topic of the period. Among Krishnan Chander's collection, *Ham whashi Hain*, Bedi's *Lajwanti* and Hayat-ullah Ansari's *Maa Aur Beta* are remarkable. A number of writers chose to write consistently about the common trends in Hindu and Muslim cultures which took shape in undivided India through the centuries (Azad, p.20).

Abdullah Hussain's epic picaresque novel, *Udhas Naslain*, traces the political, social and historical mood of India from the Great War through to the Partition and the creation of Pakistan. The life of Naim Beg, the protagonist, is tied in directly and indirectly with the destiny of India. His life is chronicled from being forced by the Imperialist British to participate in their war, to his being injured, becoming a freedom-fighter and in the process taking part in blowing up trains, going to jail and finally being killed brutally during the Partition.

Hussain's novel moves away from the State's metanarrative of Partition, and instead builds up a story by concentrating on the personal growth and experience of his characters. In his novel, he presents the protagonist in a variety of different situations; in intellectual conversation with the British or other Indian elite in Delhi, in the rural fields of Punjab, his encounter with the fiery and very violent group who want to overthrow the British through any means, and ultimately to his incarceration in jail for his political views.

One of the major themes of this novel is Naim's almost constant dislocation from one place to the other. His movements define the growth and development of his ideals and personality. Hussain establishes the power and control of the colonialists upon the native population and the unchallenged authority they exercised:

He was told that he could take as much land, from wherever he wanted. After this, the British colonial master, who was fluent in Urdu had a strange ceremony (which will be mentioned in greater detail in the novel later on) in which Nawab Roshan Ali Khan was given the title of a 'Lord'. There were two versions of how the area of the land was determined. According to one version, the Nawab tied a canister filled with honey and which had a hole at the bottom to the back of his horse. As he rode along, the honey kept dripping and insects gathered around the droplets to form a natural boundary. The second version of the myth was that he had started running and kept planting small bamboo sticks into the ground. When he returned by the sunset, his breathing had become so uneven that he was near death with exhaustion (Hussain, pp.5-6).

This extraordinary generosity showed how complete and arbitrary the colonial control was. They had the absolute power to do whatever they wanted without ever having to consult those to whom the lands might have belonged. This action was also indicative of the colonialist policy of creating a new social class of powerful elite whose sympathies could be retained during times of trouble.

There was another incident which illustrated the colonialist's power and contempt for the natives. A white ticket conductor beat an old Indian farmer to death in front of a large group, yet no one dared to stop him. When the train reached its station, he was arrested by British policemen. Naim conversed with another passenger about the possibility that at least the man will be tried for *murder*:

Sure, surely he will be tried. These (the British) people are great believers in upholding the law. But who will be in the Jury? Is any relative of yours in a Jury? He turned to go, then turned back and stood close to Naim. "This pig, I will tell you son, will sleep in his wife's bed tonight. I have seen more than fifty such incidents in my life. Such cases only have white juries, completely white" (Hussain, p.42).

The coloniser's power was such that even though he was alone and observed to carry out such a horrendous attack, the natives do not have the moral, social or even civic authority to prevent such brutality to one of their own. These people were the true 'wretched of the earth,' who, out of intense fear of the might of the coloniser undergo a complete transformation because they

have come to accept their own lack of self-esteem when they were in close proximity to their tormentors. That same quality was somehow restored back to them when they were in the company of their peers. A brutal action as was carried out by the colonialist would not have resulted in the same display of powerlessness by the onlookers if the perpetrator had been a native. Such an inaction ties in with what Fanon says about the fear that colonialism instils in the natives; there is the constant trepidation of reprisals by the Imperialists being much more harsh than the action which might have warranted them. The idea of 'self-esteem' is completely undermined by the colonial authority and the native is not really allowed space or the freedom to have respect for anything he believes in or anything that he/she does. Such denial of memory for oneself builds up through time into an uninterrupted disdain not just for other natives, but everything that they stand for.

It is after exemplifying such an incident that Hussain shows the extent of British hypocrisy and the helplessness of the Indian people. Even after observing the former's conduct, the latter seem powerless to do anything about it. It is this same class of people that the colonists turn to for help during World War II. On a day that Naim is in Roshanpur during the harvesting season to help his family, British soldiers descend from all sides and round up the farmers:

One British sergeant who spoke fluent Urdu, started addressing the crowd in his heavy and snarling military manner: "It is everyone's duty to protect one's country and government. The War is threatening to destroy your country and your government... To win the War, we need young men, whoever has more men will win. Our country has hundreds of thousands of men"... Mohinder Singh, who was standing in the front row addressed the sergeant: "Where is the battle taking place?"

The murmuring of the crowd intensified.

"Silence", the sergeant opened his arms.

The War is threatening England. Threatening England. I mean your government. We need you to save the British government" (Hussain, p.77).

It is especially the marginalised subjects, whose opinion or livelihood is never considered or acknowledged, who are now expected to defend the privileged lifestyles of their colonisers and of the native elite who collude with

them. They are expected to make a collective sacrifice against an enemy that they would never have encountered in their lives. The affairs of the colonialist take precedence over the private, daily practices of survival of the native. Harvest, which is something that Naim had worked so hard upon is to support his whole family is left untilled because the State unilaterally decided that her needs were more pressing than that of the individual.

Naim is one of the people recruited to fight to defend his 'government'. His regiment is taken from Roshanpur to Karachi, to Aden, to Port Said, Cairo, Alexandria and finally to Marseilles. Many of these coerced soldiers had never even ventured out of their native villages. Yet under the yoke of colonialism they have had to leave their homeland to fight and to die for the government and the beliefs of the Imperialists.

Hussain paints a painstaking picture of the confusion that Naim and his fellow Indian soldiers feel when they are forced to fight the Germans, even though they have no enmity towards them. Naim, in conversation with his friend, Mohinder Singh, articulates his feelings about what they have been forced to do:

"Do you know why we are fighting"? Mohinder Singh asked suddenly,
"Have they attacked Roshanpur"
"Here" _____
"But why are we here"
"The Germans are the enemies of the British, and they are our masters, that's why"
"I only know that Roshan Agha is our master"
"The British are the masters of Roshan Agha"
"Tell me for once and all, as to how many masters do we have in all"?
(Hussain, p.127)

In a battle, somewhere in Belgium, Naim is wounded. When he wakes up in a military hospital, his left arm has been amputated. He is given a medal and a piece of land for his bravery and services to the Crown. Because of these two conferred 'honours', his social and economic status is given a considerable boost. Like many other young men who had been to fight the War, he had

grown up before his years. As a result, he has acquired a new found self-confidence and the knowledge to question the social and political events taking place around him. Alok Rai, in discussing the literature of Partition, talks about the air of expectation in the general public, an expectation of a change. This had been coming for a while because thousands of Indian soldiers had returned from abroad and had seen the British in a light and circumstances that were very different from their roles in India. These soldiers, along with the majority of the general population knew that the British were no longer as infallible as they had projected themselves in the psyche of the common person. Most importantly, people expected the British to keep their word about granting India her independence in return for her participation in the War. According to Rai, by the end of World War II:

There is, paradoxically, a frequently interested sense of anticipation, an expectation that great things should happen – because clearly, great national and international processes were passing through critical junctures, and the world was, for better and for worse being shaped (Rai, p.21).

Colonialism's grip over India becomes untenable after the mass blood-letting that had taken place during the War. There were other reasons as well, such as the undertaking that if the Indians fought for the Empire, Imperialism would be dismantled once the War was over. The political awakening had reached the masses and it was increasingly difficult for the already stretched manpower to manage a vast country like India. The War had taken a heavy toll on England and it needed re-building, so efforts and people were needed to work there more than in the colonies.

Though many things have undergone changes in Roshanpur, not all of them have been for the better. Upon his return, Naim witnesses some thugs of Roshan Aga entering an old man's house and beating him brutally till he is bleeding profusely. He goes over to enquire:

"Uncle, what is the matter" Naim asked.
Instead of Ahmed Din, a young man who was standing close by answered - "The had come to collect *Motorana*"

“Motorana”

“Roshan Agha has bought a Motor (Car)”

“So”

Naim shrugged his shoulders and opened up his arms in the air as he did not really understand what he had been told, he asked the young man again: “What is Motorana?”

The young man replied, “The Jagirdaar (feudal lord) has bought a motor car and we have to give a portion of our crops” (Hussain, p.150).

Ahmed Din was beaten up because he had been unable to give his portion of the newly levied ‘tax’, it did not really matter that he was an old man who had had to work alone in his fields because his son had died defending ‘his country’. As Roshan Agha and others belonging to his class enjoyed the patronage of the colonialists, they could do whatever they wanted with their own people without any fear of facing any criminal charges or prosecution. They were now the new rulers, the petty bourgeoisie, as pointed out by Fanon, who take up the privileged positions, as it becomes increasingly obvious that the colonialists would be driven out.

As the political mood of the country changes, so does Naim, as he joins in with a splinter group of people whose sole aim is to overthrow the British through violent means. He never clearly defines his ultimate political or social ambitions and goals. Consequently, there appears to be some distance between him and the reader. As a result, one is left to question why he had left his family to fight for the British. There is no indication of whether he has left them to fight for what he believes in or whether it is because he wants to be away from the people of the village and his family.

Frantz Fanon, in his seminal work, *The Wretched of the Earth*, deliberates about the native's need and desire to pursue the same means of overthrowing the colonialists which have been used to suppress him/her. Because colonialism is maintained through violence and intimidation, the revolution should also use the same ‘tools’. As Fanon argues:

A colonised people is not alone. In spite of all that colonialism can do, its frontiers remain open to new ideas and echoes from the world outside. It

discovers that violence is in the atmosphere, that it here and there bursts out, and here and there sweeps away the colonial regime – that same violence which fulfils for the native a role that is not simply informatory, but also operative (Fanon, p.70).

Naim, unlike the native of Fanon's argument, rejects the use of violence; instead, he suggests other means of fighting against the colonialists. In this respect, he seems to be influenced by Gandhi's principle of non-violent resistance. His rejection of violence can be seen as a subversive act against colonialism, which expects and accounts for certain periods of violent response from the natives. The path that Naim advocates is of non-violence in the physical sense, which can be equally, if not more effective, in disrupting the business and influence of colonialism.

As the date of independence draws closer, reports of communal tension also increase and the general public panics:

After a few days, the riots gained momentum and people started to leave the city. There was a shortage of railway carriages. Those who wanted to escape with their lives formed Caravans and set out without a sense of direction. The news of the riots and of the caravans was coming in from all parts of the country. There was still no certainty about the manner in which the country would be divided. The partition of the country, which till this point might have been nothing more than speculation was fast becoming a reality, and people's minds had suddenly become blank. Once the bestiality of the violence set in, people just left their homes and ran to wherever they could, without thinking of their final destination (Hussain, p.495).

Naim also joins one such caravan heading for Pakistan. People keep joining it all the time, there is almost no government protection at this time. The colonialist, who for such a long time had suppressed and used these same natives have scuttled away and are more intent on saving their fortunes than the people they had at one time, considered it to be their divine right to rule over.

As there is such a dark cloud of danger hanging over them, the caravan is rife with rumours of two extremes. Some say that they will be attacked as soon as they reach the next town, while others claim that there are people

waiting for them with food, clothing and shelter at that same town. The mood shuttles back and forth between hope and terror and without any clear indication as to what would happen first. Hussain describes the despondency of the caravan:

They had been walking for nine days. As they were nearing Jullunder, there was a strange reduction in the number of people in the caravan even though half the people in the caravan were new. The reason for this was that as they had entered Punjab, the number of attacks had risen. In the last five days, they had been attacked a number of times everyday, and so they had not been able to drop their guard at all. These attacks were by armed groups of men from the adjoining villages. Initially, the refugees would fight with their attackers, but now they had become so tired of it that some of them just died at the hands of their attackers without any struggle, while others just ran away. After every attack, the attackers would jump over the dead and the wounded and would kidnap young women...

Since the last fifty miles, they had started seeing a lot of dead and wounded people lying on the road and in the adjoining fields. They provided the signs of a caravan in front, which, like a wounded animal left a trail of blood (Hussain, p.508).

There is a general atmosphere of gloom, utter tiredness and a basic loss of will to continue and survive. Naim is talking to his brother when yet another attack takes place, but they had become so used to it that not much attention is paid:

He raised his head, Ali and Professor had disappeared. Ali called him from behind the carriage: "Stop talking. Come here, here, hide. They are coming in this direction. Ahhh you stupid man."

Naim continued talking in exasperation: "The best option was to keep the foxes away is the bluish grass, and it makes a good fodder for the buffaloes and cows. Remember that. Before harvesting try to remember one more thing..."

But there was no time left. They were coming straight for him. He just did one more thing before they reached him. He removed his wooden arm very carefully and hid it under the blanket in the carriage. He was about to say "Take care of this", when they started beating him with the butts of their home made guns and led him away" (Hussain, p.525).

This is the last time Naim is mentioned in the novel. His death is at the hands of his own people, those for whose freedom he had fought for a

significant part of his life. Hussain does not treat Naim's death with any more sentimentality or significance than any other characters within this novel. It would not be wrong to say that Naim's death is the most potent example of Hussain's view on the disillusionment and the bitter disappointment in the post-independence era of those who had struggled and fought to throw off the yoke of colonialism. Naim's death, before his final destination, is actually a metaphor for the failure of countries such as Pakistan, which fall short of achieving those goals for which such a long and torturous struggle had been undertaken.

