

# **PARTITION IN INDO ANGLIAN FICTION**

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by  
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### **CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that the thesis entitled Partition in Indo Anglian Fiction submitted to the University of Calicut in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy, is a record of the original research work done by Vijayan. K, under my guidance and supervision, and that no part of this thesis has been submitted before, for the award of any Degree / Diploma / Associateship / Fellowship or other similar titles.

Palayad Campus,  
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**(Dr. C.P. Sivadasan)**

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis, entitled Partition in Indo Anglian Fiction, submitted to the University of Calicut, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy, is a bonafide record of research work done by me and that no part of this thesis has previously formed the basis for the award of any Degree / Diploma / Associateship / Fellowship or any other similar titles.

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## PREFACE

“Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge... At the stroke of the midnight hour, while the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom. A moment comes, which comes, but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long impressed, finds utterance...”

Jawaharlal Nehru to the Indian Constituent Assembly,  
New Delhi, August 14, 1947.

Even the great visionary Jawaharlal Nehru could not foresee that this awakening would be to a pathetic tragedy: the tragedy of the dead and the dispossessed of the Punjab and all those faceless hamlets of the subcontinent in which, in the wake of partition, Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims turned on each other with a ferocity rarely seen in this violent century: the tragedy of a sundered Kashmir and the outbreak of a war whose lingering effect still endangers Indo-Pakistani peace.

The reckless speed with which partition was accomplished with little regard for an orderly transfer of population between the two new states led to a holocaust. Even by a conservative estimate, ten million people took to the road in search of a new home. A million did not make it. Trains packed with Muslim refugees, all of them killed, arrived in Pakistan with messages scribbled on their sides. Foot convoys, some of them 800,000 strong and 70 miles long, moved between the two new dominions. Thousands were slaughtered on the way, an equal number fell victim to cholera and other diseases.

One Captain Atkins recalls a road to which one convoy had passed: "Every yard of the way there was a body, some butchered, some dead of cholera. The vultures had become so bloated by their feasts they could fly no longer, and the wild dogs so demanding in their taste they ate only the livers of the corpses littering the road."

The horror accompanying the transfer of power has been a major theme with Indian English writers. Though they might differ in the treatment of their subject matter and in their choice of gory incident to enliven their writing, they all seem to insist that division of Punjab was done arbitrarily and that the Hindus and Muslims could have lived in a united India as they had done for a century and a half under British rule. Furthermore, with one or two exceptions, they assign the blame for the partition to power-hungry politicians who inflamed hatred among a simple people to serve their own selfish means.

A study of the novels of partition reveals some interesting facts. We see that the novelists fall roughly into two groups, the Sikhs and the Hindus. There is also a Muslim novelist, Attia Hosain. Though in general Hindu writers far outnumber the Sikh writers, yet the majority of the novels on the partition are by Sikhs (Khushwant Singh, Kartar Singh Duggal, Raj Gill and H.S.Gill being the more important ones). This is not surprising, for the Punjab was the homeland of five million Sikhs, and it was to them that the province owed its prosperity. They were considerably richer than their Muslim counterparts. When the Punjab was cut into two, the two and a half million Sikhs whose home fell in Pakistan were enraged - - not so much by the threat to their religion

as by the fear for the loss of their very considerable material possessions. The hungry Muslims, who had long envied the Sikhs, at last found an opportunity to enrich themselves quickly by looting Sikh property. There is much truth in Leonard Mosley's observation that "this was not a Hindu-Muslim war, but a Sikh-Muslim war." (Mosley, qtd. in '**Freedom At Midnight**', 167)

We see a persistent pattern running through the novel 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. Secondly, most of the Sikh writers strive for historical accuracy and load their fiction with documentary evidence gleaned from newspapers, government reports and GAD. Kohl's **Stern Reckoning: A Survey of the Events Leading up to and Following the Partition of India** (1949). Thirdly, the 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 Edward 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." And an Indian army lieutenant recalls an incident unmatched for its grotesquery. An old Muslim in a column was tugging towards Pakistan with the only possession he had saved from his homestead – a goat. A dozen miles from the frontier

of his new home, the old man's goat began a dash towards a land of sugar cane. The old man followed in frantic pursuit. Suddenly, with vengeful wrath, a Sikh came from the sugar cane land, beheaded the old man and ran off with his goat.

Let us now examine some of the Sikh novels. Raj Gill's *The Rape* (1974) opens in March 1947 in a village in West Punjab - - soon to become part of Pakistan - - where Dalipjit, a Sikh boy, and Jasmit, a Sikh girl, meet secretly at the all too familiar village well. It ends on the India side of the border some nine months later. A good few of the characters are already dead; some of illness, others at the hands of the Muslim marauders while on their long trek to India. Among the last to die are Jasmit and Dalipjit's father who had been rescued and who has been living with the boy. "I am not the same Leila", says the girl to Dalipjit when the latter beckons her to his bed. "He had me, your Father. Wednesday night it was, I told him about you being the first."(TR, 128)

The father raping his son's girl could have been a singularly poignant moment in the novel. It could have been endowed with some symbolic significance. But the effect is dissipated, for the author is too occupied in depicting the political and historical background to develop his characters. The human story is lost in a welter of editorialising the partition. Names of politicians are strewn across the pages, newspaper reports are quoted in abundance, and several speeches of Gandhi, Nehru and the Muslim leader Jinnah are reproduced verbatim. Still, there are episodes in the novel which are memorable and which prevent the book being dismissed out of hand. One

such episode is about Lakha Singh, a village priest, who, carrying his eighty-year-old mother on his back, joins a foot convoy. Seeing his mother in a coma and unable to bear his burden any longer, he lowers her into a canal. Revived by the cool water, the mother blesses her son before she sinks: "May you live long, son, for cooling my soul."

Another Sikh novel, H.G. Gill's *Ashes and Petals* (1978) brilliantly evokes the trauma of those refugees who crossed the border between the two countries by train in the weeks immediately following independence. The novel opens with a trainload of Hindus and Sikhs on their way to India. They are stopped and attacked by Muslim hooligans. In a desperate bid to preserve the honour of his family, Risaldar Santa Singh shoots his fourteen-year-old granddaughter, Baljeeto, rather than see her abducted by the raiders. Her seven-year-old brother, Ajit sits through the act - - a silent witness. Soon Santa Singh's action is emulated by other Sikhs, and the ghoulish drama is enacted in other parts of the train. What takes place is completely credible and is substantiated by similar incidents recorded by G.D. Khosla in *Stern Reckoning* and by Collins and Lapierre in *Freedom at Midnight*. On several occasions Hindus, Sikhs and even Muslims killed their women with their own hands rather than see them dishonoured. And when the men were not around to protect them, women threw themselves into wells or soaked their clothes on kerosene and set themselves ablaze.

The rest of the story is set in post-partition India, but the consequence of that fateful day forever colour the attitude of Santa Singh towards the Muslims. When Ajit, a cavalry officer, seeks permission to marry a Muslim girl called Salma, the old man

exclaims: "What have you come down to, my grandson? Have you forgotten Baljeeto, your sister? Your poor sister I had to shoot in the train. Have you forgotten the partition and the Mussalmans?" No, he hasn't. But the strength of love is stronger than that of hate. Better executed than **The Rape**, the novel suffers from the author's preoccupation with army life and tank warfare - - all of which impinges on the love story.

**Twice Born Twice Dead** (1979) by Kartar Singh Duggal covers much the same period as Raj Gill's **The Rape**. And as in the former novel, so also here, there is an abundance of historical material, several references to political personalities, and virtually hundreds of anecdotes of human suffering. But there is no editorialising. We are given a panoramic picture of human suffering and left to draw our own conclusions. These stories of human suffering, mostly narrated by the refugees who have suffered violence, are neatly juxtaposed with a kindness the two principal characters receive from Hindus and Muslims alike as they move from one camp to another. No blame is assigned to any group or individual: we are asked to look into ourselves for the malady. How could Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims, who have lived together as brothers for centuries, suddenly turn against each other and indulge in acts of primitive barbarism? The Muslim leader Liaquat Ali's cry, "Our people have gone mad!" seems to be the only explanation. Hate may be met with hate, violence may be subdued by still greater violence, but insanity can only be answered by compassion. And this novel, for all its violence, is a vigorous cry for compassion.

The novel deals with the peregrinations of Sohne Shah, a Sikh village headman, in the company of Satbharai, the daughter of his Muslim friend Allahditta. Allahditta is killed by his own people for harbouring Sikhs, and Sohne Shah flees with Satbharai to a refugee camp in Rawalpindi. From here the two move to Lahore, then to Lyallpur, and then on to Amritsar - - the holy city of the Sikhs in India and what do they see there? A caravan of Muslim evacuees on their way to Pakistan. The author describes them thus:

...The caravan was moving. Bullock carts were loaded with boxes, trunks and spinning wheels. On the top were *charpoys*, beddings and sacks. On the sacks were old men and women, carrying fowls, cats and lambs... The men were wounded; they had seen their relations hacked to pieces with *kirpans*. There was not a single young man in the caravan. Where were the youths? There were small boys, bare-footed, bare-headed, walking fast, or slowing down, to cast a longing glance at the hot *jalebis* in the sweet shops. The most yearning looks however were cast at running water. None was drawing any water, yet the tap was running. The caravan was thirsty. They had set out in the morning, and the sun was well up now. An evacuee moved towards the tap with a water pot. Hindus and Sikhs rushed to cut him up. No Muslim dared take even a drop of water from the Hindu tap. Men, women and children, looked beseechingly at the water flowing from the tap and moved on... (TBTD, 280)

While most Sikh writers admit that the Sikh attacks on the Muslims were as vicious as the Muslim attacks on the Sikhs, only Kartar Singh Duggal has given a

graphic description of Sikh atrocities. Being married into a Muslim family himself, the author is able to rise above communal loyalties and be just to both sides.

Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* (1956) was the first novel in English on the partition and in many ways it remains the best. In prose that is dry, bare and laconic, but wholly suited to his purpose, he tells how communal frenzy engulfed the remote village of Mano Majra where Sikhs and Hindus jolts the idyllic tranquillity of Mano Majra. But it is not till murdered bodies are discovered floating in the river that the Muslims are evacuated from the village and put on a train bound to Pakistan. Sikh extremists, seething with vengeance, decide to ambush the train carrying the Muslims. The Hindu magistrate, Hukum Chand, learns of their plan but is powerless - - he does not have the policemen to offer the train protection. But he has in his custody a Sikh ruffian called Jugga. He releases the ruffian and from him learns that the latter's Muslim sweetheart Nooran is on the train that is to be attacked. Jugga defeats the plan of the attackers, but is himself killed in the process.

Among the attractions of *Train to Pakistan* are its neat symbolism and strong characterisation. The train, no doubt, is the major symbol. The trains announce to the villagers the time of the day and help regulate their lives. Not that many trains stop at Mano Majra. The trains are symbolic of time, progress, and change, all of which have bypassed this sleepy village. Then one day comes the "ghost train" with its load of dead, and we know that Mano Majra has at last caught up with the winds of

destruction, which are blowing across the land. Also symbolic are the two lizards staring at each other with their shiny black eyes and emitting little rasping noises. They stand for Hindu-Muslim enmity. The feuding lizards are beautifully contrasted with the pleasure loving Hukum Chand, the symbol of government, as he carefully makes his toilet to spend the evening with a prostitute.

Though all the characters are drawn in sharp outline, Hukum Chand is the most arresting. Married to an unattractive and illiterate woman, he looks for love and sex elsewhere, but he is not immoral. He accepts gifts and obliges friends, but he is not corrupt. Though he takes the law into his own hands and does what he pleases, he is not unjust. The government machinery has broken down, and with hardly any resources at his disposal he is required to safeguard life and property. He goes about his business with the conviction that the only absolute truth is death - - the rest does not really matter. When he learns of the Sikh plan to kill the Muslim evacuees, he cries out in impotent rage:

“What am I to do? ... The whole world has gone mad. Let it go mad! What does it matter if another thousand get killed? We will get a bulldozer and bury as we did the others. We may not even need the bulldozer if this time it is going to be on the river. Just throw the corpses in the water. What is a few hundred out of a four hundred million anyway? An epidemic takes ten times the number and no one even bothers.” (TTP, 149)

Through the portrayal of Hukum Chand, Khushwant Singh shows how the much-maligned Indian bureaucracy was itself caught between the hatred of a people and the bungling of politicians. And it is to these bureaucrats, rather than to the fine sentiments expressed in Delhi, that we owe whatever lives were saved.

Turning to the next group of writers, all Hindus are less obsessed with the partition than their Sikh counterparts. India's top three writers- - R.K. Narayan, Raja Rao and Mulk Raj Anand- - have avoided the subject altogether. In so far as Narayan and Raja Rao are concerned, this is not surprising. Narayan has always shunned political subjects. His one exception was **Waiting for the Mahatma** (1955) and it proved the least successful of his works. Nothing could be less suitable to Narayan's comic genius than the horror – packed partition. Nor could the subject hold much appeal to Raja Rao, who steeped in religion and philosophy, finds sustenance in India's myths and rituals. But why Anand, the political novelist, should have avoided the subject is not easy to explain. Having fought for Indian Independence, he perhaps did not want to be critical of the Indian leaders in the early days of freedom. Also, as a humanist, he believes in man's essential goodness, while the story of partition shows man's inherent capacity for evil.

The three major works that fall in the non-Sikh group are Attia Hosain's **Sunlight on a Broken Column** (1961), Manohar Malgaonkar's **A Bend in the Ganges** (1964) and Chaman Nahal's **Azadi** (1975). Of these, **Sunlight on a Broken Column** has the distinction of being the only novel by a woman (and a Muslim at that) to have been

written on the great event. Divided into four parts, it covers some twenty years in the life of the narrator – heroine, Laila. The first three parts paint a vivid picture of Laila as she grows up in a rich and cultured land-owning family in Lucknow. It is a time of political vortex: the secular nationalists under the Congress banner are being challenged by the communal nationalists under the Muslim League banner. The politics of the street have invaded the drawing rooms of the sophisticated and even father and son find themselves in opposite camps.

Manohar Malgaonkar's **A Bend in the Ganges**, selected by E.M.Forster as the best novel of 1964, is an epic presentation of India's struggle for freedom from the late thirties to the partitioning of the country in 1947. One of the book's objectives is to probe Gandhi's ideology of non-violence in relation to man's hidden capacity for violence. The following epigraph from Gandhi, marked with self-doubt and self-questioning, sets the mood of the novel.

...This non-violence, therefore, seems to be due mainly to our helplessness. It almost appears as if we are nursing in our bosoms the desire to take revenge the first time we get the opportunity. Can true voluntary non-violence come out of this seeming forced non-violence of the weak? Is it not a futile experiment I am conducting? ... (BG, 197)

He is soon put out of his anguish. It was a common practice during the partition to strip a man naked to determine whether he was a Hindu or a Muslim - - all Muslims

being circumcised according to their religion. In Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*, one of the characters who is circumcised, muses: "Where on earth except in India would a man's life depend on whether or not his foreskin had been removed? It would be laughable if it were not tragic." (TTP, 56)

Though Malgaonkar is critical of the doctrine of non-violence, he nowhere condones violence. What he is trying to show are the hidden wellsprings of evil in man, which cannot be checked by lip service to non-violence. He goes a step further and says that violence is a fact of our existence - - and we must recognise it as such. In practical terms we may be no better off in doing so, but it would be, to use his own words, "honest and manly."

The last novel in this group, Chaman Nahal's *Azadi*, offers the most comprehensive treatment of the subject to date. The author recreates in vivid detail the consequences of the partitioning of a Hindu family and its close associates as they journey from Sialkot in Pakistan to Delhi - - the capital of India where unknown to them, the fate of these innocents was decided.

## **Chapter 1**

### **Partition Novels: A Post Colonial Perspective**

## Chapter I

### Partition Novels: A Post Colonial Perspective

*“The responsibility for governing India had been placed by the inscrutable decree of providence upon the shoulders of the British race.”*

*Rudyard Kipling*

*“The loss of India would have been final and fatal to us. It could not fail to be part of a process that would reduce us to the scrap of a minor power.”*

*Winston Churchill to the House of Commons*

*February 1931*

‘Postcolonialism’ is a protean term, the connotative possibilities of which are extended to suit the various need of theorists. A diverse range of experiences, cultures and problems are strung together under this phrase, and hence, it eludes any monolithic or even comprehensive definition. However, as Spivak rightly points out, “ ... no rigorous definition of anything is ultimately possible ... yet ... definitions are necessary in order to keep us going, to allow us to take a stand” (1988, 77), in a specific context.

The second edition of the American Heritage Dictionary gives, perhaps, what could only be called a simplistic definition of ‘postcolonial’ as, “of, relating to, or being the time following the establishment of independence in a colony” (1968). Since the

mid-sixties, the term 'Commonwealth Literature' has been used as the comprehensive label for all English writing that came out of the various British colonies, and a global association known as 'Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies' has been formed, to encourage study and research in the area. However, during the past decade, in particular, the term 'postcolonial' has gained prominence. Meenakshi Mukherjee draws our attention to the new term increasingly gaining ground today:

... the massive Routledge Encyclopaedia project that began nearly a decade ago as 'The Encyclopaedia of Commonwealth Literature', just before publication altered its name to become 'The Encyclopaedia of Post-colonial Literatures in English' .... [The] new term 'post-colonial' foregrounding the political dimension of both the text and context of this literature - - is being used more often, slowly pushing out the old and seemingly apolitical name 'Commonwealth Literature'. The new title of the just published monumental Routledge volumes perhaps puts a seal of authority on this new term, knocking in the last nails on the coffin of the Anglocentric old label. (1996, 5)

At one level, such a change in nomenclature may appear to be an act of pouring old wine into a new bottle, as Bahri points out in "**Once More with Feeling: What is Post-colonialism?**":

... one might be tempted to dismiss semantic quibbling and academic versions of digging holes only to fill them again and to settle for the satisfaction that a rose by another name would smell the same and a proboscis by the name of a rose would still smell a rose ... (60)

However, Salman Rushdie has some definite reservation about the use of the term 'Commonwealth Literature'. In his essay 'Commonwealth Literature Does Not Exist', Rushdie upbraids the "new and badly made umbrella" (61), under which disparate non-British literatures are forced to huddle, without any regard for their differences. He feels that "non-Western Literature" is being ghettoised, contained and relegated to the margins, in what might be considered as a racially segregationist move" (qtd. in Bahri 64). Similarly, Aijaz Ahmad does not approve of the term 'Third World Literature', on the ground that it leads to

' ... suppression of the multiplicity of the significant differences among and within both the advanced capitalist countries on the one hand and the imperialised formations on the other. (285)

Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, in their introduction to *The Empire Writes Back*, suggests that the term 'postcolonial' is to be eminently preferred,

... because it points a way towards a possible study of the effects of colonialism in and between writing in English and writing in indigenous languages ... as well as writing in other language diasporas. (24)

In their turn, these authors offer the following richly meaningful definition for the phrase 'post-colonial':

The semantic basis of the term 'post-colonial' might seem to suggest a concern only with the national culture after the departure of the imperial power... We have used the term 'post-colonial', however to cover all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonisation to the present day. This is because there is a continuity of preoccupations throughout the historical process initiated by European imperial aggression. (1-2)

The Routledge Encyclopaedia of Post-colonial Literatures in English (1994) adopts the above definition, as the definitive description of the scope and the parameters of the postcolonial. Nevertheless, from Trivedi's point of view,

... the seamless, painless view of colonial history which this definition represents may be rather more applicable to the white 'settler' colonies [like Canada and Australia] where the arrival of the imperial power was an act of aggression against a native population (which was quite decimated soon afterwards) but not against what answers for most of their population now, which of course is largely descended from the aggressors themselves. (234)

Despite the different stances of postcolonial critics, it must be admitted that the aftermath of colonisation can never be anything but fragmentary and explosively diverse. As Anne McClintock points out:

... the singular category 'post-colonial' may license too readily a panoptic tendency to view the globe within generic abstractions voided of political nuance. The arcing panorama of the horizon becomes thereby so expensive that international imbalances in power remain effectively blurred. (86)

It is significant that Wole Soyinka fears a possible marginalisation of the black culture, with the imminent acceptance of the nomenclature 'postcolonial Literature', at the global level:

We black Africans have been blindly invited to submit ourselves to a second epoch of colonialism - - this time by a universal - - humanoid abstraction defined and conducted by individuals whose theories and prescriptions are derived from the apprehension of 'their' world and 'their' history, 'their' social neuroses and 'their' value systems. (qtd. in Katrak 256)

The label 'postcolonial studies' also tends to downplay, or turn a Nelson's eye on, the differences between, and within, various former colonies, as pointed out by Arun Mukherjee:

The postcolonial theorists' generalisations about 'all' 'postcolonial people' suggest that Third Worldism and/or nationalism bind the people of these societies in conflictless brotherhood, that the inequalities of caste and class do not exist in these societies and that their literary works are only about 'resisting' or 'subverting' colonisers' discourses. (27)

The above phenomenon can be seen evidenced by the stance of Vijay Mishra and Bob Hodge, who advocate the use of the term 'postcolonial', simply because it "foregrounds a politics of opposition and struggle, and problematises the key relationship between centre and periphery" (399). In the words of Meenakshi Mukherjee, such a dialectics leads to a new polarisation:

In this swing of the pendulum, marginality is valorised, oppression almost turns into empowerment. On the whole however postcolonialism foregrounds the need for recognising identities, voices and situations that were not granted by the colonial power ... (1996, 4)

Spivak also posits the view that, in postcoloniality, "every metropolitan definition is dislodged. The general mode for the postcolonial is citation, reinscription, rerouting the historical" (1993, 217)

Another site for contention in respect of 'Post colonialism' has been the presence/absence of the hyphen in the term. There seems to be however no consistency

in the use/non-use of the hyphen in the works of the theorists, in this regard. Significantly, Vijay Mishra and Bob Hodge distinguish between two kinds of postcolonialism, signalling the differences through the use or non-use of the hyphen:

The first ... is what we call oppositional postcolonialism, which is found in its most overt form in post-independent colonies at the historical phase of post-colonialism (with a hyphen) ... The second form ... is a 'complicit postcolonialism' ... an always present underside within colonialism itself. (401)

Nevertheless, it must be conceded that the above use/non-use of hyphen with regard to the two opposed modes of usage of the phrase 'postcolonial' has not yet gained currency in critical parlance till date. In their introduction to the anthology of essays *Colonial Discourse/Postcolonial Theory*, Francis Barker, et al. claim that they have

... distinguished between 'postcolonial' used as a temporal marker and 'postcolonial' etc. to indicate the analytical concept of greater range and ambition, as, in 'postcolonial theory' or the 'postcolonial condition'. (4)

In his analysis of the signification of the hyphen, T.Vijayakumar invests it with a hair-splitting paradoxical meaning, which does seem to take the argument too far:

'I am the hyphen in Indian-American' A.K.Ramanujan is reported to have said... Shashi Deshpande sees it as an understatement. For her, Ramanujan was more than a hyphen, he was a bridge. 'Hyphens unite but bridges connect'. But do hyphens unite? Some like the poet Wendell Aycock do not think so. In his poem titled 'Hyphen-nation' he writes:

'...

The Hyphen only supports. It does not connect

... the hyphen is incomplete

existing between two cultures, it is an

eternal bridge

with barriers and guards at both ends.'