Eminent cultural critic, Aijaz Ahmed, has strongly criticised the failure of Urdu literature to produce a direct or comprehensive critique of the colonial experience:

I cannot think of a single novel in Urdu between 1935 and 1947, the crucial year leading up to decolonisation, which is in any direct or exclusive way about 'the experience of colonialism and imperialism'. All the novels I know from that period are predominantly about other things: the barbarity of feudal landowners, the rapes and murders in the houses of religious 'mystics'... The theme of anti-colonialism is alluded to in many of those novels, but never in an exclusive or even a dominant emphasis. In fact, I do not know of *any* fictional narrative in Urdu, in roughly the last two hundred years, which is of any significance and any length (I am making an exception for a few short stories here) in which the issue of colonialism or the difficulty of a primacy as, for example, in Forester's *A Passage to India* or Paul Scott's *The Raj Quartet*. The typical Urdu writer has had a peculiar vision, in which he or she has never been able to construct fixed boundaries between the criminalities of the colonialist and the brutalities of all those indigenous people who have had power in our own society (Ahmad, p.118).

Ahmad does have some validity in his argument, yet it must be said that his ability to generalise does get the better of him in this case. Because colonialism is not mentioned by name does not, by any stretch of the imagination mean, that it is not a dominant theme in a novel such as *Udhas Naslain*. Evils of colonialism dominate the contents of this novel as there is an implied reference to how it constantly affected the Indian society. It is colonialism which determines the social status of people like Roshan Agha, of the political movement to gain independence, of the young men going off to fight

the wars of the imperialists, and most of all, the Partition. Hussain is at pains to show that the misery suffered by ordinary Indians during the Partition does place a considerable burden of responsibility for violence and brutality squarely on them. Had the novel been written directly about colonialism, it would not have been surprising for critics like Ahmad to condemn it as being too narrowly focused on 'their' activities rather than trying to understand the part that 'we' might have played in it. So, even though there is some truth in what Ahmad points out in the above-mentioned quotation, his conclusions do tend to generalise and therefore cannot be considered to be valid in their entirety. As has been discussed in the previous chapters, writers from the subcontinent have attempted to examine various aspects of Partition through the experiences of a wide variety of characters. Most of these authors have not shied away from holding other Indians (those belonging to a different religions) responsible for the pain and misery caused to millions of people. Even though these 'others' might have different religious beliefs, it is never questioned or doubted that they were also people who had existed in the social and cultural fabric of India. Hussain's work provides a comprehensive example of Indians, without any regard to their religious affiliation, being held accountable for their actions, praised for their positive contributions and criticised for those that resulted in such large scale anguish during the Partition.

Chapter 7

Re-Calling Traumas: Memory, Violence and the Oral Narratives of Partition

This chapter will explicate the interconnections between violence, memory and cognition of events of peoples' lives during the Partition. It is believed that by examining the combination of experience and memory of Partition, one may arrive at the lingering effects of that traumatic period and how it continues to shape victims' present outlook. Their deep seated detestation of the 'Other' (Hindus and Sikhs) is still intense, primarily because of personal experiences, as well as the State's deliberate efforts to carefully cultivate and foster certain fears and apprehensions of its populace. The articulation of personal traumatic experiences in the form of oral narratives in a limited public space can be considered to be the first significant steps by the victims towards incorporating their pain in the historical consciousness of the general community. The need for these steps has been made even more essential by the lack of any initiatives to keep archival record of their experiences by the state or provincial governments. Even though the State's metanarrative begins with Partition as the moment of the foundation of Pakistan, beginnings in individual narratives are much more complex than such definitive citations of particular dates. A State's narrative depends on 'dates' since it provides a coherent packaging of historical events which may be read and interpreted with a particular bias. In individual interviews, these same dates are not so politically and historically loaded. The strategically essentialist mode of 'one' history of a nation requires selective placing of chronological events and clearly defined protagonists, usually the political leaders, and in the same vein, a block compartmentalisation of the villains and victims. However, during my fieldwork (carried out in Punjab, Pakistan between August-November, 1997), the 'subjects' cited various events and circumstances which were at odds with the State's official version of history. Most of the interviews for this chapter were carried out in the rural District of Shakargarh in Pakistan. This was done for a number of reasons, firstly because the largest number of crossings into Pakistan took place here, secondly, Shakargarh had the first villages where the refugees

crossed River Ravi to get into Pakistan. These interviews shed light on how people had been forced to move from their homes to undertake an uncertain journey towards the 'homeland' that was promised by the political leadership of the Muslim League. The historical reality of the Pakistani government's failure in providing any significant form of assistance to millions of fleeing refugees is completely omitted from the State's version of history.

The major difference between the various accounts of histories encountered by a postcolonial historian are elucidated by Gyanendra Pandey, who declares that the search for historical evidence is initially nothing more than 'apparent paradox'. He continues:

What the historian trades in, we are told, is facts. What s/he inherits and collects and explores are narratives. 'Facts' or, more broadly, 'evidence' comes to the historian in the form of narratives and narrative fragments: the narratives, one might say (with only a little exaggeration), of the ruling classes, and the 'fragments' of the subordinated (Pandey 1995, p.224).

As in every major national and domestic conflict, the groups which suffer most are those forming the basic social fabric of a society, those with the least political clout to warrant any attention to their misery. During Partition, this 'group' consisted of the ordinary rural populace, those who were great in numbers but lacked education and thus experienced an unfair political representation in the leadership, most of which was dominated by western educated elite and feudal landlords. The people in the 'subordinated' groups are those who suffered the most, and their 'fragmented stories' form the imperative foundation upon which the entire narrative structure of the Oral discourse has to be constructed. Sometimes, these subaltern voices gain entrance into the official narratives, but never progress beyond their 'capacities', which is that these life stories are nothing more than mere illustrative examples to elaborate the State or elite history's perspectives.

The 'fragmented' narratives are denied access in the State's narrative, for it would obligate an enquiry into its own shortcomings when these subalterns' dire needs of shelter, expectation and protection were not met. The State's narratives

fail to mention its own inadequacies by imposing the entire blame on the 'other', in this case, the Indians (Hindus and Sikhs as well as the government). While the political leadership of the Muslim League is glorified in its struggle for a separate homeland, subaltern's claims on history are erased from this simplistic metanarrative. In almost all the colonial struggles, once the political objectives of decolonisation and independence are achieved, there is an obvious change in the ideology and priorities of the leadership. Those subjects whose lives are forever altered and who are forced to fend for themselves against grave adversarial odds are denied any protection in their struggle for rights and survival by the State they helped to create. As discussed earlier, these groups are large in numbers but weak in their political influence. These groups include people in rural areas, the uneducated and women. Theirs are the stories which make up the bulk of what really happened during the Partition of 1947.

The subaltern's stories are excluded from the metanarrative for a variety of reasons. Firstly, because most of them are Oral and secondly, as will be discussed further in this chapter, these narratives do not follow a linear structure similar to those in a written form. These Oral narratives are often at variance with the official version of history. Despite prejudices from the State's narratives, their importance and value is increasingly becoming obvious. Elizabeth Tonkin cites Dale Porter's *The Emergence of the Past* in defending the oral tradition as a viable academic and social form of discourse. As she says:

... [N]arrative history is a proper form of interpretation, a means of proposing plausible connections which is a criteria proposed by some philosophers. He believes that narrative may be the most powerful way of understanding events that occur with a certain degree of complexity through time. It is a 'self-justifying mode of explanation' which can actually be scientific, in ways comparable with scientific method as it is now understood (Tonkin, pp.36-37).

As Tonkin suggests, Oral narratives can no longer be relegated to the margins of academic discourse as tools of recovering a coherent and reliable Past. Orality provides spaces for reflexivity as well as complexity each time a story is told, even though these variations might be too insignificant for either

party to notice at that particular time. Derek Clifford points out how this form of history fills the essential but unfulfilled gaps of the official history of a State:

Oral history - at its best - potentially offers a contribution to social assessment in understanding ordinary people by *situating* their lives in concrete social and historical context through the stories they tell about themselves, their friends and families; by locating their accounts within other histories which relate to those specific times and places, and by thus eliciting their own meaning and perspectives, giving them a genuine voice in the assessment of their own needs (Clifford, pp.65-6).

Oral narratives form the fluid counterpoint to the rigid version of events described in the State's narrative. Instead of selective 'milestone' events, oral narratives are loose threads which become tangled with or untangled from other strands of stories. Bridget Macey describes the process and politics of oral narratives:

Recapturing the detail of how the past was lived is not easy either for the interviewer or the subject. The idea that someone has only one story to tell is naive. Telling one's story in itself can act as a trigger for other memories and other interpretations of events. Each time a story is retold the possibility exists for a shift of emphases, sometimes giving new information, sometimes amending the detail. It seems impossible to look at the subjective elements of one's personal without incorporating one's current attitudes and beliefs in the reinterpretation (Macey, p.43).

A number of survivors that I interviewed often omitted details of brutalities and degradation of the times they had lived through. However, in the presence of other survivors, the conversations tended to be more detailed and unequivocal. A number of the people interviewed had stories of lived experience of overwhelming fear, disorientation, exposure to constant humiliations, sickness, starvation and the ever-present threat of death during Partition's troubled times. Many survivors' accounts divulge the sense of personal confusion (following the rupture of an old and an established way of life) loss of identity, and increasing focus on the minutiae of life on the move, a state of alertness to the particular which alone might contribute to survival. These factors, along with others which will be discussed in more detail later on, make Oral history an essential component of

what might be considered to be a 'record' of an event. Dunaway points out that
Orality:

'... has helped to democratise history, by incorporating diverse perspectives of the non-literate and of groups often excluded from traditional historical canon.... oral materials are subject to the same problems of validation as any source used for research or writing' (Dunaway, p.40).

During the interviews, it became obvious that Partition had come up incidentally and unexpectedly; these people had heard of the impending division of India through the news on the radio which filtered into their communities, along with oral accounts of people crossing over into Pakistan, and finally through the arrival of hundreds of thousands of refugees. These versions of events were a far cry from the official metanarrative about the causes which led to violence and dislocation. In the elite's version of the history of Partition, political and idealistic nationalism enveloped the rural areas and that in turn led to their demands for a separate homeland which ultimately led to violence. For many of these rural subjects, the extent of violence seemed to defy an explanation, it was something which did not follow a logic and it was something which existed outside their realms of comprehension. Thus it was not unusual to hear people giving all kinds of rationalisations for such a large and brutal scale of violence, ranging from 'all the people had gone mad', 'Sikhs being manipulated by Hindus', to a 'curse from God'. Thus the inexplicability and the unexpectedness of Partition and its dire consequences dominated the narratives of people's experiences. Many of them found it very difficult to explain how it was possible to tear apart the social fabric of their mixed societies. As one of the interviewees told me, 'we did not even know that we had become enemies!' The same people who had helped groups get across the River Ravi to their respective homelands, now formed groups of young men who actively searched around different villages to loot and kill the departing Hindus and Sikhs. These acts, according to the people interviewed, were in response to the horrible scenes they had seen and stories they had heard from the refugees who had come from East Punjab. During the interviews, it also came to light that some elders of different communities had tried to restrain their young ones,

and were successful on a number of occasions, otherwise the bloodshed would have been even worse than it was. The total number of people killed, according to some estimates was over a million, with hundreds of thousands injured and similar number of women raped, tortured or abducted by all the sides. This genocide was on a scale never experienced before in Indian history.

The fear and panic caused by this genocide ensured that maximum expulsion and transfer of population of the 'Other' took place. This ambition was clearly achieved as Partition became the largest human migration that has ever taken place during peace-time in the world's history. Alison Palmer has described the modern genocide as the:

. . . [T]he intention to destroy physically a whole or a substantial part of a group because they are part of that group whose membership is defined by the perpetrator, regardless of whether or not the whole group is actually destroyed. This includes cases where unintended genocidal consequences of action are noted by the perpetrator, and are continued or increased where genocide is attempted but fails (Palmer, p.90).

The violence witnessed by subjects was such that it seems to have left an indelible mark on those who were unfortunate enough to have lived through it. There continues to be a general sense of complete incomprehensibility at what was happening around them. To some people, Partition's violence was a sign of an 'unnatural' time, others considered it to be some kind of a Divine punishment and yet others justified it as something that was preordained. Dipesh Chakrabarty, who has worked extensively on the Bengali Partition, has articulated the complexities involved in re-covering the details of victims' experiences:

Memory is a complex phenomenon that reaches out to far beyond what normally constitutes a historian's archives, for memory is much more than what the mind can remember or what objects can help us document about the past. It is also about what we do not always consciously know that we remember until something actually, as the saying goes, jogs our memory. And there remains the question, so much discussed these days in the literature on the Indian partition, of what people do not even wish to remember, the forgetting that comes to our aid in dealing with pain and unpleasantness in life. Memory, then, is far more complicated than what historians can recover and it poses ethical

challenges to the investigator-historian who approaches the past with one injunction: tell me all (Chakrabarty, p.2143).

The academics' research techniques, as Chakrabarty points out, fail to comprehend or indeed acknowledge the difficulties faced by the survivors. The stories, survivors are told, would perform the miracle of helping them to come to terms with their traumatic past. By so doing, the researchers take on the added role of a psychoanalyst, something for which they are ill-qualified. In addition to this unwelcomed responsibility, I also had to convince the subjects that their stories did matter and it was important, not just for them but for the whole nation, that they were told. Their narratives followed a variety of structures, some gave a detailed account, others were very circumspect and did not really want to talk about the experiences of their past, and if they did talk about the events they been through during Partition, it was in a very summarised form. Almost all the people interviewed became physically emotional at one point or another.

The oral narratives of Partition are circumscribed within two major emotional boundaries, which are explained by Chakrabarty. They are:

'... the sentiment of nostalgia and the sense of trauma, and their contradictory relationship to the question of the past. A traumatised memory has a narrative structure which works on a principle opposites to that of any historical narrative. At the same time, however, this memory, in order to be the memory of trauma, has to place the Event - the cause of the trauma, in this case, the partition violence - within a past that gives force to the claim of the victim. This has to be a shared past between the narrator of the traumatic experience and the address of the narration. Yet it cannot be a historicist version of the past, one that aims to diffuse the shock of the traumatic by explaining away the element of the unexpected (Chakrabarty, p.2143).

The erratic and disjointed memory confronts the linear metanarrative of the State, whose collective suffering is harnessed or ignored to produce a chronological arrangement of events, with clearly defined victims and villains. Janet Walker points out the recurring personal struggles which are fought by the survivors in their mental exertion of remembering and forgetting their agonised past:

History of trauma, a history of events that are forgotten in their experiencing. "The historical power of trauma is not just that the experience is repeated after its forgetting, but that it is only in and through its inherent forgetting that it is first experienced at all... For history of trauma means that it is referential precisely to the extent that it is not fully perceived as it occurs (Walker, p.817).

The events of Partition are enshrined in the sudden and explosive repercussion of events which were taking place outside the domain of rural everyday social and communal sphere. When these events are re-called, the "severe trauma explodes the cohesion of consciousness" as well as creating an "altered and an exaggerated" notion of what was witnessed. These narratives are presented in a spasmodic chronological linearity, their personal rendition of the events is "... marked by repetition, and centred on an event it calls attention to and deflects attention from". These are events which are not fully grasped at the time, even by the very participants as they unfolded (Walker, pp.813-4).

'Violence' was defined by each subject as an act carried out by the members of an 'other' community whereas the brutalities they or the majority of other Muslims might have witnessed or participated in were relegated to 'revenge' for the barbarity practised by Hindu/Sikhs in East Punjab and other parts of India. A number of subjects stated that they were systematically disarmed by the Indian military and police of any 'weapons', and in some cases Muslims were not even allowed to carry sticks, on the other hand, Sikhs were allowed to carry *Kirpans* (swords) because it was part of their religious belief. It is documented, and came up a number of times during the interviews, that Kirpans and other types of knives were the Sikhs' weapons of choice as totally dis-armed civilians were butchered, women and children were the particular targets. This is an example of how one action could be responsible for the beginning of so many other things. This is an excerpt from the Commander of the Punjab Boundary Force's report on the 11th August, 1947:

The Civil arrangements for splitting the Punjab are proceeding rapidly and a few days ago a new Hindu Supdt of Police arrived in Amritsar to take over. His first act was to dis-arm the Muslim members of the Police Force. This has created considerable alarm and despondency. The Police Force in Amritsar has decreased by 30%. The Muslim Police are

most anxious for their own safety and for that of their families. The Governor has taken prompt action and this Hindu Supdt of Police has been transferred to the Kangra Valley (Zafar, p.333).

One needs to question the reasons for such a deliberate and provocative move, and that too of a Hindu in an area which was already experiencing the worst of atrocities against the Muslims. It is also quite surprising that his actions should come as a surprise because being a senior officer, there must have been, or should have been, some reports on his anti-Muslim stance. One can only imagine how the people responsible for violence against the Muslims might have felt by this action, for it must have been seen as nothing less than official approval for their actions.

Some of the phrases uttered persistently in almost all the interviews had to do with the scale of violence, the number of refugees and the sheer brutality which had taken hold of people who had lived together for generations. The Muslims trapped by the flooded River Ravi on one hand were indiscriminately and ruthlessly attacked by Sikhs, who I was told, would patrol in *Jathas* and would attack any group of Muslims that they wanted. These attackers would collect their loot which would be piled up by the roadside, go back to their homes in the evening and return the next morning. A similarly gruesome incident has already been discussed in the chapter dealing with Abdullah Hussain's *Udhas Naslain*. Naim is so exhausted by the physical and emotional rigours that he does not even attempt to put up any sort of resistance against his killers. This macabre activity had assumed a predictably vicious ritual, where both the victims and perpetrators of violence seemed to go through the motions, immune to the misery and havoc caused around them. Yet, a number of people talked about their experiences when they got along with one another without any untoward attention being drawn to the other person's religion. Pandey believes that even though such stories might be true, an event as brutal as the Partition had to provide some selective sense of a shared experience when the past was remembered. He continues that:

In the long-term, it [violence of partition] also produced new visions of a past that had been exceptionally harmonious, a past in which lives and cultures, joys and sorrows, were shared in ways that partition (and the politics of partition) made impossible. It gave rise to new notions too of the 'traditions' of 'our village', 'our town', 'our locality' which often stood out in popular recollection from the general run of insanity and violence. None of this, it is suggested, happened here (Pandey, 1997, p.2037).

Most of the people interviewed believed that most of the vicious acts of violence occurred in the 'public space' outside their immediate community, thus establishing an immediate distance between themselves and the mayhem. Almost all of those who knew about such actions were quick to point out that acts of brutality carried out by their peers could not be really considered as acts of 'violence' (which is always carried out by the Hindus/Sikhs) and the acts always took place outside the sanctity of the community. In a few cases where the interviewees did talk about the physical violence in their villages, I was told that it was mostly carried out by the *Jathas* from other villages or by some 'wayward' members of their own community. The subjects interviewed were able to talk about the physical and quite often horrific acts of brutality towards others, but not a single individual could 'remember' anything about sexual violence (especially rape, which, according to official figures, there were tens of thousands cases.) This brutal and 'essential' part of the communal violence seems have been erased from individual and community memory.

A number of subjects reminisced about the 'old times' when they were young and how they used to live with Hindus and Sikhs as a community, within certain defined parameters, and played their part in each other's happiness' and sadness'. The Muslims had a better understanding with the Sikhs, though the latter are the ones who were most responsible for the violence during the Partition. There were strong cultural similarities between the Muslims and the Sikhs, because of their shared linguistic heritage; both communities were farmers, and as an interviewee put it, "If you share land with someone, you are most likely to share a number of ideas and beliefs with him". However, recalling the events of Partition, a number of those interviewed said that Sikhs were manipulated by the Hindus, and that Sikhs are, as a community, very simplistic and not particularly intelligent. Because they were closer to the Sikh community,

one feels that there were instances when a concerted effort was made to distance them from the violence. A few also said that they (the Sikhs) were learning their lesson now, as they have had some payback from the Hindus to the violence they carried out on the Muslims. The examples of Indian government's military operation on the Golden Temple and the large scale massacre of Sikhs after Indira Gandhi's assassination during the 1980s were cited as cases in point.

The interviews for this chapter (25 in all) were conducted in the villages across the border with India, in the District of Shakargarh. There were 20 men and 5 women interviewed, with ages ranging from 66 to 85. The main reason for such a gender disparity was that a number of women did not want to be interviewed by an 'outsider'. These 'informants' were approached after I had been told about them by my contacts in their particular villages. As I have already mentioned, this area of Punjab was chosen because it was here the most of the crossing from one side to the other took place during the Partition. Most of the interviews were conducted in Punjabi, while a few were in Urdu.

The methodology that I adopted for this exercise has been outlined by Martin W. Bauer and Sandra Jovchelovitch. As these interviews were about events which had a direct influence on the informant/subjects' lives, they were considered as 'Narrative Interviews' (NI). This technique goes further than any other interview method in avoiding pre-structuring the interview. It is the most notable attempt to go beyond the question-answer type of interview. I used a specific type of everyday communication, namely story telling and listening to elicit their responses. The underlying presupposition is that the perspective of the interviewee is best revealed in stories where the informant is using his or her own spontaneous language.

In this interview technique, one had to have gained enough confidence of the informants to elicit narrations from them about this painful topic, and once

the narrative had started, to keep it going by mobilising its self-generating schema. The steps involved in this process included:

Preparation

Exploring the field, in which I already had an academic and historical knowledge.

Formulating examinant questions, which reflect the interest that I have in conducting these interviews. These are distinguished from 'immanent' issues, which are the themes, topics and accounts that appear during narration by the informant.

Phase 1: Initiation

Introducing the central topic of Partition to trigger the process of narration. There was a deliberate avoidance of 'indexical formulations', and did not refer to dates, names or places, for such questions were introduced only after the informant had brought them in his narrative.

Phase 2: Main Narration

Once the informant started talking about his/her experiences of Partition, I made an utmost effort that there would be no interruption from my side, Instead, there was only non-verbal encouragement from me to continue with the narrative. This technique usually went on till the informant signalled the end of his/her story.

Phase 3: Questioning Phase

Once the story finished, I usually proceeded with asking 'what happened then' type of questions, or asked about certain clarifications. There were no 'why' questions. At this point in the interview, immanent questions, using only words of the informant, referring both to events mentioned in the story and the topics of the research project. The examinant questions that I had were usually translated into immanent questions using the language of the informant to complete gaps in the story. This phase of the interview was meant to elicit new and additional material beyond the self-generating schema of the story.

Phase 4: Concluding talk

After Phase 3, the recording was stopped. I then had a more relaxed conversation and depending on the situation, asked some 'why' questions. I also answered any concerns that they might have, and thanked them for their time and for giving me an opportunity to talk them about personal events in their lives. (Bauer, pp.62-64)

The analysis of the narratives involved focus on chronological and non-chronological aspects of the story. Narratives were considered to be a succession of events or episodes that comprise of actors, actions, contexts and temporal locations. The narration of events and episodes displayed a chronological ordering that allowed for the interpretation of how time was used by the informants. The non-chronological aspects of the narratives corresponded to explanations and reasons found behind the events, to the criteria involved in the selections made throughout the narrative, to the values and judgements attached to the narrations and to all the operations of the plot.

There are a number of considerations that had to be taken into account when these interviews were analysed. One of the most important aspects of a successful interpretation is to be 'disinterested,' and hence avoid the temptation to take sides. My conclusions, by the end of this project are similar to those expressed by Martin W. Bauer:

- Narratives privilege the reality of what is experienced by the informants: the reality of a narrative refers to what is 'real' to the storyteller.
- Narratives do not copy the reality of the world outside themselves; they propose particular representations/interpretations of the world.

- Narratives are not open to proof, and cannot simply be judged as true or false, they express the truth of a point of view, of a specific location in space and time.
- Narratives are always embedded in the socio-historical moment. The particular voice in a narrative can only be understood in relation to the larger context. (Bauer, p.72)

II

To the extent that they are remembered and believed, survivors' memories of Partition help in problematising the discourse dealing with cleansing model of communalism. One believes oral narratives to be truthful, as one does not really have ways of verifying them. It should therefore be acknowledged that these stories will reflect the narrator's biases. Sultan Khan, of village Naugaza in Pakistan, who was thirty-two years old in 1947, recounts the events of that time:

Our relatives gathered together their families and their animals and camped on the Noor Malik crossing of Ravi. The river was flooded and it rained incessantly, and no one could cross it. I was on this side of the river and there were just so many people that one could not count them. There were people as far as the eye could see. Even if there were seventy ferries on each crossing, it would have taken them months to get the people across.

The Hindus/Sikhs arranged to bring the Police and the Army from Gurdaspur. The people were stuck on that side of the river with their small children. Once the firing started, panic set in and no one cared for anything and jumped in the river. There was just so much firing that one could hear it miles away.

The next day, when I went back, the people, for whom I had thought that it would be months before they would be able to ferry across the river, were cleared from the Bank in two hours.

When we saw that with our own eyes, we told the Hindus on the Pakistani side that they had to leave their homes and go to India. In Bheko Chak, there were over a hundred Hindu families and they were asked to leave, on their way to India, they were attacked and a number of them were killed and their possessions were looted.

The sheer number of refugees was more than any of the people interviewed had ever seen. There were almost no governmental agencies and so these people, who had been uprooted from their homes and communities had to

fend for themselves in their new homelands. As more and more people crossed into Pakistan, it became obvious that it was just not possible or safe for non-Muslims to live in Western Punjab. As the troubles escalated so did the fleeing, which in return added to the general level of confusion on both sides, that ultimately resulted in more violence.

Another survivor of Partition, Abdul-Rahman Khan, from the village Jarpal, inhales the smoke from his *Hookah* (Smoking Pipe), lowers his head in a slow and rhythmic rocking motion, as if trying to recall and simultaneously purge his memory of what he had experienced. He takes a deep breath and recounts what he had seen as he waited to cross Ravi into Pakistan:

The Hindu and Sikh *Jathas* were just sitting by the way side. They would let some pass and then if they saw others with something valuable, they would rush and take that away. They took away a number of young women.... After a few days, there were sights that have never gone away from my mind. (He touches his ears, a gesture of asking God for forgiveness). There were Sikhs who had cut off children's heads and carried them on swords and spears, and were going to people and saying out aloud, 'Hey Muslays (derogatory word for Muslims), you like to eat heads (of sheep and goats), why don't you try some of these.