(195-6)

If there is considerable inconsistency regarding the use/non-use of the hyphen in the phrase post-colonialism, there is also no consensus as regards its signification of literature of any particular period. Deepika Bahri extends the use of the term 'postcolonial', not merely to characterise that which succeeds the colonial, "but also the chapter of history following the Second World War, whether or not such a period accommodates the still-colonised, the neo-colonised, or the always colonised" (52). To Carol Breckenridge and Peter Van der Veer:

'Post' implies that which is behind us and the past implies periodisation. We can therefore speak of the postcolonial period as a framing device to characterise the

second half of the Twentieth Century. The term 'postcolonial' displaces the focus on postwar' as a historical marker for the last fifty years (1)

The term 'postcolonial', as commonly understood, covers the cultural interaction between colonised powers and the societies they colonised - - the white settler colonies such as Canada, New Zealand and Australia on the one hand, and the non-settler colonies in South Asia, Africa and the Caribbean on the other. However, the more popular usage of the term, as Gauri Viswanathan suggests, is "to signify more or less an attitude or position from which the decentering of Eurocentrism may ensue" (qtd. Bahri 52). However, Arif Dirlik does not agree with the use of 'postcolonial' as a literal description of what used to be formerly 'colonial' societies, or as a description of global conditions after the period of colonialism, and suggests that "one does not have to be postcolonial in any strict sense of the term to share" in the themes, common in much postcolonial discourse (336). Spivak comments that "the United States is not outside the postcolonial globe" (1993, 217) either.

For Bahri, postcolonialism is an inter-cultural or sociological phenomenon, not particularly signifying the postcolonial era that followed the industrial revolution and geographical expedition of Europe:

... given that the history of humankind is one of exploitation and colonisation of various kinds, is not much of the inhabited world in some stage or the other of

postcoloniality? All over the world, people identifying with nations or communities have participated in some kind of colonialist manoeuvre. (55)

Sara Suleri is in agreement with Bahri's view, and asserts that marginality experienced in any area of any age in history, can be defined in terms of postcolonialism:

Where the term once referred exclusively to the discursive practices produced by the historical fact of prior colonisation in certain geographically specific segments of the world, it is now more of an abstraction available for figurative deployment in any strategic redefinition of marginality. (274)

Such an interpretation of the phrase falls in line with Homi Bhabha's assertion that

... postcolonial time questions the teleological traditions of the past and present, and the polarised historicist sensibility of the archaic and the modern. (1990, 304)

Thus 'postcolonism, from its humble beginnings as a describer of literature, has evolved today, to the status of theoretical apparatus and a disciplinary entity, posing almost a challenge to recent theories like poststructuralism, postmodernism and feminism. The authors of *The Empire Writes Back* are of

the opinion that 'postmodernism', has contributed to the phenomenal development of postcolonial discourse:

Perhaps one of the most significant reasons for the exponential expansion of the postcolonial discourse is the hot climate generated by the development of postmodern theory and the postmodern critic's suspicion of an objective historical consciousness. (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, 162)

Young contends that postcolonial discourse has profited enormously from "the politics of post-structuralism [which] forces the recognition that all knowledge may be variously contaminated" (11)

Ketu H. Katrak gives two reasons, for the recent trend in postcolonial theory, to engage certain fashionable theoretical models:

... 1) to validate postcolonial literature, even to prove its value through the use of complicated Eurocentric models. Or 2) to succumb to the lure of engaging in a hegemonic discourse of the Western theory, given that it is 'difficult' or 'challenging' often for the sole purpose of demonstrating its shortcomings for an interpretation of postcolonial texts. (256)

Dirlik is of the view, that postcolonism has been very much influenced by post-structuralism and post-modernism:

... [the] crucial premises of postcolonial criticism, such as the repudiation of post-Enlightenment metanarratives, were enunciated first in poststructuralist thinking, and the various postmodernisms it has informed. (336)

Slemon, however, argues that postcolonial critical practice is different from post-structural and post-modern modes of criticism, and the assumption that the premises are the same would make,

... postcolonial criticism radically fractured and contradictory, for such a criticism would draw on post-structuralism's suspension of the referent in order to read the social 'text' of colonialist power and at the same time would reinstall the referent in the service of colonised and post-colonial societies. (1989,9)

Bahri rightly observes that, metropolitan postcolonial theory is replete with post-structuralist methods and the writings of Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze and Guattari:

The serviceability of post-structuralism for postcolonial criticism aside, the connection between the two, one might speculate, is partly responsible for the latter's status in the academy, a completely indigenous 'postcolonial' discourse being either considered or rendered an impossibility for various reasons: the lingering influence of colonial texts in Third World curricula and universities, the continuing need for legitimisation of the marginal by the central, and the persistent disregard for any productions that might be de-linked from the metropole or Western modular constructs of postcoloniality. (70)

In an article titled “Is the Post in Postmodernism the Post in Postcolonialism?”, Appiah argues that “the post in postcolonial, like the post in postmodernism is the post of the space clearing gesture” (348) and that “ ... the post in postcoloniality, like the post in postmodernism challenges earlier legitimating narratives” (353). But Helen Tiffin remarks:

It is ironic that the label of ‘Postmodern’ is increasingly being applied hegemonically, to the cultures and texts outside Europe, assimilating postcolonial works whose political orientation and experimental formulations have been deliberately designed to counteract such European appropriations, and it might be argued, have themselves provided the cultural base and formative colonial experience which European philosophies have drawn in their apparent radicalisation of linguistic philosophy. (170)

Om P. Juneja points out how both postmodernism and postcolonialism share common strategies of moving away from realist representation:

While postmodernism has its origin in the ‘crisis of authority’ vested in Euro-American cultural institutions having monocultural thinking with universalist claims in the latter half of this century, postcolonial perspective appropriates this crisis of authority as the erosion of that former colonist authority and also as the liberation of the colonial self in which one’s own identity may be created and recuperated. (15)

On the other hand, Martina Michael is of the view that the postcolonial theory

...has reformulated the postmodern notion of the subject by shifting our attention to processes of subject formulation that are closely connected to the notion of space. (88)

Speaking of 'subject' and 'object' positions leads us to another closely connected issue - - postcoloniality and feminism. As Chandra Mohanty argues, in the context of Western feminist writing about Third World women.

Western feminists alone become the true subjects of this counter-history. Third World women on the other hand, never rise above the debilitating generality of their 'object' status. (qtd. in Suleri 274-75)

Spivak points at the

... discontinuity, heterogeneity and typology ... (in) sex-analysis, because this ... cannot by itself obliterate the problems of race and class. It will not necessarily escape the inbuilt colonialism of First World feminism towards the Third (1988, 153)

It is interesting to note that, Minh-ha is of the view that "the work of decolonisation will have to continue within women's movements" (268). Mohanty too

expresses a similar sentiment, namely, the Western feminists are not totally seized with the problems facing women in the Third World:

Western feminism appropriate and 'colonise' the fundamental complexities and conflicts which characterise the lives of women of different classes, religions, cultures, races and castes in these (the Third World) countries. (260)

Audre Lorde speaks also of the double burden of the Third World women, for having to fight against not only the patriarchal oppression, but also their own marginalisation at the hands of their white counterparts:

Women of today are still being called upon to stretch across the gap of male ignorance, to educate men as to our existence and our needs. This is an old and primary tool of all oppressors to keep the oppressed occupied with the master's concerns. Now we hear that it is the task of black and Third World women to educate white women in the face of tremendous resistance, as to our existence, our differences, our relative roles in our joint survival. This is a diversion of energies and a tragic repetition of racist patriarchal thought. (qted. in Minh-ha 266)

In *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World*, a comprehensive account of women's involvement in nationalist struggles in Egypt, Iran, India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, the Philippines, China, Vietnam and Korea, Kumari Jayawardena makes the interesting observation that feminist ideas in these regions, were not originally

imported from the West, but inscribed in their own inheritance. Ketu H. Katrak also subscribes to a point of view:

Women writers' stances, particularly with regard to glorifying/denigrating traditions, vary as dictated by their own class backgrounds, levels of education, political awareness and commitment, and their search for alternatives to their existing levels of oppression often inscribed within the most revered traditions. Their texts deal with, and often challenge, their dual oppression – patriarchy that preceded and continues after colonialism... (257)

A striking example for such a dual oppression has been the case of the Telugu poet Muddupalani, a courtesan in the court of Pratapasimha of the eighteenth century, as described by Susie Tharu and K.Lalitha in their introduction to **Women Writing in India**. Muddupalani's 'Radhika Santwanam' was a '*sringaraprabandham*', in which the principal '*rasa*' evoked was '*sringara*' or erotic pleasure. Traditionally, in such literature, it is the man who woos his lover. But in 'Radhika Santwanam', the woman's sensuality is presented as the central issue, as she takes the initiative, and it is her satisfaction and pleasure that provides the poetic resolution. It is an unusual work, but it was relatively uncontroversial in its time. In 1911, however it was banned by the British Government, on the ground that it could endanger the moral health of the Indian subjects. Though the ban orders were withdrawn after Independence, it was difficult to find a copy, even as late as the late 1980s, primarily thanks to the influence of the many reform movements. Tharu and Lalitha write:

The story of Muddupalani's life, her writing, and the misadventures of 'Radhika Santwanam' could well be read as an allegory of the enterprise of women's writing and the scope of feminist criticism in India, for it raises, in an uncanny way, many of the critical questions that frame women's writing. These include questions about the contexts, structured and restructured by changing ideologies of class, gender, empire, in which women wrote, and the conditions in which they were read: questions about the politics, sexual and critical, that determined the reception and impact of their work; questions about the resistances, the subversions, the strategic appropriations that characterised the subtlest and most radical women's writing ... patriarchies reconstructed in the interests of Orientalism, imperialism, the Enlightenment, nationalism, among other forces, provide the horizon within which the text articulates its feminist challenge. (15)

Viewed against the backdrop of such a baffling, kaleidoscopic postcolonial context, the structure of the novel acquires ever-innovative dimensions. Mikhail Bakhtin considers the novel's unique, protean form as

... the leading hero in the drama of literary development in our time precisely because it best of all reflects the tendencies of a new world still in the making; it is, after all, the only genre born of this new world and in total affinity with it. (1981,7)

Alastair Niven is also of the same opinion:

... it would now be impossible to define the modern novel without providing a central place for its creators in Africa, the Caribbean, Canada, Australia, and several other parts of the English-speaking world. In each case one feels that the novelists occupy a pivotal place in the establishment of a contemporary, cultural nationalism. (106)

Hence, an analysis of novels from two different well-marked postcolonial backgrounds, in the light of Weisstein's methodology with specific regard to thematology, may throw much additional light on the relative merits of the authors in question. To Weisstein, the primary components that constitute any standard literary work are "subject matter (*stoff*), theme, motif, situation, image (*Bild*), trait (*Zug*) and topos" (129). Stoff, as defined by Elizabeth Frezel is

... a well-delineated story line (Fabel) existing prior to the literary work, a 'plot', which, as an internal or external experience, as a report on a contemporary event, as a historical, mythical or religious action, as a work already shaped by another writer, or even as a product of the imagination, is treated in literary fashion. (qtd. in Weisstein 136)

The '*stoff*' in respect of the postcolonial novels, tends to appear as fairly universal, their main burden being the colonial condition of domination/subjugation, oppression/suppression, imperialism/nationalism and the postcolonial condition of the

elation of liberation accompanied by personal frustrations and disillusionments, a burden of deconstruction and reconstruction and, still more indirectly, the establishment of a national identity. Viewed from such a perspective, William Walsh's observation with regard to the innovative commonwealth fiction, seems to smack of an implicit, imperialist prejudice:

Perhaps the commonwealth writer's motto in these matters should be the opposite of the gentle, liberal apophthegm of Forster's. 'Only disconnect!' Cut yourself off from your own past. Unbolt your fierce identity. Dismantle your driving national force, and become something altogether quieter, more passive, a faithful recording instrument. (1973b, xii)

Postcolonial themes, to say the least, are at least as various as the post colonial nations, societies, ethnic groups and the different sects of race, class and gender:

Themes, like symbols... are polysemous: that is, they can be endowed with different meanings in the face of differing situations. That is what makes an inquiry into their permutations an adventure into the history of ideas  
(Levin 144)