Stories such as the one mentioned above are among those which do not get any significant attention in the metanarrative unless they are to be used as mere examples. Urvashi Butalia, who has worked on Partition's narratives writes about the uneasy 'relationship' that develops between the survivors and those engaged in collecting their stories. She also discusses the manner in which stories have been passed to the next generation through oral narratives. She believes that:

The partition of India into two countries, India and Pakistan, is an event that is said to have taken place in August 1947, yet its beginnings go much further back into history and its ramifications have not yet ended. For many of us, who were first and second generation children after partition, the event lives on in our minds, not so much through historical records as through the tales that are told and retold, particularly in North Indian [and Pakistani] families, of the horror and brutality of the time, of the friends and relatives who continue to live across the border and of visits to ancestral homes, much of this creating a yearning for a – largely mythical—harmonious past where Hindus and Sikhs and Muslims lived

happily together. This ideal is something that we continue to hold on to in the face of an increasingly communal present (Butalia, 1994, p.31).

I disagree with Butalia's methodology when it concerns the subaltern histories; in my research, it became painfully obvious that the violent change was not a result of some drawn out tensions, instead it was more of a reactionary atmosphere which culminated in violence and hatred of the other communities. Even though they profess to speak for the subalterns, writers like Butalia still use the same premises for their research as those used for State's narrative. It seems that the composition of the subaltern histories is characterised by competitive rather than collaborative avenues of theorising, where religious affiliation of the community invariably takes the centre stage. As much of the research on Partition is carried out in India, this factor assumes a pivotal role when examples of a particular community's (in this case, Hindus and Sikhs) pain not so astutely burden the whole of the 'other' (Muslims) with the guilt of that violent act. One wonders if it would be at all possible to achieve an adequately neutral theorisation of the peripheral history of those overlooked by the State.

The situation of the East Punjab got worse by the day and that is where the greatest uncertainty about the eventual Partition plans lay. As the final outcome became certain, Muslims started to leave for Pakistan. H.V. Hodson's book, *The Great Divide*, has a section of the report that Mountbatten wrote to the King after his tour of Punjab:

... The contrast between the organisation of the columns in each direction was striking. Coming from the West, a non-Muslim column, which seemed to consist entirely of Sikhs, was about to cross the Ravi; it was drawn up in good marching order along some fifty miles of road. The Sikhs had their bullock carts and flocks with them... In contrast, the Muslim columns coming from the East appeared poor and ill-organised. They looked as if they had been driven out or fled in panic, as indeed they had (Hodson, p.411).

Hodson notes that vicious attacks on the trains continued much after the 14th of August and there was no lapse in their brutality, "[G]ruesome attacks were made on refugee trains, by Sikhs and others. Between 20th and 23rd

September, 2,700 Muslims and 600 non-Muslims were killed or wounded on trains (Hodson, p.412). Whereas the League's political leadership has been consistently blamed by the Indians as those responsible for violence, Hodson's account points to the deliberately ignored role of other political parties:

Pandit Nehru himself told Lord Mountbatten later that Master Tara Singh had candidly admitted that the Sikh leaders had been inciting their followers to violence and had approved of most of what they had done, but that things had gone too far and the Sikh population was itself now in danger (Hodson, p.406).

The role of the Akali and Congress parties' leadership has continued to be ignored in the present political historiography. The latter had the largest number of political followers and the former was the only party representing the Sikhs, as such, the influence they had, even though indirectly, should not be underestimated. The political and religious affiliations of sections of each religious community were exploited by all the three parties involved. A combination of political and religious rhetoric was used to incite people to become more antagonistic towards the other communities.

Veena Das and Ashis Nandy have carried out extensive research on the language and discourse of violence, of the different ideologies which explain its use. The one which is directly related to Partition is the 'language of feud', which is:

... [S]tudied intensively by anthropologists in the context of tribal societies. Despite variations between cultures and societies, feud may be defined as a pact of violence between social groups in such a way that the definition of the self and the other emerges through an exchange of violence. Whereas the victim of violence in sacrifice is the means by which the moral community is established and hence bears a close relation to the sacrificiant, the victim of feud is simply a bearer of the status of his group. He is the means through which the pact of violence may continue to be executed (Das, 1986, p.179).

Both authors are very critical of the written literature of Partition, because of what I had stated earlier in this chapter; that it entails an essential and often times a deliberate attempt to form a simplistic and stereotypical portrayal of a character along particular religious lines. Once this form of characterisation takes place, the authors' need to create a balanced view invariably results in a

predictable tit-for-tat plot, in which his/her own religious community is always less guilty than the others. Writing about such literature, Das and Nandy state that:

The experience of the partition produced a large volume of literature, much of which was autobiographical in inspiration. Most of this literature remained inauthentic, because it tried to reduce the violence to the language of feud in which violence from one side was equally balanced with violence from the other. Thus the description of violent, inhuman acts perpetrated upon those travelling by a train coming from Lahore would be matched by another description of similar gruesome acts to which travellers coming from Amritsar would be subjected. If a prostitute gave shelter to two women whose bodies had been mutilated by rioters then one could be certain that one of these women would be a Hindu and the other, a Muslim. Similarly, the language of self-sacrifice was often used to describe events, but inevitably degenerated into a glorification of self-mutilation without exploring the generative capacity of suffering. In some ways, these representations were the same as using ordinary language to convey an extraordinary and traumatic experience to someone who has not shared it... It is precisely the use of the same context or phrase which sums up the unbridgeable chasm in understanding (Das, 1986, p.189).

Orality provides a counter-balance to the rather artificial and 'closed' narratives in written literature. It allows the narrators much more freedom and space to bring in issues and events which, if not impractical, would weaken the written narrative. One of the most distinctive features of Orality is the lack of pressure to include 'matching' scenarios, to somehow justify or to provide a 'balance' to a particular narrative.

Ian Talbot has also carried out research into the literature of Partition and states problems he encountered which are very similar to those I had faced when doing research for this chapter:

Some may argue that little is to be served by cataloguing the horrors brought by the massacres of 1947. All that will be achieved is the reopening of old wounds... Yet to bury away these agonies is to deny the experience of countless people. In the name of both justice and truth, victims should be given their voice. Furthermore it could be argued that a nation's maturity can be gauged by its ability to confront unpleasant aspects of its historical past. The more it does this the less likely they are to be repeated. By denying the horrors of the 1947 massacres, the courage and humanity which was displayed during them is also neglected (Talbot, p.29).

One cannot but agree with his conclusion, for it is imperative that not just the social scientists, but the community lays claim to the narratives of Partition. The aim, however, should be to accept the sufferings of all those who paid such a heavy price in order to attain a separate nation. The memories should form the corner-stone of the articulation of national identity of Pakistan and should be seen as something that unites the people to form a more tolerant and stable society.

The violence between the Punjabis was a larger than life example of the attitudes and behaviours which had been sanctioned in this very proud, headstrong, militant and comparatively prosperous region of colonial North India. A man was expected to exercise 'control' over his wife and expected to keep her in 'place' in and out of the household, a liberty which included tacit approval of physical violence against his spouse. Such a disposition, when placed alongside the volatile conditions of the Partition was to have devastating results for all the communities involved in venting out their anger and hatred which had been fanned by inflated claims of real and imagined atrocities of the 'Others.' As a result, one has to agree on a number of issues that Andrew Major raises, despite his tendency to generalise and exaggerate his point about the whole of Punjabi community:

Yet it would seem to be quite wrong to regard the rape and abduction of Punjabi women in 1947 as a product of anomie of the times, as an abnormal occurrence in a society undergoing severe temporary dislocation, for that would ignore the fact that violence against women is embedded in everyday relationships in this society. Recent studies have confirmed that 'power rape' – the raping of women in order to demoralise and defeat rival men in a patriarchal society – is particularly common in Northern India. Abduction is also conspicuous in the history of inter-clan rivalry in the Punjab: speaking of the turbulent Jat villages near the India-Pakistan border, a former Chief Justice [G.D. Khosla] asserted that 'thefts, dacoities, murders and abductions have always constituted the normal spare-time activities of the inhabitants'. Referring to one Jat Sikh villager's raping of many Muslim refugee women in 1947, the same author writes that the rapist 'was not impelled by anger or a desire for revenge. For him it was a God-given occasion to do something he heartily enjoyed' (Major, pp.60-61).

As described in Veena Das's research about women's stories during the Partition, I had similar experiences with women I interviewed. The actual moment of dislocation is very sudden, as if it becomes that in order to deny time to think of what has happened. The abruptness of this event denies the 'normal' mode of moving from one place to another, in which case one would pack one's belongings, meet the neighbours and take care of any outstanding commercial or economic matters. Das outlines the trauma of 'disruption' of the 'private' lives of women:

The forms of representations that emphasise the disruption of everyday life and violence to the women's world of cooking and feeding and decorously covering the body are also not idiosyncratic expressions – they represent forms through which disruption of life through a sudden announcement of death is traditionally represented in personal narratives of women (Das, 1991, p.71).

As these 'normal' activities are brusquely terminated, women who had been 'allocated' private spheres of houses are suddenly and literally thrust into the open. This emotional and physical threat of brutal violence is manifested repeatedly in the narratives of women and men who had to undertake the journey from East to West Punjab. Because women were in a new domain, their reaction of incomprehensibility may well be understood, but men still find it hard to come to terms with the fact that they, who had grown up with the beliefs that they could always 'protect' their women, failed, albeit against forbidding odds. These emotions of impotence seem to have been internalised or were manifested in the particularly gruesome acts of these 'refugees' into Pakistan, as they took 'revenge' on those (Hindus and Sikhs) who were still in West Punjab.

Sakina Bibi, of village Dalla Bora, recalls one such disruption of her family's lives:

My mother was baking bread. We were urging her to get up, for a (Sikh) *Jatha* had come. She said that she would not leave until they had had something to eat. My brother removed the *Tawa* (baking tray) and said "get up, do you want to be left behind?" And then we left our home.

The violent transition from the private to public space is made even more difficult by the events taking place around them. The huge number of people denies all the social amenities of the private space, privacy is the first casualty of this entrance into the public domain. Sakina Bibi continues:

At the crossing (of Ravi), there were just so many people. At that place, Hindus and Sikhs started killing people. I saw so many bodies of men and women who had been murdered. There were so many corpses, one was overcome with fear by seeing such a large number of bodies. It was time to beg for forgiveness (from God). There was nothing to eat, sleep or go to toilets. We had left with only the clothes we were wearing. We stayed on the river bank for six days before we were able to cross over to Pakistan.

When one remembers that time, one still gets goose-bumps, what kind of time was that. One asks for forgiveness. One's heart is fearful. It was a terrible time. Mothers were not able to look after their infant sons. Many of the children were thrown in the river so that the mothers could escape the Hindus and the Sikhs. There was chaos, just like *Qiyamat* (Day of Judgement) no one cared for anyone else. They just wanted to escape from their attackers.

Many survivors' accounts convey a sense of personal confusion (following the rupture of the old life) loss of identity, and increasing focus on minutiae of life on the move, a state of alertness to the particular which alone might contribute to survival. A number of subjects said that they became much more aware of their surrounding, factors like the sugar cane plantations and the direction of the wind assumed critical importance in order to escape detection. They had to be very vigilant of the water wells, for a number of them had been deliberately poisoned.

The injuries which seemed to crystallise Partition's violence were mostly inflicted on women of 'Other' groups. For it was through their bodies that 'self' and 'other' were defined as the diametrically opposed notions of differentiation. In this binary opposition however, groups brutalised their own women because they thought that it was the best way of saving their *honour*. The most potent example of this notion manifested itself through the intensity with which women of each group were guarded from the 'Other.' There were numerous occasions in which the interviewees had been eye-witnesses to the savagery inflicted on

women from one group by men from another, which included amputation of breasts, mass rape, parading them naked through public and religious places, cutting open pregnant women, and tattooing their bodies with nationalistic and religious slogans. Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin explain this particular form of violence and the reasons behind it as actions which would last for much longer than the Partition. According to them:

Marking the breasts and genitalia with symbols like the crescent moon or trident makes permanent the sexual appropriation of the woman, and symbolically extends this violation to future generations who are thus metaphorically stigmatised. Amputating her breasts at once desexualises a woman and negates her as wife and mother; no longer a nurturer (if she survives, that is) she remains a permanently inauspicious figure, almost as undesirable as a barren woman. Sudhir Kakar, in his exploration of how communities fantasise violence, says that sexual mutilation figures prominently: the castration of males and the amputation of breast - "incorporate the (more or less conscious) wish to wipe the enemy off the face of the earth" by eliminating the means of reproduction and nurturing (Menon, 1998, p.44).

The purpose of this chapter is not just to catalogue stories of violence, instead, it has been to historicise and de-homogenise the events and already marginalised victims of the violence of Partition. The aim of this research has to establish a connection between the experience of violence and its articulation through memory. It has to be understood that only such steps would compel victims and cultural critics to problematise the otherwise monolithic narrative of pain and misery. Rather than drawing an ineffectual academic conclusion to the violence of Partition, I agree with the observation of Jill Didur, who believes that '...[I]t is incumbent upon those carrying out research on this traumatic episode of history to trace its contradictions and intersections thus deconstructing the conflation of community and state identity it has been appropriated to signify' (Didur, p. 15). The effort in this case has been directed to 'particular' rather than 'general' events of Partition, for it is only then that one is able to make some inroads into the otherwise 'universalising and hegemonic historical' constructions of Partition by the State. The subaltern voices used in this chapter act as barriers against the smooth and encompassing flow of the State's version of a nation's history.