More importantly, however, Van Tieghem speaks of "the role played by ... (the author's) own genius, their ideal and their art, in the variations they have played on a common theme" (89). Thus, one comes across themes peculiar to each postcolonial

society as well as common themes, such as the quest for identity explored in countless ways, and subjected to varied treatments. Niven is not far off the mark when he observes:

It may be becoming altogether inappropriate to speak in terms of national labels ... The impermanence of cultural rootings and the cross-fertilisation of art, society and politics in the modern world ... make national descriptions redundant. (1107)

Nevertheless, for present study, a thematic survey of postcolonial novels has been undertaken under a broad classification of literatures of settler and non-settler societies. In non-settler countries like India and Africa, the main burden of the postcolonial writers has been to revive and rejuvenate an already existing but blurred, literary tradition and culture. On the other hand, settler communities in Canada, Australia and New Zealand have had to develop, in Michael Dahs's words, "the counter culture of imagination" (qtd. in Tiffin 173)

Canada is linguistically and geographically fragmented into a plurality of cultures, and such a task of creating a 'counter culture' is a complex enterprise in its context, as terms like 'culture', 'place', 'identity' and 'tradition' connote different things in different contexts. William Lyon Mackenzie King, Prime Minister of Canada, once made a humorous but pertinent remark that: if some countries have too much history, we have too much geography" (qtd. in Woodcock 1994, 188). Northrop Frye's words

too highlight such a fragmentation of the Canadian psyche, fraught with numerous paradoxes at different levels - - cultural, temporal and spatial:

Canadian sensibility has been profoundly disturbed, not so much by our famous problem of identity, important as that is, as by a series of paradoxes in what confronts that identity. It is less perplexed by the question 'Who am I?' than by some such riddle as 'Where is here?' (1971, 220)

In her thematic guide to Canadian Literature Survival, Atwood echoes Frye's concerns, while relating all existing paradoxes pertaining to Canadian identity, to the situation of the individual Canadian citizen:

Who am I? is a question appropriate in countries where the environment, the 'here' , is already well-defined, so well-defined in fact that it may threaten to overwhelm the individual. In societies where everyone and everything has its place a person may have to struggle to keep from being just a function of the structure. 'Where is here?' is a different kind of question. It is what a man asks when he finds himself in unknown territory, and it implies several other questions. Where is this place in relation to other places? How do I find my way around it? (1972, 17)

The vast empty spaces, largely unknown lakes, rivers and islands, vast stretches of dark forests, endless prairies, rigorous northern climate and the barbaric, rude and ruthless snow, have all forced on the Canadian psyche a sense of isolation in the

physical, geographical and psychological aspects. Frye, in his conclusion to the *Literary History of Canada*, speaks of a vague, yet comprehensive terror in regard to nature:

... where the winters are so cold and where conditions of life have so often been bleak and comfortless, where even the mosquitoes have been described... as 'mementoes of the fall' ... It is not a terror of the dangers or discomforts or even the mysteries of nature, but a terror of the soul at something that these things manifest (843)

It is the vast expanse of space and relentless, cold cycle of seasons, against which the tiny human individual is pitted for basic survival, that contributes to the sense of mystery and terror in Canada. F.R.Scott writes in his poem 'Lawrentian Shield':

Hidden in wonder and snow, or sudden with summer  
 This land stares at the sun in a huge silence  
 Endlessly repeating something we cannot hear (16)

In fact, the geographic and climatic factors have caused the Canadian imagination to be "obsessed with the limitations rather than the possibilities of human experience" (Stouck, 9). 'Survival', thus is a great fact of Canadian life, and constitutes one of the major thematic strands running through Canadian Literature. Atwood remarks: "Stick a pin in Canadian Literature at random and nine times out of ten you'll hit a victim" (1972, 33)

Frye argues, and quite convincingly, that a tendency to maintain 'Old World' ways in Canadian settler societies has produced a tendency to shut out the wilderness and he calls this attitude as 'garrison mentality':

Small and isolated communities surrounded with a physical or psychological 'frontier', separated from one another and from their American and British cultural sources; communities that provide all that their members have in the way of distinctively human values, and that are compelled to feel a great respect for the law and order that holds them together, yet confronted with a huge, unthinking, menacing and formidable physical setting - - such communities are bound to develop what we may provisionally call a garrison mentality. (1965, 845-6)

In the Canadian context, the term 'regionalism' as W.H.New points out, "shifts its meaning as people attribute different nuances to the notion of 'region' itself" (1970,31). For some, the regions are political units like Newfoundland and Nova Scotia; for some others, regional divisions are based on physical features - - Appalachian Highlands, St. Lawrence Lowlands and the Prairies, for example. For still others, the divisions are based on patterns of habitation such as the Outports, the Eastern Townships and so on. For the 'regional' writers, the immediate reality is physical and local, the here and the now; the cliched goal, rather than the metaphysical or the global:

From coast to coast, Prince Edward Island to British Columbia, these books present a sanitised, endearingly innocent vision of English Canada as an untroubled society living close to the land, free of corruption of the urban industrialisation and characterised by a clear 'northern spirit', self made men, self repressed women, and happy endings for those who fulfil the Protestant work ethic. (Gerson 50)

It is an interesting fact that even regionalist aspirations within Canada, may be considered, ways of "deploying geographically specific notions of cultural solidity against centrist Canadian notions of a stable national identity" (Slemon 1994, 1117)

In literature, such a quest for identity is carried out perhaps most effectively through the genre of fiction, by virtue of its being the most reciprocal to human needs and tastes, both in the personal and collective spheres. Alastair Niven observes that in Australia, Canada and New Zealand, the novel has become a natural form for writers to use:

The dispossessed indigenous populations, whether Aboriginal Australian, Native North American, Inuit or Maori fostered their oral traditions, but only very recently turned to imported forms of fiction. For the educated settler with an ancestry in Britain it was, however, natural to adopt the novel, the reading of

which had been, and to a large extent continued to be, their main leisure activity.  
(1107)

These new writers have had their difficulty in cutting themselves off from the English literary tradition. The sheer vastness of experiences that had so many different values to define, questions to investigate and cultures to vindicate and expound, that they felt that their continuous supine bondage to the old moorings of culture and language of the English mainland, would not simply meet their artistic needs and imaginative expressions. What Pushpinder Syal says about Australian writers is equally applicable to Canadian writers:

... they have had to struggle to define their being 'Australian' without pandering to stereotypes of the 'rough' Australian landscape and people... Australian writing ... is in a peculiar position: it is linked to the English tradition, its writers are 'native' speakers of English, but it is obvious that they cannot regard themselves as 'British' writers or writers working in straight continuity with writers in the English tradition. Its social context reflects the same paradox: it is that of the urban, technological, advanced Western Society, but here is also the outback, the vastness of a continent that figures in their awareness more than it does in a geographically limited Britain (115)

In sharp contrast, for the writers in the non-settler communities, the task has been very different, namely, going back to the past and recovering their lost identity. Chinua Achebe tries to teach the blacks in Africa, through his fictional works, that they

are not without history, and that their “past with all its imperfect form was not one night of savagery from which the Europeans acting on God’s behalf delivered them” (44-5). He calls novel writing as an “act of atonement”, and as the “ritual return and homage of a prodigal son” (77). Wole Soyinka too, most readily subscribes to similar essential goals in the case of postcolonial writers, the most important of them being, in his view, ‘race revival’:

It involves, very simply, the conscious activity of recovering which has been hidden, lost, repressed, denigrated or indeed simply denied by ourselves - - yes, by ourselves also - - but definitely by the conquerors of our peoples and their Eurocentric bias of thought and relationships. (114)

With regard to the attitude of the African writers, Jeremy Harding makes the following pertinent point:

Negritude, which proposed that there were intrinsic virtues in Africanness, and above all in blackness, was on the whole inimical to the anglophone writers. ‘A tiger’ said Soyinka, ‘does not proclaim his tigritude’. Nevertheless, the idea of recovery implicit in negritude, of a vigorous, lyrical African culture, suppressed or subdued by colonialism, remained powerfully present to them (5)

Ironically, the very language invented and employed by the Euro-centred ex-colonisers, had to prove its relevance and adequacy in a totally changed cultural,

political and geographical context, from almost a diametrically opposed perspective. Barbara Harlow recognises such a kind of ‘resistance writing’ in respect of the following literary traits among the postcolonial works: “Heterogeneity, fractured genres, polymorphous subjects” (75). To cite another striking instance, while discussing the postcolonial Caribbean novel, John Thieme makes the following observation, highlighting its inevitable variety and diversity:

... fictional reconstructions of the past offer statements on the nature of current Caribbean identity ... The dominant formal characteristic of the Caribbean novel in this period is its use of polyphony. Texts ... either employ multiple voices, or mix generic codes in ways that interrogate the assumptions of stability on which most European realist fiction is based. The replacement of unitary narrative modes by fluid and fragmentary structures can be seen as a response to the pluralist nature of Caribbean society and as characteristic of much post-colonial writing. (1121)

As Ashish Nandy sees it, colonialism can be viewed as three different periods, in the Indian context. In political terms, it is the period beginning from 1757 with the battle of Plassey and ending in 1947 with India’s Independence. In Intellectual terms, colonialism began somewhere around 1820 and continued till 1930, when Gandhi’s leadership shook off the intellectual domination of the British colonialists. Colonialism can also be seen as a phase, where political freedom had been achieved, but habits of thought continued to persist, especially during the period beginning from 1947 and

continuing upto the present. While the “outer supports” to the colonial culture have virtually come to an end in India, feelings of inferiority and insecurity, anchorage to the West and a sense of subordination still continue in the Indian society. It is a peculiar brand of colonialism which has survived the “demise of empires” (Nandy xi-xvi) In the words of Jasbir Jain:

The systems inherited from the colonisers are no longer relevant but they seem to have taken root, while the values of the native culture are valuable but far too remote in time. In between these two extremes is the postcolonial mind struggling to step outside its creator, the colonial period. (1991, 3)

In such a context the task of a novelist may either be ‘retrieval of history’ or ‘re-writing history/tradition’. In **Things Fall Apart**, Chinua Achebe retrieves history by questioning European interpretations of Africa, which are purely anthropological and ethnological, ignoring the material of its culture and its people. To quote an eminent critic,

In **Things Fall Apart** Western historicising is kept at bay while the complexity and communal destiny of culture through proverbs, seasonality, festivals, rituals, multitheism and power balancing and power sharing are established. Simultaneously this serves in each of its facets, to comment on a British system of theological exclusivity, ethnocentrism and hierarchical structuralism. (Tiffin 1998, 724)

In the same manner, when Raja Rao writes a '*sthalapurana*' in **Kanthapura** or when Shashi Tharoor rewrites the Indian epic **The Mahabharata: The Great Indian Novel** it marks a cultural, political and literary event, nothing short of recasting history/tradition. In **Kanthapura**, Raja Rao

... not only subverts from the form of historical novel, but extends the limits of the individualistic novel form to express the consciousness of a whole village in the collective 'we' of the narrative of Achakka, the old woman narrator.. History for her is not a linear progression of events in a chronological order or a retelling of great events, but a poetic awakening of the people who figure in these events and of gods and goddesses who bless them in absentia. India's freedom movement in the 1920s for her, therefore becomes a re-enactment of the Ravana-Sita-Ram myth and also the myth of the Devi. Raja Rao here, by converting history into the myth of the vanquishing of a demon by a goddess renders the intrusion of British history of colonialism 'illusory' because of the introduction of the metaphysical dimension of temporality of this intrusion. (Juneja 18)

Again, Shashi Tharoor's **The Great Indian Novel**, as the novelist himself says about it, "retells, the political history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century India through a fictional recasting of events, episodes and characters from the Mahabharata" (1991, 30). For example, on India's defeat in the Sino-Indian war, the narrator comments:

How could you have allowed it to happen? It was a question many of us in the Kaurava party could not resist asking Dhritarashtra when the Chakras invaded, tossed our ill-fed, ill-clad, ill-shod jawans contemptuously aside and inexorably erased the Big Mac Line. By the time our panic stricken response could be organised the war was over; the Chakras had announced a unilateral cease-fire that we were in no condition to reject. In a few humiliating days they had achieved every one of their objectives ... They even shook the credibility of Dhritarashtra's non-alignment, for our blind Prime Minister panicked enough to welcome the offer of a squadron of fighter planes and pilots from the superpower whose alliances he had earlier consistently spurned. It was not, Ganapathi, a time at which we covered ourselves in glory ... (304)

More importantly in India, the colonial experience has been a form of cultural encounter that gave birth to biculturalism. Most of the Indian English novelists upto 1970s deal with this kind of situation. Krishna of R.K.Narayan's **The English Teacher**, Moorthy of Raja Rao's **Kanthapura** and Govindan Nair in **The Cat and Shakespeare** are cases in point.

Beyond any shake of doubt, the task of the postcolonial novelists in the non-settler nations has been different from that of their counterparts in the settler nations. However, the main burden of both has consisted in offering resistance to authoritarianism, recognising multiplicities and valorising the views of the oppressed.

With regard to the postcolonial literary scenario in Canada, one finds that its geographic spatiality, linguistic heterogeneity and cultural disparateness of its population have continued to inspire themes and issues relating to the particular, the regional, the marginal and the ethnic. The two main streams of literature in Canada are those of the English and the French, and the consistent burden of the English writers in Canada has been the struggle to break free from the Euro-centred, traditional modes and the patronising attitude of the big brotherly, Americans, and to find a realistic expression, more pertaining to the region and cultures of the land and its peoples.

The new nationalism has also shaped a generation of novelists, committed to exploring their ancestral roots. For instance, Sheila Watson, Margaret Laurence, Robert Kroetsch and Ruby Weibe map the west; Robertson Davies, Alice Munro and Timothy Findley write about Ontario; Mordecai Richler and Leonard Cohen deal with life in and around Montreal. The love-hate relationship between the Quebecois and the English Canadian, and the crisis over Canadian-French identity are powerfully articulated by writers like Hubert Aquin, Jacques Goadbout and Claude Jasmin. The “suppression of the mother tongue by a colonising mastertongue” (Neuman 402), has led writers like Jacques Renaud, Claude Jasmin, Michael Tremblay and Marie Claire Blais to adopt *joual* (the speech of the most uneducated French-Canadians), rather than Parisian French, as their literary medium.

In the 1970s and 1980s, there has been an upsurge of Native Canadian Literature. The mythical stories and the Indian way of life find frequent expressions in

the native writers. Writers like Maria Campbell, Basil Johnston, Duke Redbird, George Kenny and Joan Crate exhibit in their writings an amazing vitality and a singular pride in their aboriginal past. Since the 1970s, “the hyphenated and othered” (Salat, 168), Indian, Italian, Chinese and Japanese Canadians, have also been able to acquire greater visibility and voice, Rohinton Mistry, Joy Kogawa, M.G. Vassanji, Uma Parameswaran and Tomson Highway, to name a few.

The emergence of women-writers has been another remarkable feature of Canadian writing in the second half of the twentieth century. Recent novels by women have tended to increasingly explore women’s issues within a nationalistic framework. Of these writers, Margaret Atwood, Alice Munro and Margaret Laurence stand out as strong champions in the cause of women.

Atwood’s first novel **The Edible Woman** (1969) establishes the broad thematic pattern of woman’s endeavour to attain a human identity, that she works out with subtle variations in her later novels. **Surfacing** (1972), is a novel about a young woman’s quest to reconnect herself with the past, and “records a woman stripping her of social mask, defences and ideals to discover her essential self” (King 1980, 213). **Lady Oracle** (1976) dwells on the evolution of a girl, Joan Foster, to maturity. In form, it subscribes to the traditional *bildungsroman*, but takes on different emphases, as its subject is female. In **Life Before Man** (1979), two women are characterised as prehistoric dinosaurs, one vegetarian, the other flesh-eating, contending over a mate. **Bodily Harm** (1981) explores the inner life of Rennie Wilford, a young journalist who

blunders into a Caribbean revolution. Though Rennie himself gets exposed to new cultures and new ways of life, she lives mostly in the inner worlds of reminiscence, dream and nostalgia. Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) is a frightening parable set in the twenty-first century in Gilead, in a society, whose patriarchal structure is maintained by 'Aunts' and 'Guardians', where young women like the narrator, offered, are compelled to play the roles of child-bearing mistresses to powerful males. *Cat's Eye* (1988) is another of Atwood's moving retrospective novels, which explores the relations between women, especially adolescents. Her collection of stories include *The Dancing Girls* (1977), *Murder in the Dark* (1983), *Bluebeard's Egg* (1983) and *Wilderness Tips* (1992), with the last of these dealing with themes of ageing, betrayal and death.

Alice Munro's favourite literary form has been that of the linked short story and her subjects are mostly women's relationship with friends, lovers or others. Her first book *Dance of the Happy Shades* (1968), was followed by *Lives of Girls and Women* (1971), a series of stories which chronicles the development of Del Jordan as both a woman and an artist. As a critic has rightly observed, "Munro treats the growth of intelligence and sexuality matter-of-factly, yet within the exaggerated framework of adolescence" (Djwa 1996, 74). In Munro's subsequent collection of stories, *Something I've Been Meaning to Tell You* (1974), the title-story explores the 'inside' of the head of a woman who has been twice married. There is no doubt about her attitude towards men in general. For her, they are all vain, quarrelsome, bloated, opinionated and untidy. *Who Do You Think You Are?* (1978) is an episodic novel, chronicling the inter-connected lives of the young Rose and her stepmother Flo. In a pivotal chapter, 'The

Beggar Maid', Rose learns that neither she nor her husband can fulfil the other's fantasy, and their life turns into a veritable battleground. Ten years after their divorce, they run into each other at an airport terminal, and he makes a "truly, hateful, savagely warning" face at her. It is such a type of uncanny violence that Munro explores in this collection. *The Moons of Jupiter* (1982), *The Progress of Love* (1986), *Friend of my Youth* (1990) and *Open Secrets* (1995) are darker stories reflecting the rootlessness of contemporary life in Canada.

'Indian Literature in English' is only one of the voices in which India speaks, as Indian Literature comprises several literatures - - Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kashmiri, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu. The phrase 'Indian Literature in English' itself, has evolved through various options. In the early years of the twentieth century, the term 'Anglo-Indian Literature' was incorporated in the Concise *Cambridge History of English Literature*. However, the term 'Anglo-Indian' had to be dropped soon, due to its racial connotation. "Eurasian, Anglo-Indian - - these terms are sometimes used with a snigger and evoke 'chee-chee' feeling" (Iyengar 2). So for a long while, the term Indo-Anglian was preferred. In *Literature and Authorship in India*, published in 1943, 'Indo-Anglian' was printed by mistake as 'Indo-anglican', which sparked off considerable protest from different quarters. The nomenclatures currently popular among contemporary critics have been, 'Indian Writing in English' and 'Indian Literature in English'. That Indians chose to write in English was a fated outcome of British colonisation of India, a historical accident, a process which could have come to a dead end with India's

political Independence in 1947, and the adoption of Hindi as the new official, National Language of India. As early as 1964, V.S.Naipaul, in an ironic vein, states that Indian Literature in English, has ceased to exist, with a singular exception:

The only writer, who, while working from within the society, is yet able to impose on it a vision which is an acceptable type of comment, is R.Prawer Jhabvala. And she is European. (qted. in Cronin 204)

To the contrary, the most fertile period of Indian writing in English, actually, began in the 1960s, and it continues to flourish still. One of the reasons for such a spurt of Indian writing in English may be the enormous resistance offered to Hindi as the National Language, by the Indians speaking other languages. So far, English has maintained its stupendous role as a common link language in India. From a historical perspective, the establishment of the United States as a unipolar Super Power, might have also led to the sustained high status accorded to English at the global level. Also, substantial migration from India to the English-speaking countries of the West, and their literary contributions have played a significant role in the world-wide recognition and acceptance of Indian Writing in English.

The Indian government which assumed power soon after Independence was remarkable for its literary talent. Its Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru had published in 1936, an autobiography in English, which is remarkable for its literary merits. C.Rajagopalachari, free India's first Indian Governor General was also a litterateur and

had made remarkable prose translations of the two great Indian epics, the **Mahabharata** and the **Ramayana**. Mahatma Gandhi's **The Story of my Experiments with Truth** (1927) is one of the imperishable modern classics in English.

Three of the significant novelists writing at the time of Indian Independence were Mulk Raj Anand, R.K.Narayan and Raja Rao. Mulk Raj Anand shows how the Indian novel in English might become a powerful expression of social concern. Each of his first three novels, **Untouchable** (1935), **Coolie** (1936) and **Two Leaves and a Bud** (1937), focuses on a specific social evil - - discrimination based on caste, child labour, and exploitation of workers in a tea estate, respectively. Raja Rao's maiden novel, **Kanthapura** (1938), "utilises experimental language, an unorthodox narrative mode, a collective feminine perspective and an ambivalent closure" (Mukherjee 1994, 1129). In the novel, Rao deals with the impact of the Gandhian ideology on a remote village of South India, attempting to represent in a microcosm the changes that were sweeping the entire length and breadth of the subcontinent in the 1930s and would eventually lead to the country's Independence in 1947. R.K.Narayan's novels are free of any such social, political or national agenda, or of any stylistic experiment. But his novels revolving around Malgudi, an imaginary small town in South India, are written in a relaxed style conveying his amused detachment that is typically and unmistakably Indian. There are also writers who grew up in British India, spending many years abroad, having inherited a culture in which Indian and British elements were interfused. Nirad Chaudhari is one such distinguished product of a mixed culture, as evidenced by his **Autobiography of an Unknown Indian** (1951).

Of the major poets writing in English, Nissim Ezekiel and A.K.Ramanujan were both children of the Raj: “Macaulay’s Children”, as Ramanujan puts it, rather than “midnight’s” (qted. in Cronin 206). Toru Dutt, Kamala Das, Mamta Kalia and Eunice de Souza are women poets, who have found in English a more appropriate medium to define their experiences as women. Kamala Das’s *My Story*, records frankly and powerfully the experiences of a woman, on some of which her poems are based. Some other poets like R.Parthasarathy and Arun Kolatkar have been bilingual. The use of English as a literary medium, in a country where it is not used in everyday life, has contributed to the central predicament of the Indian writers in English. According to Raja Rao,

One has to convey in a language which is not one’s own the spirit that is one’s own. One has to convey the various shades and omissions of a certain thought – movement that looks maltreated in an alien language ... We are all instinctively bilingual, many of us writing in our own language and in English. We cannot write like the English. We should not. We cannot write only as Indians. We have grown to look at the large world as part of us. Our method of expression therefore has to be a dialect which will some day prove to be as distinctive and colourful as the Irish or the American. Time alone will justify it. (qted. in Pollard 28)

The prophecy of Raja Rao may be said to have come true, as the recent phenomenal upsurge of the Indian novel in English has shown. Of the novelists who followed the major trio, Sudhindra N. Ghose, the author of a four-volume novel sequence - - **And Gazelles Leaping** (1949), **Cradle of the Clouds** (1951), **The Vermilion Boat** (1953) and **The Flame of the Forest** (1955) - - is very much ahead of his time with his skill at blending realism with magic and his juxtaposition of myth, legend and metaphor with a realistic and linear narration of contemporary events” (Mukherjee 1994, 1129). Bhabani Bhattacharya, in his **He Who Rides a Tiger** (1954), depicts a famine that devastated Bengal in 1943, and the hoarding and black marketing that made some people very rich in the war years.

A general sense of well being and self-esteem was generated in the 1950s in India, with India assuming an important role through its contribution to the establishment of world peace. The temporary setback due to the Chinese invasion of 1962, was compensated by India’s repeated triumphs against Pakistan in 1965 and 1967. With the rapid development of science and technology, the Indian industry recorded a dynamic growth. The setting up of Indian Institutes of Technology in some cities in India, signalled the country’s dynamic march towards modernity. The setting up of the Sahitya Academy and the Sangeet Natak Academy gave further impetus to the growth of fine arts in free India. In such a climate, the 1960s proved to be an extremely productive decade for the Indian novel in English.