The physical and mental scars of the survivors' experiences have continued to reverberate in their post-Partition lives, adding to the difficulties of establishing themselves as immigrants in their familiarly unfamiliar homeland. The scale of their suffering was just not appreciated at that time. Survivors were treated with tremendous insensitivity by those who saw their arrival as a sign that they would have to share certain economic gains which they might have kept for themselves. As a result, the refugees suffered indifference and even outright hostility by those Muslims already living in Western Punjab and other areas of Pakistan.

This chapter has demonstrated the politics and various forms of language and discourse that have been used to remember and re-articulate the trauma of Partition. The written literature continues to be considered a more significant and 'authentic' tool of remembrance in the metanarrative of the State. However, as discussed earlier in this chapter, it has severe short-comings and cannot be entrusted to present a complete picture of the complexities involved, either of the Partition or of re-narration. Oral literature, on the other hand, is how most of the population of Pakistan, remembers the collective ordeal it went through. This form of articulation of memory of Partition has been marginalised for long enough, and has suffered because of the postcolonial nations' obsession with the colonial version of collecting and articulating a national history, which has always been in a written form. Orality demonstrates the complexities of remembering that cannot be captured in written literature and hence adds a dimension missing from the otherwise linear narrative. These collective voices need to be tapped into in order to create new, hybridised forms of national autobiography. Gyanendra Pandey has pointed out the need for inclusion of a variety of voices, some of which could be construed as offering contradictory perspectives. He posits that:

Ultimately, too, we shall have to return to the question of the language of historical discourse and its ability to represent violence and pain and daily struggle. This refers not only to the vocabulary available to historians, but also the structure of their discourse. How do we structure or frame the histories that we write in order to allow some place for the bodies that carry the marks of these 'everyday' (marginal, not so much

lying outside as reworking the consequences of centralised production and representation) occurrences, and thereby often constitute the 'larger' events and processes of History (Pandey, p.221).

Pandey's arguments are very pertinent to the urgent need of the collection of Oral narratives of Partition if the subcontinent is to achieve a realistic understanding of what took place during that time. Historians and other academic scholars need to admit and understand that certain events involve such complexities and contradictions that articulating them might fall outside the realm of the tools that they might have at their disposal. It should not be such a difficult step if one acknowledges and appreciates the fact that in many cases, even the victims are unable to either comprehend or explain their traumas.

Chapter 8

Lunatics at Large: Saadat Hassan Manto's Study of Pathologies of Violence

Saadat Hassan Manto was born in the town of Sambrala (Ludiana District) of Punjab in the undivided India of 1912 (Flemming, p.100). He had started writing from an early age and was to move to a number of places before settling down in Bombay, where he wrote articles for newspapers, plays for the radio and finally scripts for the movies. His far from idyllic life was shattered by the ferocity of violence which soon engulfed Northern India during 1946 and 1947.

Manto migrated in 1947, quite unwillingly, to Lahore when the communal violence in his beloved Bombay made it unsafe for him and his family to stay there. He was never able to fully settle down in the newly created Pakistan and continued to long for the city he had grown up in and loved. Soon after his forced migration to Pakistan, and disillusioned with his experiences, he turned more and more to alcohol and finally in 1955, died from it.

He, like most of the other writers, was stunned by the savagery and the large extent to which the different religious factions delved into the communal orgy. As the nation seemed to tear itself from its very foundations of tolerance and comparative communal harmony, his first reaction was that of shell-shocked creative silence. His first collection of short stories dealing with the violence were sketches of the collapse of everyday normality which became a common occurrence during the Partition. Stories which recorded his first reactions to the viciousness he had witnessed were published under the title of *Siyah Hashiye (Black Margins)*. His narrative stance in them was that of a third-person, and they revealed the barest minimum context of the 'action' of looting, murder, rape and the anarchy which seemed to have gripped India. It was Manto's brilliance that he could set, construct and conclude a meaningful story in a space of two lines. The emphasis in this collection of short stories is less on the thematic structure, than on his black humour which he relies on to achieve the greatest

impact. The point is brought home to the reader in his typical style in *Karamat* (Miracles), in which people light lamps, in thanksgiving for the miracle of sweet water, until we are told that this syrupiness is no divine miracle. The water is sweet because a man who was running with a stolen sack of sugar fell into the well and died. Writing about Manto's mode of storytelling, Salim Akhtar argues that:

Manto was a follower of the tradition of realism in the Urdu short story. Rather than providing unnecessary details and extended descriptions in setting the scene and analysing the characters of his stories, Manto is one of the few writers who practices verbal economy. This reliance on internal elements, whose presence or absence determines whether a short story – indeed any artistic work – achieves anything, is a hallmark of his writing (Akhtar, p.1).

There were other reasons besides his writing style which made Manto stand out from his contemporaries. Keki N. Daruwalla lists Manto's fiction and the directly confrontational manner in which it challenged the bourgeoisie and self-congratulatory attitudes of the Urdu speaking middle-classes of India. Rather than writing about a romanticised past or anaesthetised present, Manto took on the task of presenting those characters whose existence the society was fully aware of, but refused to acknowledge in terms apart from stereotypical and negative abstractions. According to Daruwalla:

Manto rose to fame due to the brilliance, the uniqueness of his vision and the controversial nature of his writing. The Indian middle class, ever prone to a mix of prudishness and hypocrisy in the thirties and the forties was shocked out of its wits. And Manto, of course, revelled in whatever shocked them, be it "obscenity" or sudden violence, or the dramatic and brutal manner with which he unmasked hypocrisy. It appears he spent a literary lifetime revelling in his role as the *enfant terrible* of Urdu literature (Daruwalla, p. 118).

Even though his critical acclaim grew in public as well as in the eyes of most of his contemporaries, there was still a very influential minority, which as the quote above suggests, tried to curtail the publication of some of his stories. They, in their own puritanical thinking, deemed them to be grossly offensive to their parochial and artificial view of society. Manto fervently believed in the stories and themes he wrote about, and was not ready to budge or bow down to

the pressures of people, whom, he considered to be intellectually inferior to himself.

Manto's migration to Pakistan did not guarantee that he would be openly welcomed and fully accepted by the writers of his new homeland; in fact, it was the reverse, as Hafeez Malik describes Manto's status in the Pakistani writers' eyes:

In November 1949 the progressive writers held their first all-Pakistan Conference in Lahore. And those who were not acquiescent to the fundamental Marxist ideology were branded as the 'reactionary writers' of Pakistan, and were dismissed from the main Association. Among those censured most vehemently was Saadat Hassan Manto, who was presented to be a member of a "... large group of pornographic writers, thriving on the base human instincts." (Malik, pp.661-662).

Such actions did not detract Manto, instead they further alienated him from his contemporaries who increasingly lost his respect. He fervently believed that they were just imprudent followers of foreign ideologies and were just as ignorant or elitist as the bourgeoisie which refused to acknowledge a realistic assessment of society.

Manto has acquired greater critical respect with the passage of time and has become the focus of serious academic scholarship. He was ahead of his times as he set out to contest the State's metanarrative of grand mass movements which overlooked the cases of the individuals' plight, especially those who were the weakest and on the margins of the society. It is no wonder that Ayesha Jalal believes that one should:

[Q]uestion the self-definition of the new state [ie Pakistan] that emerged out of the partition process and which had prosecuted Manto on the charges of obscenity when he wrote about the experience of raped and abducted women (Jalal, p. 101).

Manto's stories have often been compared to snapshots as much as exposition exercises. He allows a character's personality to unravel only during a particular crisis and refuses the option of passing judgement on him/her. On the other hand, the short story, like a photograph represents identity and characterisation which is incomplete for it captures only but a moment in a

sequence of events. It may be a 'true' representation of a moment, but the very medium of Manto's short story, like a photograph, 'freezes' the development of the character's identity; because it denies the essential presence of manoeuvrability, which is a reflection of the true life he tries to capture.

Uli Linke's well researched article on the apparently unexpected violent upheavals in a country's history suggests that they are not as surprising as many writers dealing with Partition have and would like to believe. He argues that:

It requires rethinking genocide, not as an exceptional episode, a state of anomie and a breakdown of the social (Durkheim, 1933), a suspension of the normal order of things (Sorel, 1941), a historical regression (Canetti, 1973; Foucault, 1979), or a return to primitive instincts (Freud, 1930) and mythic origins (Girard, 1979), but as an integral principle of modernity. Comprehensive programs of extermination are neither primitive nor instinctual. They are the result of sustained conscious effort and the substitution of moral responsibility with organisational discipline (Linke, p.559).

The end result of such 'organised cleansing' is revealed in Manto's *Tetwal Ka Kuta* (The Dog of Tetwal), where two newly distinct ideologies occupy two borders along an artificially constructed line and even a dog's identity is presented as in tune with the feelings and biases of the two opposing camps. As Flemming points out, the need to create the 'Other' had reached such an intensity that both sides needed it to be sure of their identities, and in a charged social and political climate, there was no room for compromise. According to Flemming:

. . . . [T]he obvious symbol in the dog of all those caught in the crossfire of conflicting loyalties, the story makes a chilling assertion about the fate of those unable to commit themselves to one side or the other: those already committed will eventually kill them (Fleming, 1985, p.86).

The killing of the dog or the death of Toba Tek Singh, can be explained by what Hannah Arendt has termed as the 'banality of evil', in a mechanism in which brutal demise of someone else is given no significance, and daily life grinds on. The iconography of religion and culture is celebrated by the death or

extermination of the 'Other'. Arendt uses this phrase in reference to the cold and mechanical destruction of the 'Other' as it was carried out by the Nazis. In the context of *Tetwal Ka Kutta*, the soldiers are carrying out orders, and for them 'other' is someone (or something) which has no meaning in itself and can only be construed as defined by their superiors. In Toba Tek Singh's case, his individuality and feelings do not count, for he is nothing more than a 'number' in the bureaucracy that is expected to deal with the 'problem'. The lives of the dog or Toba Tek Singh are not considered to matter in the larger scheme of things as defined by those carrying out this destruction of life.

The most radical difference which Manto demonstrated in his portrayals was the absence of any direct connection between the action of and religious affiliation of his characters. Most of Manto's characters are devoid of any particular religious belief, thus removing the convenient connection between their actions and their religious affiliation, a technique which has been used by a significant majority of those writing about Partition. His short stories of Partition do not manipulate the common binary oppositional method of pitting the Muslims against the non-Muslims, the people of the community against the 'outsiders', the deviously manipulative politicians against the 'simple' and peaceful members of the community. Manto does not utilise religious affiliation as unproblematically as it has been propagated by a number of his contemporaries. There are no characters in his stories who are 'good' because they belong to a particular religion.

The process of 'othering' in most of the novels about Partition is very simplistic as binary opposition is maintained between people solely based on the character's religious affiliation. Manto adds other dimensions to his characters such as their economic status, their thirst for violence, or their sexual perversions, to reveal his characters in their complexity so that their actions are seen in lights other than their religious affiliations. Manto is obviously aware of the problematic nature of making the same mistake as others of allowing the religious identity to be held responsible for a character's actions, as a result, he consciously decides to avoid the religious angle.

Manto's stories goad readers to re-imagine the pain and suffering of individual characters, and to re-interpret their misery in contemporary social surroundings, especially of those marginal figures like the old, women and children. His stories are not about people who set out to wreak havoc on 'other's' community, rather, they are people who happen to be at a certain place when events unfold in which they play a willing or an indirect part. The individuals in his stories are 'normal' people, an alternative which totally dismisses the popular theories of the time (that most of the appalling attacks were being carried out by 'specially trained' people). Another difference between Manto and his contemporaries was the manner in which he described the incidents. He did not take any moral stance and did not pass any authorial judgement on his characters, instead, he let his characters reveal their own eccentricities, weaknesses and brutalities. His disposition is that of a detached observer who presided over a particular instance of an incident in their lives which he describes in a dispassionate manner, even though these actions were, in a number of cases, ones of severe brutality. Manto's critical and personal attitude is underlined by a streak of *black humour*, which, it seems, offers him a way to somehow create a distance between himself and his narrative. He is determined in his unwillingness to take sides or to believe the outbursts of violence which his *creations* undertake as a summation of their characters. Instead, he explicates a new phenomenon of violence which has taken hold of society. Manto expands the 'spaces' of violence to include sections of society which had been unaffected by the communal violence of pre-Partition era. With the scale of violence during the Partition, the sacred 'spaces' of both public (mosques and temples, 'confined and localised' as Das calls it, p.12), and the private (women inside the houses) had been particularly targeted.

Manto was one of the few original writers to form a direct linkage between the voyeuristic sexual perversion carried out by his characters and the horrendous communal violence which had enveloped most of the region at that time. He does not agree with those authors who believed that indiscriminate acts of savagery could be attributed to rhetoric of politicians who relied on

goondas (hired hoodlums) or simple village folks to carry them out. Manto is of a different opinion, as he presents just the actions of his characters and in most of these the motives of that character are also laid bare.