Manohar Malgaonkar's *A Bend in the Ganges* (1964), stands out as a panoramic chronicle of the Indian freedom movement. It highlights the political dialectics of violence and non-violence that played a unique role in Indian politics, ultimately paving the way for India's freedom. The novel presents a double movement: Gian, the weak protagonist who starts as an enthusiastic follower of Gandhian non-violence, by a curious turn of circumstances, is soon driven to espouse a cause of violent revenge, while Debi Dayal, the strong protagonist committed in the past to a violent struggle for freedom, finally gets thoroughly disillusioned and gives up all his efforts. Malgaonkar's *The Princes* (1963) focuses on the political and personal life of two princes who experience the trauma of loss of power - - and identity - - caused by accession of their princely states to the rest of India.

Discourses for and against colonialism began long ago within the political and intellectual cultures of colonised countries. The early debates were all about the political and economic aspects of the colonial relationship. However, an interdisciplinary approach, embracing psychological, cultural, sociological and economic methods of interpretation, in understanding the cluster of problems associated with colonisation is adopted by theoreticians like Frantz Fanon and Edward Said. Fanon found the economic theories inadequate to explain the complexity of colonial experience. According to Fanon, economic exploitation is only one aspect of colonial oppression. Fanon's psychological therapeutic approach interrogates the existing assumptions and reorients the study of the process of colonisation and decolonisation along psychological lines giving necessary space for the processes of

consciousness and psychic traumas produced by colonialism. His method of interpretation is a combination of sociological, psychological and Marxian concepts. He incorporates racial, cultural and psychological phenomena into the discourse of colonialism. Fanon traces the close links between colonial war and mental disorders. The question of the national culture and the necessity of revolutionary violence to reach socialism, are the major concerns of the book, **The Wretched of the Earth** (1961). The psychological and cultural dimensions of white racism against the black under colonialism are discussed in yet another book **Black Skin, White Masks** (1952). The colonial situation is viewed along similar lines by writers like Albert Memmi, Jean Paul Sartre and Georges Balandier.

Edward Said has made significant theoretical explorations of the colonial experience. His famous work **Orientalism** (1978) portrays how European culture was able to produce the Orient politically, sociologically and culturally. Analysing the role of the cultural text in preparing the ground for cultural and political supremacy of imperialism Said explores ways in which Orientalism conditions the Orient. The Orient that appears in **Orientalism** “is a system of representations framed by a whole set of forces that brought the Orient into Western learning, Western consciousness, and later Western empire” (Said, **Orientalism** 202-203). He believes that the various texts of **Orientalism** dealing with art, politics, ethnography and literature play a vital role in constructing the Orient and in controlling it culturally.

In his recent work **Culture and Imperialism** (1993), Said expands his arguments to provide a pattern of relationships between the modern West and the overseas territory. Referring to a wide variety of cultural texts, Said traces the general world-wide pattern of imperial culture, the historical experience of resistance against empire and its cultural implications in this book.

The publication of **Europe and its Others** in 1984 introduced critics like Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Homi K. Bhabha. According to Bhabha, problems of cultural and racial difference cannot be fully comprehended using signs of social authority produced in the analysis of class and gender differentiation. He assigns an autonomous position to the colonial within the confines of hegemonic discourse through recovering how the master discourse was interrogated by the natives in their own accents. According to him the object of colonial discourse is to show the colonised as a racially degenerate population in order to justify conquest and rule. It is at the margins of colonial discourse that the practice of colonial authority displays its ambivalence, “in double duty bound” at once a civilising mission and a violent subjugating force. Ambivalence works as a discursive and psychical strategy of discriminatory power. Bhabha writes: “it is the force of ambivalence that gives the colonial stereotype its currency: ensures its repeatability in changing historical and discursive conjunctures; informs its strategies of individuation and marginalisation; produces that effect of probabilistic truth and predictability which, for the stereotype, must always be in *excess* of what can be empirically proved or logically construed” (Location 66). The native subject is ‘commodified’ by the colonialist discourse into a stereotyped object as a

source for colonialist fiction. Bereft of Subjectivity, individuality and originality this stereotyped object is reduced to its exchange value in the colonialist signifying system, the force of ambivalence giving it currency.

Bhabha introduces mimicry both as a strategy of colonial subjection through reform, regulation and discipline, which “appropriate” the “other” and the native inappropriate imitations of this discourse which has the effect of menacing colonial authority. He writes: “colonial mimicry is the desire of a reformed, recognisable Other, as a *subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite*. Which is to say, that the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an *ambivalence*, in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference” (Location 86). Being a repetition, imitation or a partial representation, mimicry lacks authenticity and originality. This double vision that is inherent in mimicry discloses the ambivalence of colonial discourse and disrupts its authority.

The discriminatory nature of colonial authority refers to a process of splitting as the condition of subjection. Bhabha envisages this condition as “hybridity” which according to him is the “revaluation of the assumption of colonial identity through the repetition of discriminatory identity effects” (Location 112). Bhabha’s concept of hybridity marks a significant deviation from the accepted notions of colonial authority. It reverses the effects of the colonialist repudiation so that the denied knowledge enters upon the dominant discourse and intervenes in the exercise of authority producing a

crisis in the colonial authority. Bhabha refers to this transformation as the displacement from symbol to sign. According to him hybridity “displays the necessary deformation and displacement of all sites of discrimination and domination” (Location 112). So he feels that colonial power produces hybridisation and reveals the ambivalence at the source of traditional discourses. It turns the discursive conditions of dominance into the grounds of intervention. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak is one of the most prominent of the postcolonial critics. Though she teaches in America, Spivak originally belongs to India. A non-white radical feminist with Marxist sympathies, Spivak uses poststructuralist theories like deconstruction to formulate a postcolonial theoretical perspective.

The first volume of **Subaltern Studies: Writings on South Asian History and Society** appeared in New Delhi in 1982. The publication of these texts along with a host of others dealing with issues of race, colony, empire and nationhood indicated the shifting attention and interest in the intellectual production. Challenging the existing historiography as elitist, the **Subaltern Studies** group uses the perspective of the subaltern to combat fiercely the continuance of the colonialist knowledge in nationalist and mode of production narrative. The subaltern is not an eternal category. It is a historical construct that resists the appropriations of colonial and nationalist elite. Gyan Prakash in his essay, “Postcolonial Criticism and Indian Historiography” writes: “The subaltern is a figure produced by historical discourses of domination, but it nevertheless provides a mode of reading history different from those inscribed in elite accounts”

(88). **Subaltern Studies** aims to recover the peasant from elite projects and positivist historiography.

The anticolonial critique of the past was centred around the dualism of coloniser and colonised. It treated the dualism as an emancipatory power. However postcolonial theory problematises both colonial and nationalism and tries to analyse the “link between structures of knowledge and the forms of oppression of the last two hundred years” (Young, 2). Nationalism while displacing the colonial authority shares the ideology of modernity and the “Enlightenment notions of freedom and democracy” (Mongia 5). Thus it is true that nationalism depends on the very structures that it tries to dismantle. Though considered to be a sign of modernity, the nation inscribes the changing social reality. Benedict Anderson comments on the origin of nationalism in his **Imagined Communities**: “Nationalism has to be understood, by aligning it not with self consciously held political ideologies, but with large cultural systems that preceded it out of which as well as against which it came into being” (19). He points to the ambivalent emergence of the nation as a system of cultural signification moving in-between different cultural traditions. Thus postcolonialism rejects not only the “Western *imperium* but also the nationalist project” (Appiah, 353) and seeks an alternative method of resisting colonial containment. It dismantles not only the political, economic or cultural domination but the very terms by which knowledge is constructed.

So the origin and development of postcolonial theory can be traced back to the inadequacies of the existing anticolonial discourses and the socio-historical pressures emanating out of the new awareness about the operations of colonial powers at various sites including that of knowledge production. Its central task is the critique of Eurocentrism and the repudiation of the narrative of modernity. Aiming at the reformulation of the knowledge and identities authorised by colonialism, the postcolonial intellectual goes beyond nationalism, “to undo the Eurocentrism produced by the institution of the West’s trajectory, its appropriation of the other as History” (Prakash, 87). The Western ideology that postcolonialism confronts, operates not just through the Eurocentric discourses but has penetrated into the national body politic affecting both the public and private realms. As the imperial discourse “operates through its authorisation and deployment by the nation-state” (Prakash, 89) during the post independence period, the confrontation is more intimate, occurring within the national body politic, within the psyche. The intimacy of the “self and the other”, the coloniser and the colonised and the discourses of domination and resistance suggest that postcolonial criticism “occupies a space that is neither inside nor outside the history of Western domination but in a tangential relation to it” (Prakash, 87). Postcolonial criticism developed in accordance with these issues posed by the new historical context goes beyond other political concepts that resist colonialism while sharing many of their concerns. Padmini Mongia elaborates on them:

The political concepts that have shaped modern history - - democracy, the citizen, nationalism - - no longer seem adequate for coping with contemporary

realities. The rise of new social movements around such issues as race, gender and ethnicity, have revealed the limits of older conceptions of community, individual and nation. Profound changes such as decolonisation, the movement of peoples on a hitherto unmatched scale, and new distributions of global power, have led to instabilities which have revealed that the old narratives of progress and reason are inadequate for addressing contemporary realities and the numerous fractures that attend them. Postcolonial theory has been formed as a response to these pressures even as it offers a means of speaking of them (5).

Originating in the new global scenario, the postcolonial discourse addresses the contemporary issues relating itself to and at the same time distancing itself from all oppositional discourses that try to subvert the imperial authority.

The postcolonial period witnesses a transition in the nature of colonial authority and the state. If the metropolitan bourgeoisie has domination over the state during the colonial period, the post independence period presents a more fluid situation where the national bourgeoisie, landowners and metropolitan bourgeoisie compete with each other for the domination over the state. Hamza Alavi's observation on postcolonialism in *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought* is relevant here. According to him, these oppositional forces operate within a "single peripheral capitalist mode of production in which the various classes are all located, the metropolitan bourgeoisie having a structural presence in these societies" (83). So the postcolonial societies reveal a structural similarity brought about by the common experience of colonialism though

differences do exist between individual nations. This similarity originates from the common experience of colonialism. Helen Tiffin in her article “Postcolonialism, Postmodernism and Rehabilitation of Postcolonial History” defines postcolonial as a term, which is “used to describe writing and reading practices grounded in some form of colonial experience occurring outside Europe but as a consequence of European expansion into and exploitation of “the Other worlds” (170). Tiffin without doubt relates postcolonial writings to the historical experiences like the European expansion and exploitation of ‘the other’ worlds.

Reiterating the interrelationship between the historical experience of colonialism and postcolonial writings, Tiffin identifies the rudimentary dialectic of colonialism that stratifies the colonised world into two, the coloniser and the colonised. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin refer to this homogeneity in the postcolonial societies, in their famous work, **Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Postcolonial Literatures**, when they observe that “they emerged in their present form of the experience of colonisation” and that they “asserted themselves by foregrounding the tension with the imperial power” (2). It is true that the tension between the imperial power and the colonised is a continuous process that runs throughout the postcolonial period.

Analysing the Indian situation, it is true to say that the social transformations that formulated a postcolonial society in India began to appear in the early period of colonial rule. It created structural transformation within the society forming new classes, new forms of oppression and new social formation with certain classes or

groups dominating over others. The Industrial bourgeoisie and the substantial peasants acquired dominance in India during the Raj. Heterogeneous in nature, these classes included various types. The land-owning class included those who cultivated substantial holdings on “capitalistic” lines with hired wage labour and those who continued “feudalistic” production with tenancy. The industrial bourgeoisie comprised small urban business in control of single industries, monopoly business establishments with interests spread throughout the country and an educated middle class made up of various professional elite, including lawyers, doctors and the civil service personnel. The natural subordinates to these classes were landless labourers, petty traders, the urban work force and other unemployed or scarcely employed classes. Referring to the essential multiplicity of these classes R. Sudarsan in an article, “The Political Consequences of Constitutional Discourse” writes: “These classes were in themselves heterogeneous” (60). The heterogeneity of the different classes in confrontation makes the dialectical struggle a complex phenomenon.