Manto's characters are not 'strangers' or outsiders, as it is usually assumed in the novels of Partition, who have descended on an ideal community to shatter its social and religious cohesion. People in Manto's stories are never 'lost', even in the middle of a chaotic riot; they seem to know where to go, the 'direction' of home is never in question. He was never so concerned with the forcibly construed sense of 'balance'; the attempt to equate social deeds of people from warring communities. It is for that reason that 'good' and 'bad' characteristics of his characters are flaws of individuals more than they are of people belonging to particular religious groups. The events in Manto's short stories unfold at a rapid pace, and, as an omniscient creator, he is quite distant, yet fully aware of the eventual outcome.

The pain of the characters in Partition narratives leads to its own politics of victims and villains, as Shashi Joshi, in her excellent study of Manto, explains:

The very nature of language and narrative, which Lyotard views as antagonistic, generating a discourse of conflicting oppositions revolving around a struggle, can be revealed in the words spoken by characters in the Partition stories. How does conflict get deposited in, and in turn produce, cultural significations? Examining cultural stereotypes and their visibility as it is apprehended by those involved in conflict may help us comprehend how binaries evolve (Joshi, p.142).

Ashish Nandy and Veena Das strongly criticise blatant and in most cases unsuccessful attempts by authors to project their strong biases through characters of their own religion. Writers like Khushwant Singh and Chaman Nahal portray Sikhs and Hindus respectively as victims of Muslims' barbarities, and, only towards the end of their novels, in what seems like a postscript, they make a cursory and a flat statement to say that Muslims had suffered similar if not worse forms of violence. The arbitrary division is reinforced by presenting certain tokenist gestures of a 'sympathetic' character, who acts in directly the opposite manner of the accepted wisdom of his community. The example of such a character is

Juggat in *Train to Pakistan*, who is a Sikh, with more sympathies for the Muslims than for his own community. What makes such characters unbelievable and makes one question the sincerity of their authors is the lack of any reasonable or logical rationale for the path that a particular character has chosen. A number of authors have deliberately introduced and perpetuated exclusive categories through a binary system of religious classifications. These practitioners' interpretation of the ideology of violence of Partition is not only dangerous but reductionist and biased. Nandy and Das's comments on 'balanced' fiction are about those authors, like Manto, who write with much more sensitivity. According to these two critics, a majority of the Partition literature comes across as:

... [I]nauthentic, because ... violence from one side was equally balanced with violence from the other. Thus, the description of violent, inhuman acts perpetrated upon those travelling by a train coming from Lahore would be matched by another description of similar, gruesome acts to which travellers from Amritsar were subjected. If a prostitute gave shelter to the two women whose bodies had been mutilated by rioters then one could be certain that one of these women would be a Hindu and the other, a Muslim (Das, p.189, Joshi, p.142).

Such forced equality in somehow trying to achieve a balance never succeeds in allowing one to understand the complexity of events taking place during a time such as the Partition. Instead, it ends up casting doubts on the authenticity of the original event, for one feels that the 'formula' of balance is applied indiscriminately.

Ismat Chughtai, considered by many to be one of the finest and radical writers of short stories, failed to comprehend or acknowledge the depth and complexity of Manto's *Thanda Gosht*, which dealt with the issues of a connection between violence and a perversion of sexuality. As a renowned writer in her own right, she had broken a number of sexual taboos, with stories like *The Quilt*, which dealt with the issues of lesbianism within very respectable households. She seems to suggest that sexuality and its representations could remain on a personal level, but felt offended when Manto took it into public domain and made the connection to the communal conflict. When interviewed, she was asked about this story as a microscopic representation of the

widespread violence which took place during the Partition. Her response was very much like that of her contemporaries:

I've never noticed anything symbolical about the story. Manto was a very sweet man, not at all vulgar-minded, I think. He was very sweet-looking, innocent, like a saint. I used to tell him that and he'd feel very bad. He used to say, "I'm not a saint; I'm a very bad man." (Chughtai, p.177).

As this point of view indicates, the obsession with Manto's wording was something that had to be connected with his character. It seemed rather difficult for people to talk about his creativity without attacking his personality, because Manto spoke out about the perversion of sexuality, it therefore had to have an aspect of his personal life in it. However, there was no indication, much less any proof of Manto engaging in any perversions as some of his character, it just increased the confusion over the interpretation of his personal life through his writings. Chughtai, who herself had been a target of harsh criticism, fails to see Manto's stories beyond the 'vulgar' words. Many writers' fixation on the literal contents of the sexuality portrayed in Manto's stories makes them oblivious to their own fascination with the almost pathological sexual perversion that is highlighted.

One aspect of the Partition's violence which stands out, in almost every characterisation, is that it was carried out by men, on other men, women and children. This could be because of certain social characteristics of the society, where men are considered to be the guardians of 'public' space. Most of the atrocities, like parading naked women, mass rape and mutilations were carried out in public 'space,' an area that they were generally not encouraged to frequent, as it was men's' domain. Women on either side of the religious divide were not encouraged, or, in most cases not allowed to know or talk about the activities of men outside the confines of their houses. This state of affairs continues to this day, as women, even after 50 years, have been discouraged from sharing their pain and experience with the male members of their households and communities.

A number of writers have treated the grotesque incidents of violence in a reductive sense as a large scale collective madness and blamed a particular community as perpetrators of crimes and the other as victims. Manto, however, took the characterisation of the solitary figure of Toba Tek Singh in one of his most moving and famous stories of the same name. This story is a dense allegory of a mental asylum set at the point of the Partition when it is announced that lunatics of different religious groups should be sent back to their respective countries. Just like the ordinary people of the Subcontinent, these marginalised wards of a social institution are not deemed 'fit' enough to be consulted before their fate is decided. Through his stories, Manto, according to Alok Bhalla, "...bear[s] shocked witness to an obscene world", and in the process of describing the events of that fateful period:

He [Manto] blames no one, but he also forgives no one. Without sentimentality or illusions, without pious postures or ideological blinders, he describes a perverse and corrupt time in which the sustaining norms of a society as it had once existed are erased, and no moral or political reason is available... Unlike other writers who see the violence of the Partition as an aberration in the peaceful and tolerant rhythms of our social and religious life, and so turn to the past for consolation and retrieval of values, Manto refuses to believe that the past was another kind of place and another kind of time (Bhalla, pp. 175-177).

This fictitious drama has succeeded in capturing the utter confusion that Toba Tek Singh, who represents the 'average person', a Punjabi speaker, (more than his religious identity), experienced at the uncertainty and the rapidity of the unfolding of political events. Singh, like millions (of 'insane') he represents, is completely at the mercy of 'sane' government officials who, in all their worldly wisdom, have decided to exchange their 'lunatics'. As the parameters of binary opposition are clearly marked, the 'sane' are fully in-charge of deciding the fate of apparently hapless inmates who have no option but to carry out those arbitrary decisions. As the ramifications of the 'official' resolution percolate to the inmates, a curious and unprecedented chain of events begins to unfold; whereas the inmates had co-existed in an apparent 'insane' societal harmony, they now take up the distinct spaces of their religious identities. Manto begins his *Toba Tek Singh* with his usual bitterly distanced view of the events as they unfolded during the Partition:

A couple of years after the Partition of the country, it occurred to the respective governments of India and Pakistan that inmates of lunatic asylums, like prisoners, should also be exchanged. Muslim lunatics in India should be transferred to Pakistan and Hindu and Sikh lunatics in Pakistani asylums should be sent to India.

Whether this was a reasonable or an unreasonable idea is difficult to say. One thing, however, is clear. It took many conferences of important officials from both sides to come to this decision (Manto, p.11).

The inmates of the Asylum are soon infected with the new national and religious identities they have been forced to assume. As a result, even the lunatics are shown to be willing converts to these new constructions of self. Whereas they might have been 'bound' together by nothing more than their collective madness in the eyes and minds of the 'sane', this new found nationalist and religious fervour divides their 'community' even further. For example, an inmate whose name is *Mohammad Ali*, is quick to exploit the current climate of confusion, and assumes the title of Quaid-e-Azam (Father of the nation, the title given to Mohammad Ali Jinnah). This example of sudden political transformation is soon followed by another inmate, this time, a Sikh, who declares himself to be none other than Master Tara Singh (Leader of the Sikhs). As for the other inmates, they:

. . . . [W]ere unable to decide whether they were now in India or Pakistan. If they were in India, where on earth was Pakistan? If they were in Pakistan, then how come that until only the other day it was India (Manto, 1989, p.12).

The story then moves to Bishan Singh, probably the most memorable character of all Partition writings' characters. A wealthy landowner in his native village of Toba Tek Singh, but in the Asylum for more than fifteen years, Bishan has very limited ability in verbal communication, most of which is confined to a few nonsensical phrases which no one understands. As the time of transfer moves ever closer, Bishan Singh tries to find out the fate of his beloved village, Toba Tek Singh; whether it has been granted to India or is still within the Pakistani borders. Till the very last day, he is unable to receive any satisfactory reply, and then he is put in a truck to be transported to India:

Bishan Singh tried to run, but was overpowered by the Pakistani guards who tried to push him across the dividing line towards India. However he wouldn't move. 'This is Toba Tek Singh', he announced.... Many efforts were made to explain to him that Toba Tek Singh had already been moved to India, or would be moved immediately, but it had no effect on Bishan Singh... There he stood in no man's land on his swollen legs like a colossus... Just before sunrise, Bishan Singh, the man who had stood on his legs for fifteen years, screamed and as the official from the both 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 (Manto, p.18).

Bishan Singh is defeated by a combination of the forces of social institution and narrow mindedness of both newly formed nations. As he is a marginalised figure, it is apparent from the beginning that he would lose out against the sluggish and all-powerful mightiness of political ambition and bureaucracy.

During the Partition, as it has already been discussed extensively in this dissertation, women became specific targets of Hindu, Sikh and Muslim groups, as their bodies became the spaces on which the narratives of each community's communal intentions were brutally inscribed. In a short story entitled, *Khol Do* (Open It), the violence carried out on a young girl is so brutal that its effects do not end with her life. Even death fails to form a barrier from the subconscious anguish of the trauma of repeated rapes which Sakina suffered before she died and was dumped by the roadside, where she is found by her father. Manto unflinchingly describes the events as they unfold to reveal the full horror of the story:

The doctor looked at the body on the stretcher, took her pulse, and said to Siraj-ud-Din, "Open the window."

There was a movement in Sakina's half-dead body. Her lifeless hand opened the top of her *shalwar* and pulled it down. The old Siraj ud-Din shouted joyfully, "She's alive, my daughter is alive!" The doctor was drenched in sweat from head to toe (Flemming, 1977, p.105).

The reader's reaction is not radically different from the shock that the doctor experiences. One can only imagine Siraj ud-Din's state of mind that he

does not even notice the physical act of his daughter removing her *shalwar*. Instead, his immediate concern is with the fact that he has noticed a tangible movement in her body. His reaction is one of the most genuine examples of love, especially for women who had been raped and brutalised. At this particular moment, all the 'social burden' that his daughter's body carries, ceases to be of any concern. On the other hand, one is forced to imagine what Sakina had experienced during the last days and hours of her life, as she must have been subjected to suffer the violence, pain, shame and utter helplessness when she was forced to act as a 'body' for men from her own Punjabi community. The only difference between her and her tormentors must have been the fact that she was a Muslim and they were not.

Manto also revealed the moral hypocrisy of Punjabi culture when it came to the subject of women. The strong Punjabi patriarchy espoused the moral virtues of women by defining them around the men in their families; their identity was always tied in with their fathers, brothers, husbands or sons. Whereas these might have been the feelings in regards to their 'own' women, everyday events even before and especially during Partition revealed just how misogynist and psychotic these men had actually become. In the pre-Partitioned India, Manto awakened society's active apathy to the women who had been relegated to the margins of 'respectable' society. In this phase, he focused on the plight and acceptable exploitation of prostitutes and other groups of women who had failed to live up to the rigid moral responsibilities imposed on them by their community. Manto's stories reveal that it is members of society, enjoying apparent respectability who provide the daily sustenance to this private underworld as they undergo sinister character changes under the cover of darkness. As the clear light of the day approaches, these same men cover themselves in the morally superior veils of renewed decorum to condemn the abodes they had inhabited the night before. In her analysis of Manto's portrayal of women, Sukrita Paul Kumar writes that:

He [Manto] needed no metaphoric or symbolic masks to construct the reality of that "other," the other which has been pushed into the seclusion of a black world, if only to satiate men sexually so that they lead a so-called normal domestic life, based ironically on chastity and the homely virtues prescribed for their women (Kumar, p.156).

Partition literature is built around the trope of the 'domestic' nature of women. It is assumed that by attempting to move out of this private space assigned to them, women somehow violate not only social, but 'natural laws' as well. As discussed earlier, most of these rules are imposed on them by the patriarchy and enforced with society's consent as the 'morally right' behaviour. Manto's frank portrayal drew sharp criticism not only from readers but from the so-called progressive writers of that time. The violence directed towards women during Partition was a deliberate perversion of the rules set up to denote women's place and honour in society.

In conclusion, one can sum up Manto's work as distinctively original and one which challenged the prevailing social and literary representations of the events of Partition. He continued to passionately believe in the essential goodness in human beings, despite being devastatingly critical of their momentary lapses into acts of extremely brutal behaviour. Because of his uncompromising stance on his artistic and personal principles, he was ostracised from the 'community' of progressive writers, and yet had strong enough convictions to continue his particularly incisive observations of what he had witnessed.