The colonial state in India can be differentiated from the metropolitan capitalist state, as the former has been established by external forces while the capitalism in Europe emerged from internal contradictions within an earlier mode of production. Preserving the pre-colonial social formation and integrating the economy with the world capitalist system, colonialism in India heavily retarded the growth of Indian economy. The nationalist movement brought together various groups with conflicting interests against colonial rule. The movement itself was a site of struggle between different classes for control over it. Entering into a series of alliances between the

bourgeoisie and other dominant classes and mobilising the subordinate classes under its leadership the nationalist project aimed at the reorganisation of the political order. But the effort was moderated in two quite fundamental ways. Partha Chatterjee writes:

On the one hand, it does not attempt to break up or transform in any radical way the institutionalist structures of “rational” authority set up in the period of colonial rule. On the other hand, it also does not undertake a full-scale assault on all precapitalist dominant classes; rather, it seek to limit their former power, neutralise them where necessary, attack them only selectively, and in general bring them round to a position of subsidiary allies within a reformed state structure (Nation, 212)

The ambivalent attitude of the nationalist movement is shared by the independent state. The post-independence period indicates a shift in the power structure with the emergence of a complex power centre, where various forces contend for supremacy while compromising on sharing power. While indicating a political shift from colonialism to national democracy, the transfer of power failed to materialise the aims of the national movement. During the post-independence period, the state continued the legacy of a colonial state though with certain shifts. Though the national bourgeoisie was able to establish its dominance, the post-independence state was a site of various confrontations. Kalpana Wilson comments on the nature of this transition thus:

... the structure and apparatuses of the state remained largely identical with those of the colonial state which had been used to reshape the Indian social formation according to the needs of metropolitan capital. And the same alliance with the rural dominant classes which had enabled the bourgeoisie to dominate the independence movement now proved to be a major constraint upon capitalist transformation. The state thus became the focal point for a number of different contradictions whose strength varied over time: contradictions between different sections of the dominant classes, between the interests of imperialist and indigenous capital, as well as between the producing classes and those who appropriated their surplus (249-250)

Tracing the confrontations between various classes for hegemony over the state during the post-independence period Kalpana Wilson towards the continuance of the colonial power structure and the change that the colonial agenda undergoes during pre-independence and post-independence period.

Abdul R. Jan Mohamed in his article, "The Economy of Manichean Allegory: The Function of Racial Difference in Colonialist Literature", perceives two phases of colonialism; dominant and hegemonic. The dominant phase is characterised by the subjugation and violent oppression of the native by the colonialist material practices and the oppressive state apparatus. In this phase, "Colonialist discursive practices, particularly its literature are not very useful in controlling the conquered group" (62). Many factors contribute to the formation of the hegemonic phase, though the most

important one is the ritualised acceptance of the Western form of parliamentary government after independence. During this phase colonial oppression used discursive practices to subjugate the psyche of the native who “accept a version of the colonisers’ entire system of values, attitudes, morality, institutions, and more important, mode of production” (Jan Mohamed, 62). Jan Mohamed’s differentiation of the colonial experience into two phases - - dominant and hegemonic - - help in analysing the difference between the colonial and post-independence periods. According to him the society undergoes fundamental structural transformation with the acceptance of the Western social structure and its value system. The hegemonic phase begins with this internalisation of the colonial values and its social structure. Jan Mohamed’s division of the process of colonialism into dominant and hegemonic phases takes into account the internal structural changes that the society has undergone as a result of colonial expansion.

Edward Said in his famous work, **Culture and Imperialism** attempts yet another categorisation. He writes: “In our time, direct colonialism has largely ended, imperialism, as we shall see in specific political, ideological, economic, and social practices” (8). Said assigns new meanings to the terms “colonialism” and “imperialism” by connecting them with specific social structures. According to him they are not simple acquisitions but are impelled by ideological formation. These terms refer to two different stages in the history of formerly colonised nation. But it is true that these different stages while different from each other establish a continuity of concerns. While breaking away from the colonial political dominations, nationalism continues to bear

its legacy in the socio-cultural realms. Aspiration towards modernity, rationality and democratic social order is clearly evident in the Indian nationalist movement. Moreover the administrative, educational and legal systems overlap to a great extent affecting the continuance of the power structure. Satish Saberwal in his essay, “Democratic Political Structures” speaks about the Western influence on Indian institutions. He writes: “The political structures launched by the Constitution of 1950 relied heavily on Western institutional styles which stood in sharp contrast to the political styles which had prevailed in India historically” (15). The Western institutions denied normal growth of Indian economy and administrative system and was blind to the real problems and needs of the society.

The imperial regime has affected every area of modern Indian life, like economy, society, politics, administrative structure and the culture. Regarding this overall influence Bipinchandra writes:

A whole world was lost, an entire social fabric was dissolved, and a new social framework came into being that was stagnant and decaying even as it was being born. To turn around a well-known phrase, India underwent a thorough going colonial ‘cultural revolution’. (Nationalism 7)

The abrogation of the internal structure affected various realms of Indian society such as the social, political, administrative, economic and the cultural. The transformation which resulted in the evolution of a new social framework occurred as

an “integral part of the development of colonialism” (Chandra, *Nationalism* 6). The overlapping of concerns and structures in the colonial and post-independence periods give more authenticity to the term “postcolonial” to refer to the period from the moment of colonisation to the present day. Regarding the continuance of the colonial structure in various systems of governance in India, Partha Chatterjee writes: “The postcolonial state in India has only expanded and transformed the basic institutional arrangements of colonial law and administration, of the courts, the bureaucracy, the police, the army, and the various technical services of government” (*Nation* 15). He observes a continuity from the colonial period to the post-independent period involving structural and ideological factors.

Commenting on the popular use of the term “post” meaning “after” or “anti” in jargons like postmodernity, postcoloniality and post feminism in his book *Location of Culture* Homi Bhabha writes: “These terms that insistently gesture to the beyond, only embody its restless and revisionary energy if they transform the present into an expanded and ex-centric site of experience and empowerment” (4). Not only the colonised nations but even the colonisers have to confront its postcolonial history as “*internal to its national identity*” (6) because of postwar migration and the flood of refugees. So, widely different in nature, postcoloniality developed into a global experience crossing the boundaries of the nation. So even while possessing a global status postcoloniality is divergently placed in multiple cultural locations revealing histories of oppression and strategies of resistance. The traditional concepts of homogenous national culture are giving way to a transnational hybrid culture. Nation is

a contested term today and the idea of a pure national identity can be achieved only through the destruction of the borders of modern nation (Bhabha, 5). The transnational hybrid culture does not indicate transnational homogenous culture, instead the uniformity relies in the hybridity rather than in the elements that produce hybridity.

In part, cultural variety is prevalent even within the national boundaries. The continuing confrontation and the dialectical relationship between nations, cultures and concepts provide an “in-between”, hybrid space. Homi Bhabha writes:

Private and public, past and present, the psyche and the social develop an intimacy. It is an intimacy that questions binary divisions through which such spheres of social experience are often spatially opposed. These spheres of life are linked through an ‘in-between’ temporality that takes the measure of dwelling at home, while producing an image of the world of history (13)

Informed by this hybridisation of culture, postcolonialism responds to the continuing confrontations in the society at various sites; culture, sex, race, migrancy, history, economy and politics. Intimately associated with the contemporary social praxis, postcolonialism cannot delink itself from anti-colonial and anti-neocolonial discourses and practices. According to Bhabha “Postcoloniality, for its part, is a salutary reminder of the persistent ‘neo-colonial’ relations within the ‘new’ world order and the multinational division of labour”. Such a perspective which connects the postcolonial theory with contemporary reality enables the “authentication of histories

of exploitation and the evolution of strategies of resistance” (6). So postcolonial theory cannot be dissociated from the contemporary struggle against colonial and neo-colonial practices.

The heterogeneity and unity of postcoloniality is resident in this pattern of oppression and resistance. The repetition of this pattern of exploitation and resistance ensures uniformity. The heterogeneity of postcolonial discourses and practices originate from the divergent forms of exploitation instituted by the coloniser and the multiple forms of resistance to it. As Gyan Prakash puts it, “the *functioning* of colonial power was heterogeneous with its founding oppositions” (96). This heterogeneity originates from the fact that colonial discourse operated as the structure writing and that the structure of their enunciation remained heterogeneous with the binary oppositions that order the discursive field. According to G.N.Devy: in this “elaborate pattern of collaboration and confrontation” (92) the terms “coloniser” and “colonised” are not fixed unchanging entities as they undergo semantic transformation during various stages of social development. This process is experienced in the cultural, ideological and psychological fields as well. They always undergo reconstitution and refiguration.

The operations of postcolonial criticism in these complex directions make it an ambivalent practice. Colonisation in India has to be studied in this direction giving adequate significance to the heterogeneous concerns that influence the postcolonial society. It won't be right to study colonialism in India wholly in terms of capitalism. When we give foundational status to capitalism we ignore other concerns. Those who

try to rearticulate discourses other than capitalism neglect the story of capitalist exploitation. We have to be cautious enough to avoid both these mistakes. Accepting capitalism as the foundational theme in studying Indian history will show our adherence to capitalist homogeneity. Gyan Prakash explains, “making capitalism the foundational theme amounts to homogenising the histories that remain heterogeneous with it” (93). If capitalism is made the foundational theme in studying Indian history the difference between the metropolitan proletariat and the colonised subaltern will have to be effaced. This may reduce colonialism into the history of development of capitalism in India. Gyan Prakash believes that social identities like class, race, caste, gender, nation, ethnicity and religion are not equal categories. Woman as a social identity is different from a worker, an uppercaste Hindu is no equal to a citizen of India. The peculiar kind of relationship between these social identities cannot be explained through the concept of multiple selves, incorporating a variety of social identities. On the other hand Prakash feels:

... we have to think of the speciality of colonial difference as class overwriting race and gender, of nation overinscribing class, ethnicity and religion, and so forth - - an imbalanced process, but nevertheless a process that can be rearticulated differently. This is the concept of heterogeneity and cultural difference as it emerges from postcoloniality. (95)

It is true that various cultural forms coexist in confrontation and compromise in the postcolonial Indian society. But it is also true that certain cultural forms

predominate over others. The colonial ideology plays a dominant role during the postcolonial period. Nationalist historians assigned a prominent role to colonialism in shaping the economy, politics and culture of modern India. They argued that capitalist development began in Indian society along with colonialism. But the benefits of capitalism were denied to India as the colonial rulers compromised on key issues for their own sustenance and more profit. Thus colonialism developed “the under development” in India. The new framework came into being dissolving the economic and political basis of the old society and the precapitalist mode of production. Colonisation of India was completed by integrating Indian economy with world capitalist economy.

Hamza Alavi in his essay, “India: The Transition to Colonial Capitalism” also differentiates between the European capitalism and the version of capitalism practised in the colonised nations. According to him, “the colonial impact brought about a specific, colonial type of ‘bourgeois revolution’ in the colonies, establishing a structure of specifically colonial capitalism” (1). Speedy industrialisation and the destruction of the feudal structure, the twin functions of a bourgeois revolution did not take place in India. Moreover “the pattern of production was progressively lopsided, geared to the requirements of the metropolitan economy, (i.e. exports) and also providing market for the products of metropolitan industry” (Alavi, 66). Thus the colonialists successfully implemented an economic policy that helped the development of their economy while “developing under development” in India.