His vignettes were and are still considered to be the hallmarks of his status as a literary visionary. He successfully made a break in his literary style, and so moved from the prevalent fashion of exhaustive and gory details of brutality to reveal the true extent of the horrors; instead, he became the first and most effective practitioner of brevity and left minutiae for his readers' imagination. Manto's work requires readers to view his characters and events on a number of levels and those who have construed them literally, have failed to comprehend the complexity.

Manto's characters are usually solitary, they stand on the thresholds of belonging and yet display a distinct reluctance to join a particular ideology. The wider society, which believes in manichean aesthetics, either ignores or fails to

understand the complexity of their dilemma and, as is seen in *Tetwal Ka Kutta* and *Toba Tek Singh*, they either die or are killed because of their in-betweenness. It is because of his ability to capture the workings of not only those who 'matter' but of those who are outside the realms of power that Manto has achieved such a cult status in Urdu literature.

Conclusion

The Partition created a collective trauma which has still not been fully addressed by either those who experienced it or their respective countries. It is only now that both India and Pakistan are grudgingly taking tentative steps towards an acknowledgement of individual and private grievances suffered during the Partition. Till recently, both Pakistan and India have tended to indulge in creating metanarratives which have dealt with issues and implications of violence and dis-location during Partition in a very narrow and simplistic manner which have been used to create and perpetuate stereotypes. Each country's metanarrative blames religious groups and political parties of the 'other' for the bloodshed, pain and suffering of its people, and in so doing attempts to exonerate its own position. In such ingenuous attempts at the discourse of Partition, villains are almost always the 'outsiders'. These biased versions of events *have gone on for more than fifty years, and one feels that with the advent of a new century, there is an urgent need to break this vicious cycle of blame and counter blame based solely on nationalist, religious and political ideologies.*

Because the relations between both countries continue to be influenced by the events of Partition, it is imperative that new measures should be undertaken in order to examine and evaluate the past, making the best of the present. It is only through such questioning that we can create an atmosphere that would be conducive for a brighter and friendlier future for the people of both countries. Alok Bhalla has articulated the feelings of many in his introduction to the collection of stories that he has edited:

Contrary to the communal histories, the stories about the Partition have more to do with the actualities of human experience in barbaric times than with ideologies, and seem to be bound together by one common thread – they find the notion that there was always hatred between the Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims in ordinary life, completely incomprehensible (Bhalla, p. XIV).

There is a desperate need to question existing metanarratives and to give the long overdue prominence to the marginalised voices. The States' narratives deny space for any narrative that may challenge their version, as Eriks Uskalis argues:

State narratives interpellate the subject as intimately connected to it in an effort to ease out potential dissent from the social formation. Their monologic forms do not easily offer the subject any space to articulate dissent in the form of dialogue (Uskalis, p.1).

Dissenting voices are more problematic and may not provide such undemanding explications as set out in metanarratives, but one feels that their recognition is the only way forward. In a critical re-examining of these voices, one may find unpalatable truths about what is held dear by an individual or the community as a whole; one may also be confronted with challenging the approach of how one views the 'other'. The commonality of pain and suffering in all narratives needs to be accepted in order to comprehend the mistakes in one's own community and understand similar characteristics in others. The idea is to examine one's own humanity to understand that of others. This dissertation, one hopes, is the first step in the direction of critically examining prevalent stereotypes that continue to dominate the discourse of Partition.

This dissertation has examined how the forces of Nationalism and Communalism played out their respective roles in independence and the simultaneous break-up of India. As has been discussed in preceding chapters, there seems to be an easy slippage by authors between the two distinct dogmas. Each of these ideologies and its consequences were played out on different 'stages' during the period between the end of colonialism and break-up of India. Both nationalism and communalism could be put forth as discourses which expressed the feelings of a particular community; however, the butchery and violence carried out was the direct result of the latter. Peter van der Veer has explained Luis Dumont's argument about the relationship between these two split discourses:

His (Dumont's) main contention is that to understand communalism we have to make a comparison between traditional and modern societies,

since communalism is a phenomenon that combines the two. Communalism is an ideology that emphasises the religious community as a social, political and economic unit in antagonistic distinction from other such groups. Nationalism is an ideology that emphasises a collectivity of individuals united on the basis of their political will, common history and common territory. The most fundamental difference between the two phenomena is the fact that a nation is not built on the common religion of a people. Nationalism thus presupposes a secularisation of society that implies that religion becomes the private affair of individuals and that the political organisation becomes autonomous, having its own values (Veer, p. 28).

The religious and communally motivated form of ethnic cleansing during the Partition was, for the lack of a better word, incomplete. Even though such large scale killing and expulsion took place, both countries were not completely 'cleansed.' India continues to have more Muslims than Pakistan in absolute numbers, even though they may form a small percentage of the total population. Similarly, Pakistan also has a significant minority of non-Muslims. Because of these factors, narratives of Partition cannot truthfully categorise the whole communities of both countries as single, homogenised identities. However, there are some authors like Chaman Nahal and Khushwant Singh, as discussed in this dissertation, who have tried to group people according to their religious affiliations; such moves have resulted in their representations being blatantly prejudicial and rather simplistic. The ethnic, social and religious diversities continue to exist in both countries as they persistently defy rigid definitions of homogeneity. Violence during 1947 operated as a kind of fluid phenomenon and cannot be said to have been practised by any single religious community. People who were victims on one side of the border, as has been documented in a number of accounts, became the most fervent advocates of violence on the 'other', and in a number of cases, took an active part in perpetrating carnage on those fleeing one part of Punjab to the other. As a result, there exists a vicious circle of shifting positions in relation to violence and those who are to be blamed for it. When the events of that period are recalled on an individual or communal basis, the memory becomes a double edged sword. For it is not used only to recall events, it is simultaneously used as an act of selective forgetting of any role that these individuals might have played in inflicting pain on others. Thus, there are many who claim to be witnesses to the atrocities committed by the

'Other' community, and yet, in most cases, incidents of similar violence by members of their own community, as articulated by Gyanendra Pandey, are always outside the edge of their personal and communal space. Instances of violence involving their own community occurred mostly 'out there.' It is precisely such absolute rejection of direct or indirect responsibility which results in narrow and parochial remembrances where a deliberate distinction is maintained between the victims and villains, with each community identifying with the former.

I

The official discourses, in the form of biased versions of events of Partition in educational curriculums and the state controlled media are used to construct and perpetuate certain self-serving purposes. In such metanarratives, the focus is, in most cases, on the heroic struggle or the sacrifices of those belonging to elite social, political and economic classes. They are in effect the 'leaders' of the struggle for independence. If one is to read just their version of events, it is only they who have taken on all the risks to achieve the creation of a new country; however, others are mentioned, but only in bland and meaningless numbers. These 'numbers' are the marginalised, the majority, whose stories are even more relegated to the margins of national discourse; they are doubly unfortunate. Firstly, because their stories do not offer the selective linearity of the official discourse since each story may be at odds with all other versions. They lack the cohesive cushion offered by clearly articulated stories which form the official discourse. Secondly, people suffer from what one may call the heterogeneity of subalterns. The disenfranchised, even though they are viewed as a collective identity, never really form that. In the case of women, there are many who were abducted and even after more than fifty years, they have still not been re-united with their families, or to make matters even more complicated, they have created a new 'homeland' for themselves. There are also women who have returned, but have been rejected by their families and their communities; in other cases, many women have refused to go to their original families. Situations such as these offer alternative narratives that do not

fall within the parameters of the official discourse, and thus are, in most cases, excluded from it. And yet, because there are so many differences amongst these marginalised narratives, they are unable to integrate and materialise as collective voices to pose as a successful counter-discourse to the State's metanarrative. It is a situation such as this that Henry Schwarz has discussed in his work on the question of the ownership of narratives in the subcontinent:

The existence of such immense and highly diversified subaltern strata within the postcolonial state, prevented from forming adequate political coalitions that might include them in the processes of state power, obviously casts some doubts upon representational validity of the state and raises provocative questions about the eventual destiny of 'the people' (Schwarz, pp.131-32).

The metanarratives are essentially built on simplistic characterisation with a strong binary opposition. Hence the categories of 'victims' and 'villains' are invariably employed, which consequently leads the discourse to be dominated with the theme of violence by the 'other'. In exploring the political and social issues raised by the violence, it is obvious that they are distinctly different from, and much more complex than the narrativised forms they have been presented and re-presented. The complexity, testified by the fundamental disparities between grand historical and political narratives and the individual accounts needs to become the centre of the discourse of Partition. These recurrent impasses between grand and individual stories are, ironically, the routes which would ultimately lead to a more comprehensive and problematic understanding of forces at work during decolonisation and its aftermath. Only the relentless struggle to unmask parochial perspectives of State and Individual narratives would move the debate of Partition further and allow each side to make some kind of an attempt to acknowledge the other's perspective.

The broader implications raised by such dissimilarities between simplistic and intricate versions of events seem to have been ignored by a significant number of critics, who have tended to focus primarily on the issues raised within the narrow confines of novels that form the canon of each country's literary discourse. Ahistorical and apolitical appreciation of texts discussed in this

dissertation has done very little to contextualise the damning effects of violence still reverberating in the public and private consciousness of both nations' populace. Unsophisticated stories of Partition are implicated in re-enforcing and re-affirming caricatured stereotypes of 'Others' rather than looking inwards in order to challenge certain instances of brutality which were carried out by *all the* parties involved in the orgy of violence. As has been clearly demonstrated in this dissertation, women's bodies assume the 'spaces' on which nationalist and communalist ideologies are contested. Ritu Menon, who has done considerable work on women and violence, exposes the moral hypocrisy of the patriarchal discourse of Partition:

That terrible stunning violence and the silencing pall that descended like a shadow over [partition] has always just hovered at the edges of history. Breaking the silence has exposed not only the cracks in family mythologies about honour and sacrifice, but the implicit consciousness that prevails around permissible violence against women during periods of highly charged communal conflicts (Menon, p.255).

Although women were particular targets for much of the sexual and religious violence, yet the discourse on their suffering remains marginalised in the national metanarrative. Menon has explicated Deniz Kandiyoti's study on the interconnection between postcoloniality and gender:

The regulation of gender is central to the articulation of cultural identity and difference. The identification of women as privileged bearers of identity and boundary markers of their communities has had a deleterious effect on their emergence as full-fledged citizens... evidenced by the fact that women's hard won civil rights become the most immediate casualty of the break down of secular prospects (Kandiyoti, p.442, Menon, p.254).

Women in Pakistan were pushed back into the 'private' space after the country gained independence. However, there were some signs of their participation in public and social spheres during the 1970's when Zulfikar Bhutto introduced nation-wide projects on family planning. The military coup of 1977 brought about a new perspective on the role of women in Pakistan. Hamza Alvi has outlined the manoeuvres used by the new ruler to suppress them:

The Zia regime, in its search for legitimacy, in the name of Islam, embarked upon a series of measures that were designed to undermine what little existed by way of women's legal rights, educational facilities and career opportunities - as well as the simple right for freedom of movement and protection from molestation by males (Alvi, p.1).

II

The first section of this dissertation dealt with the political history of Partition and in so doing laid the foundation of understanding major political forces which shaped the events, eventually culminating in the partition of India. Revisionist research has already begun in India, while much of Pakistani discourse continues to rely on simplistic versions of events. My research has attempted to highlight reasons as to why it is imperative that Partition discourse becomes problematic, and this work has cast a serious doubt on the prevalent views about the political parties and leaders, who in orthodox historiography and the public perception are held responsible for the Partition and violence which took place. The official history, which continues to dominate Partition's discourse, belongs to those who retain the reins of power. Their version of history deliberately and consistently sidelines the silent majority, as the modern history of the subcontinent is continuously woven around a handful of politicians, like Jinnah, Gandhi and Nehru and colonial administrators like Wavell and Mountbatten. The focal aim of this dissertation has been to explore and in certain cases, explode cults of personalities built around certain political figures and to underscore the roles and suffering of the common people. Another aim was to contribute towards making Partition's discourse multifarious by adding the often ignored Pakistani perspective to it. A certain degree of balance will, hopefully, promote a more tolerant and an alternative view of what is an emotionally explosive debate. New historiography of Partition has already resulted in challenging, if not breaking the cults of mythology of political and colonial figures such as Gandhi and Mountbatten (Patrick French's *Liberty or Death* and Andrew Roberts' *The Eminent Churchillians* respectively).

The fictional literature discussed in this dissertation has highlighted the anxieties and expectations of Pakistani people as members of a newly independent postcolonial State. Individual and community's sense of betrayal manifests itself in anger and mistrust between people and the State and even in gender relations. One of the most difficult tasks confronting Pakistani women writers in inscribing themselves as subjects lies in resisting and renegotiating their role within the metanarrative. For such an inaccurate representation not only homogenises the concept of national identity, it also inevitably assigns women to a fixed role as an historical metaphor buried deep within the foundations of the narrative. It is in such a position that women have had to begin their struggle immediately after Partition, where they have had to attempt to raise the awareness of patriarchy's grip over discourse which is about them and yet from which their input is absent. On a number of occasions, such endeavours have been vigorously suppressed, attempts by women to challenge and break these restrictions have been condemned by the patriarchy as the former's betrayal of 'their' traditional and cultural heritage. Transgression of the national narrative is considered deviant and the women are dismissed as too enamoured by western values and are portrayed as rejectionists of their Islamic or Pakistani mores and history.

In Bapsi Sidhwa's novels, *The Bride* and *Ice Candy Man*, treatment meted out to women immediately after Partition reveals the antagonism and the sense of vulnerability felt by the patriarchy. The violence had challenged and undermined the traditionally dominant position of men in relation to their women. However, as many of these men were helpless in the events preceding the independence's violence, the patriarchal attitude is re-introduced, as one is able to observe a deliberate and much more forced effort by them to re-establish their supremacy. The promise of more freedom for women is, as in many other postcolonial nations, put aside as both the State and community set out to reinstate their ideologies. As the newly arrived migrants gain an economic foothold in the economy and take the first tentative steps in becoming part of the influential middle class, they also set out to control the sexuality of all the women in their household. In these class-conscious times, control of women's

social position undergoes violent mutations as can be observed from the treatment meted out to Zaitoon by a number of men in her life in *The Bride*. The establishment of Pakistan heralds the pathological impulses of the patriarchy to be restored which make women's roles their primary target. Twisted and selective patriarchal interpretations of culture and tradition have been applied to target women as their new found freedom might have threatened to violate the parameters drawn around them.

In *Ice Candy Man*, Sidhwa has once again highlighted the essential role that women's bodies occupy as soon as the violence of the Partition begins. This 'space' is used by men from each community to articulate their communalistic discourse through rape, abduction or mutilation. This novel also highlighted the unambiguous correlation between economic class and the 'respect' that can be accorded to women. Partition's effects reach the society and families not affected by it physically, when the camp for 'fallen women' is established next to Lenny's house. Somehow, these 'fallen' women are tacitly expected to take a considerable blame for allowing such violence to be inflicted on them. Victims of patriarchal and communal violence are segregated from the general public, for their presence could challenge the social perception of how men are supposed to have protected their women. Their discourses are confined to the private space of the camp; men, on the other hand, are outside, and provide another twist, which is to deflect any criticism from themselves and blame the 'Others.' More efforts seem to be concentrated on condemning the real and imagined perpetrators than on rehabilitating the victims. What happens to the Ayah goes a long way in demonstrating the pain and anguish of all these women, and succeeds in bringing home the message of terror and helplessness to the readers. Her plight brings to the fore what hundreds of thousands of women have suffered in the process of their country's freedom. Ironically, voices of victims such as these women continue to be silenced from each State's metanarrative.

The literature discussed in this dissertation has come from a variety of linguistic, national, religious and ethnic backgrounds. The aim has not been to

present an exhaustive discourse of all the literature, or even most of the literature written about this terrible event; instead, it has been to provide a sample of a variety of views that continue to arise in the discussion of Partition. Not all the literature covered in this dissertation has been in written form; the Indian subcontinent boasts a very long and established oral tradition. Because many of those who suffered the most during the violence were illiterates, their oral narratives have either not been acknowledged or have been marginalised by the State. The chapter on oral narratives was included because it allowed me to speak to individuals whose stories gave a human dimension to Partition literature which could never be achieved through works of fiction.

It was discovered during the research on the chapter dealing with oral narratives that it was the first chance that many people had had to describe their painful and often silenced memories of violence, dislocation and in many cases, ultimate judgement on current Pakistani society. Their stories, it is hoped, will democratise the whole debate on the way that a country like Pakistan views its past. These stories have also questioned the motives and manners of remembrance of Partition, they often seem to point to the gaps in the selective memory of the State's version of events. As noted earlier, these narratives do not, as of yet, have a significant influence on the State's version of events. It is hoped that this work has gone some way towards addressing this particular issue and it is hoped that other academics will examine this phenomena more critically in the future. In this chapter, it was asked whether it is ever possible to actually verbalise pain or a painful experience, with a particular focus on the responsibility of the person who is actually burdened with writing about others' experiences. One had to be aware of the kind of questions which could be asked, for it is not always possible to challenge the subject's version of events, and how well people could remember certain events after a passage of over fifty years. The processes by which selective memory works also had to be considered, as well as the question whether people unconsciously or deliberately withheld information about their own personal involvement in violent events. In some cases, the stories could have been completely fictitious, created either through their own imagination or might have been adapted from

what they might have heard from other victims of the violence. These are some of the issues which have been raised in this particular chapter, and whatever inconsistencies there might be, these stories represent an essential core of memories and experiences of a majority of those who migrated or were forced to dislocate during the Partition. Just because their versions are at odds with the simplistic narrative of the State, does not justify their relegation to the margins of the discourse of Partition. As such, there is a need to problematise narratives, memory and acts of remembrance of this event which has continued to dominate the relations between people of these two countries. It is only through a process of self-reflection that we can come to terms not only of our own pain and suffering but of the 'other' as well, and only then will we be able to move forward.

A considerable amount of literature discussed in this dissertation focuses around the immediate events surrounding the Partition, where some of the works, like Hyder's *Aag Ka Darya* and Hussain's *Udhas Naslain* present this event in context of political and historical goings on in the world. Because of the violence and brutality of this period, it has often been categorised as a 'profane' time by all the authors. An attempt has been made to examine this particular label, and if indeed this was a 'profane' period, what was the state of things in the 'sacred' time. But as is discovered in Hyder's seminal novel, *Aag Ka Darya*, which deals with the historical context of relations between different religious communities, Partition was not the first time that the tensions had spilled into violent confrontations. However, all the authors discussed agree that destructiveness and the hostility of the social and communal relations between different religious groups made Partition the worst event that had ever taken place in Indian history.

Various factions, including authors of both countries, with different perspectives are involved in the discourse of Partition. Presently, these debates are raising more issues of pain, responsibility and violence suffered and committed by each community. Even though these fundamental questions might not have begun to be answered, such a process needs to be pursued further.

However, one feels that a significant and constructive outcome would benefit all the concerned parties, for it is only now that there is some semblance of understanding about the true nature of the complexities involved in this painful chapter in the modern histories of these two countries. It is only through a realisation of the difficulties by all the parties that one can truly understand the past and move towards a shared and more compatible future. Both nations, and certain authors like Naseem Hijazi, Khushwant Singh and Chamal Nahal, have, for far too long, been inflexible in their highly biased and simplistic opinions. Such writings have resulted in hardening opinions even further and have done little to clear the impasse between Pakistan and India. For the vast majority of the population, *desh* (homeland, country) was something they had always considered as a place that was much more than a place where they lived. This was an essential part of their very identity, connecting them to their lands which provided their livelihood. The suddenness and finality of dislocation pitted them against a dilemma where their "... place of birth was horribly at odds with their nationality" (Menon, p.229). The suffering of an already dislocated populace was further increased when both States dis-allowed them to re-visit their lands of birth. The pain and longing of never having an option of being able to return to their place of birth is a theme which comes up again and again in the written and oral literature of Partition.

This dissertation has endeavoured to raise questions and cast doubts on some aspects of the national metanarratives, which have been sole sources of public memory of this event. Till very recently, little questioning of these narratives has been allowed in public discourse. These official and semi-official versions of history have, in a number of cases, ignored or refused to acknowledge those narratives that have attempted to question their validity. These narratives on both sides of the great divide have failed to live up to the ideology under which Partition had occurred. It should not be forgotten that Partition was carried out because it was perceived that Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs could no longer live together. Muslims had felt that their cultural, historical and religious identity would be lost if they continued to live under a Hindu government. Now that more than fifty years have passed after the Partition, one

has yet to mention any significant effort, by either the government or the intelligentsia from both countries of undertaking any serious and conscious efforts to bring both nations any closer.

III

The authors discussed in this dissertation have offered a variety of approaches in their comprehension and presentation of the events of Partition. In Manto's short stories, the reader is presented with a unique theme in relation to other stories about this event. He deliberately or unconsciously refrains from forming any direct link between a violent act and a character's religious identity. He allows his characters to reveal themselves as villains or victims. Even though such a representation may be seen as something obvious and to be avoided, in relation to Partition, it has been ignored by almost every author. As has been discussed in various chapters, authors like Nahal, Singh, and Shahaab have set out to describe events in their stories with forced and clumsy connections between a character's religion and his/her actions. On the other hand, Manto's stories about the same period delve much more poignantly into particular acts of violence to help the readers understand the pathological framework of individuals and the community at that particular time. His stories offer a relentless pursuit of his characters as they go through the contortions of revealing a number of aspects of their otherwise carefully concealed psyche. In some stories, the time taken to change victim to villain and vice versa is very short indeed.

The author who offers an opposite view from Manto's pithy stories is Abdullah Hussain. He succeeds in linking the continual narrative of three generations, starting with the state of Indian society under the British colonial period. His novel, *Udhas Naslain* highlights the violent nature of the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised. To fight for the British, young men from rural Punjab are forcibly conscripted to keep the political and ideological balance of power of their colonial masters. These same people are the ones who are disenfranchised through a lack of representation when it comes to

deciding the state of taxes they have to pay on their agricultural products or other such practical aspects of their everyday lives. Thus a violent dislocation takes place which will be repeated by many of those who succeed in coming back alive from these wars which have nothing to do with their way of life, ideology and culture. His work has highlighted the daily lives and struggles of two varied sections of the community. Naim, the protagonist, whose family and heritage are not very distinguished in relation to the economic and social standing of those around him, moves up in society through marriage into an upper social class. Apart from the difficulties faced by him and his wife in developing a more realistic and workable relationship, there are differences in the manner in which the whole political situation of British imperialism and the process of de-colonisation is viewed. Even though the British leave, there are still considerable differences *between people's perceptions of the legacy that they have left behind*. Hussain, better than most other authors of the subcontinent is able to capture the complexity, as has been discussed in the chapter dealing with his work.

The conflict and unrest in personal and social lives during and after the Partition is also dealt with in Qudrat-Ullah Shahaab and Rajinder Singh Bedi's works. Both of these authors have focused on how experiences of violence and captivity of women have changed them as well as those around them. Because women are perceived to be members of society who are to be 'protected' by men of their families as well as *their society, because they have suffered the ignominy of having spent time with men of an 'Other' community*, it is no longer possible for members of their families to accept their 'purity'. In Shahaab's *Ya Khuda*, the protagonist is forcibly kept and repeatedly raped by Sikhs of her village. She is sent over to Pakistan when she is pregnant; as she gives birth, the child is considered less to be a manifestation of the suffering that she has endured, instead it casts her as a woman of 'loose' character in Pakistani men's eyes. She is seen to be a convenient and an easy target because she has already had a child as a result of her being raped by the Sikhs. This combination of already strong patriarchal beliefs and the availability of a single defenceless woman exposes her to the brutality of men in a newly postcolonial state. These

actions also expose the hypocrisy and hollowness of the supposed respect that women are believed to enjoy. Ironically, women, who were supposed to have been protected, became objects of sexual and physical violence by men of both countries. The Muslim men also targeted Hindu and Sikh women and justified their actions as retaliatory responses for the 'dishonour' of their women.

On the Indian side of the border, Bedi's novel exposes an instance of similar fate confronting those women who have been 'recovered' from Pakistan. Initially, there is a shameless struggle between the men on the border when those from India claim that they would suspend the 'exchange' if Pakistanis continue to return middle-aged and ugly women. What this incident highlights is the lack of any interest in women who are being exchanged, the emphasis, instead had always been on recovery of young women, whose 'bodies' would act as reproductive receptacles for the physical continuation of a particular community. When Lajwanti does return to her husband, there is none of the joy and happiness that one or indeed she would have expected. He was the same person who was exhorting other men to accept and welcome the 'recovered' women into their families; however, his own actions are quite the opposite. His deliberately cool response to her return does not hide his attempt to somehow make her feel that maybe she could have done more to get away from her captors. His cold and callous behaviour almost verges on holding her responsible for actually enjoying her captivity. She is never given any time or space to actually narrate her own story. It is not inaccurate to conclude that Lajwanti's story has been and will be of an individual's struggle against society which has already made up its mind to hold her responsible for her own ordeal.

The predicament of many women like Lajwanti is clearly articulated by Kirpal Singh:

The most peculiar phenomenon with regard to the recovery work of non-Muslim women was that the non-Muslim girls very often refused to be evacuated. They were too afraid of the rigidity of the caste system and were conscious of having lost their relatives. Though they were helpless, under the circumstances, some of them really believed that their husbands and other relatives had failed to protect them and hence they had lost all rights over them (Singh, p. 15).

These 'recovered' women were caught in a terrible dilemma for they were aware of customs and expectations of their respective societies. Because they had been unfortunate enough to have been kidnapped, it was not their pain that the wider community was concerned about. The patriarchy wanted control over the sexuality of their own women and thus there was the drive to get these women back. However, on the women's return, for many of the family members, the presence of these 'soiled' women acted more as a reminder of how their bodies and sexuality had been abused by men from other communities. Hence the fate suffered by many women who were either rejected by their families or, as in Lajwanti's case, were taken, but were never really allowed to forget what they had been through and were not given the space to talk about their personal traumas.

I have argued throughout this dissertation that it is imperative that the history of Partition should be read and interpreted in a radically new way if one is ever to achieve a more meaningful understanding of its repercussions. The grand generalisations of certain individuals, communities and both countries have scarcely moved the discourse in any positive direction. The study of Partition needs to be read and understood as an event that it truly was; a time of catastrophic pain and suffering, and its study as an appropriately troubled record of a troubled event during troubled times with troubled results.

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