But revisionist history challenges the assumption that colonial rule represented a fundamental break in Indian history. Historians like Christopher Bayly, David Washbrook and Frank Perlin argue that the capitalist development began in the precolonial period itself. The economic institutions like commodity production, trading, banking, accounting, educated expertise and industrial entrepreneurs emerged in the pre-colonial period. So the transition from the precapitalist society can be seen as the natural outcome of the peculiar history of “Indian capitalism”. Partha Chatterjee rightly suspects that the revisionist historians attempt “to take the sting out of anticolonial politics...” by situating the origins of colonialism in India’s own precolonial history. Even if we agree with the revisionist historians, regarding the origin of capitalism in India we cannot be blind to the role of colonialism in supporting and directing the development of capitalism in India. So it is true that Indian capitalism was not allowed to develop freely because of the interventions by the colonial regime that protected its own economic interests, hampering the growth of Indian economy.

If economic exploitation was one of the foremost crimes that the colonialists committed, the most important area of its domination was the psyche of the colonised. Intervening in the cultural life of the native, the colonialists were able to reshape their perception about themselves and their relationship with the world. Ngugi wa Thiongo observes: “Economic and political control can never be complete or effective without mental control. To control a people’s culture is to control their tools of self definition in relationship to others” (16). Cultural supremacy is attained through a deliberate undervaluing of the culture of the colonised and establishing the superiority of the

culture and language of the colonised. The imposition of colonial culture on various precolonial formations inserted into colonial societies widely different, social formations. In a country like India where the divisions of religion, caste, creed, region and culture prevail, colonialism produces divergent reactions. Commenting on the culture balance that prevailed in India in the past, Marx and Engels observed that the invaders were conquered by the superior civilisation of India. But the British were the first conquerors superior and so inaccessible to Hindu civilisation (81-82). As a result of various invasions, the languages, cultures and religions of the invaders became part of Indian tradition enriching the cultural framework. This inner urge towards synthesis, derived essentially from the Indian philosophic outlook was the dominant feature of Indian cultural and even racial development, according to Nehru (6). It is believed that Indian culture has the ability to convert into its own strength the challenges raised against it. Nehru writes:

Each incursion of foreign elements was a challenge to this culture, but it was met successfully by a new synthesis and a process of absorption. This was also a process of rejuvenation and new blooms of culture arose out of it, the background and essential basis, however, remaining much the same (6).

This remarkable talent for adjusting to new situation broadened the base of traditional Indian culture and rejuvenated it on various occasions. It was on this cultural milieu that Europeans exerted their influence. Different from the previous invaders, the Europeans had no plan to settle down in India. Moreover they were

reluctant to penetrate deep into the land and society of India. Comparing the British with previous invaders, Nehru comments:

Every previous ruling class, whether it had originally come from outside or not was indigenous, had accepted the structural unity of India's social and economic life and tried to fit into it. It had become Indianised and had struck roots in the soil of the country. The new rulers were entirely different, with their base elsewhere, and between them and the average Indian there was a vast and unbridgeable gulf - - a difference in tradition, in outlook, in income, and ways of living. (302-303)

The inability of the new rulers to identify with the Indian race can be explained not only in terms of the race and class differences but also in view of their exploitative politics. While the previous invaders settled and mixed with Indian races making India their home, the British colonialists abstained from such identification. So instead of assimilating themselves with the dominantly feudal Indian society the British utilised the Indian wealth for the development of British capitalism. But in this process Britain acted - - quoting Marx's famous phrase - - as the 'unconscious tool of history' in connecting the stagnant Indian economy with the growing world capitalist economy. The economic consequences of British colonisation, "the drain of wealth and the destruction of handicrafts" (Panikkar, 6) deepened the gulf between the ruler and the ruled.

Bourgeois liberal ideology and scientific temperament of the West inspired the English educated Indians to reshape and reform the traditional Indian institutions. Inscriptions of this bourgeois liberal ideology is visible not only in social activists like Rammohan Roy, Vidyasagar, Rabindranath Tagore and the like but even in the religious reformists like Swami Vivekananda and Dayananda Saraswathi. While the pre-colonial religious movements like Buddhism mainly confined to the spiritual concerns like the means of salvation, the religious reform movements in the postcolonial India was not indifferent to the problem of material existence (Panikkar, 97). Signs of such bourgeois perspective is visible in the sphere of economy and society as well. According to K.N. Panikkar,

The basic assumption of economic thinking, even when anchored on opposition to colonial exploitation, was the development of a capitalist order. The critique of the revenue administration and the system of inheritance which facilitated fragmentation of property and hence hampered accumulation of capital, the emphasis on import of capital and technology, the opposition to drain of wealth and export of raw material, and a passionate commitment to industrialisation were all part of a bourgeois vision. (96)

Thus the bourgeois liberalism which is considered to be a logical outcome of British rule played a major role in the production of the nationalist ideology and its eventual hegemony. The power struggle between the nationalist ideology and the colonial one continues throughout the postcolonial period. But the nationalist ideology

reveals its ambivalence. Revealing its duality Partha Chatterjee writes: “Nationalist thought, in agreeing to become ‘modern’, accepts the claim to universality of this ‘modern’ framework of knowledge. Yet it also asserts the autonomous identity of a national culture. It thus simultaneously rejects and accepts the dominance, both epistemic and moral, of an alien culture” (*Nationalist*, 11). Thus its attitude towards colonial dominance remains ambivalent as it collaborates with the dominant colonial ideology sharing the concepts of modernity while confronting colonialism’s political dominance. So a clear division between the coloniser and the colonised becomes impossible in the postcolonial period. This cultural fluidity is further deepened by the hybridity of the colonial power itself.

Bhabha terms this an “in between” position as it occupies a space that is neither inside nor outside the colonial ideology. The writers of *The Empire Writes Back* explores this complex relationship thus:

In order to maintain authority over the Other in a colonial situation, imperial discourse strives to delineate the Other as radically different from the self, yet the same time, it must maintain sufficient identity with the Other to valorise control over it. The Other can, of course, only be constructed out of the archive of ‘the self, yet the self must also articulate the Other as inescapably different. Otherness can thus only be produced by a continual process of what Bhabha calls ‘repetition and displacement’ and this instigates an ambivalence at the very site of imperial authority and control. (103)

The interrelationship between the “self” and the “other” “coloniser” and the “colonised” reveals the complexity of colonial discourse, the hybridity of the colonial authority and the ambivalence of resistance. According to Partha Chatterjee, the “bourgeois opposition to imperialism was always ambiguous. (**Nationalist 25**)

This ambiguity can be traced back to its origin in the dominant colonial discourse itself. Nationalism, the emancipatory power, has two important trajectories: “the dismantling of the colonial apparatus and the construction, in its place of new social order” (Chatterjee, **Nationalist**, 25). While constructing a new social order corresponding to the class interest of the political group that led to the anticolonial struggle it formulates its own hegemonic project in opposition to colonialism displacing the existing pluralities, of the indigenous society (Ahmad, 133). Thus nationalism in effect becomes the site for the construction of a new hegemonic discourse, “which replicated the old colonial structures in new terms” (Said, **Culture** 269)

Nationalism originated in India within the complex matrix of political and cultural confrontation. Combining bourgeois liberalism and humanism of the West and orthodox cultural chauvinism of the East, nationalism constructed its own ideological position against the colonial domination and the control of tradition.

Ideologies inherently opposed to each other co-exist within the nationalist ideology under the broad aim of anticolonialism, creating inner fragmentation. This

sort of a broad alliance between national bourgeoisie and the other dominant classes weakens the revolutionary fetishism and forces it to stick to a moderate compromise formula. Commenting on this duplication of bourgeois nationalism, Partha Chatterjee writes:

On the one hand, it does not attempt to break up or transform in any radical ways the institutional structures of 'rational' authority set up in the period of colonial rule, whether in the domain of administration and law or in the realm of economic institutions or in the structure of education, scientific research and cultural organisation. On the other hand it also does not undertake a full scale assault on all pre-capitalist dominant classes, rather it seeks to limit their former power, neutralise them where necessary, attack them only selectively, and in general to bring them round to a position of subsidiary allies within a reformed state structure (*Nationalist*, 49)

The ambivalent attitude resident in the nationalist project has its origin in the confused ideological structure of postcolonial society. Though it welcomed the modern, rational ideas and tried to modernise the customs and attitudes, it compromises with the orthodox feudal forces as well as with various dominant structures revealing its ambivalence. Thus in India the bourgeois revolution was partial and lacked the revolutionary mission of a progressive bourgeoisie trying to create nation in its own image.

The ambivalence of the nationalist project delineates the complexities involved in the construction of the nationalist movement. A confluence of various classes, interests and ideologies, the nationalist movement combined multivalent ideological positions making the resistance movement a complex amalgam of opposing tendency. In order to trace the dialectic that operates at various sites within the postcolonial society it is necessary to identify the opposing movements both in the social or rather institutional and discursive fields.

Colonialism has very little in common with the precolonial institutions and discourses, as it is a violent imposition rather than the product of an internal socio-political confrontation. But the precolonial forms set necessary links with postcolonial social formation by setting a proper socio-political situation suitable for the colonial invasion and subsequent take over of the state. Establishing a central authority displacing the earlier irregular, multiple ruling structures the colonial state began reorienting traditional Indian society using European discourses of modernity, enlightenment, individualism, rationalism and freedom. Often termed by the colonial as well as nationalist historians as the confrontation between medieval and modern, this tradition versus modern dialectic has set the proper background for the emergence of the nationalist movement.

The socio-cultural confrontations unsettle the notions of tradition and modernity and as a result traditional culture becomes non-traditional and the imported Western modernity undergoes transformation. So it is right to ascertain that the two concepts,

tradition and modernity underwent semantic transformation through confrontation and compromise, precipitating a discursive space in which nationalist ideals are flushed and shaped.

The novelists discussed in this thesis consciously or unconsciously adhere to these post-colonial theories and show how the language of the colonisers can be used to write against the colonisers.

## **Chapter 2**

**The Novel as Realistic Epic: 'Train to Pakistan'**

## Chapter II

### The Novel as Realistic Epic: 'Train to Pakistan'

TRAIN TO PAKISTAN (1956) is one of the finest realistic novels of post World War II Indian fiction in English. It is Khushwant Singh's supreme achievement, which he is unlikely to excel. This realistic masterpiece contains, among other things, a well-thought-out structure, an artistically conceived plot, an absorbing narrative, and imaginatively realised characters. It has many notable features such as an unobtrusively symbolic framework, meaningful atmosphere and a powerful, unvarnished naturalistic mode of expression or style.

The predominant quality of *Train to Pakistan* is its stark realism, its absolute fidelity to the truth of life, its trenchant exposition of one of the most moving, even tragic, events of contemporary Indian history, the partition. It is also marked by its special naturalistic *mores*. The individual in Khushwant Singh's fictional world is silhouetted against this vast, panoramic background, the great human catastrophe of the partition of India and the ghastly and inhuman events which followed it. Khushwant Singh's art is revealed in not merely probing deep into the real but in transposing the actual into symbol and image. His art of realistic portrayal cannot be merely described as an exercise in the bookkeeping of existence; in effect, it is a creative endeavour of transcending the actual, asserting the value and dignity of the individual, and finally, of expressing the tragic splendour of a man's sacrifice for his woman.

**Train to Pakistan** was originally entitled *Mano Majra* (1956). *Mano Majra* is the name of a place which is the centre of action in the sequence of events leading to the final catastrophe. The change in the title seems the result of deep thought, not a matter of mere chance or casual choice. The change is from the static to the dynamic: *Mano Majra*, the name of a village, is a fixed point in space, whereas the train is a symbol of movement. The use of the word "train" has other contextual associations also. The train signifies groups or multitudes of people who are heading for various destinations. On the eve of partition of the Indian subcontinent, millions of people from either side of the dividing boundary were on the way, seeking refuge and security. Millions of non-Muslims from Pakistan longed for a passage to India, a land of hope and peace, whereas millions of Muslims from India sought the road to Pakistan, the land of Islamic faith and promise. Thus, the train implies the movement of vast communities torn from their roots and areas of traditional growth to a new "Jerusalem". It indicates the harrowing processes of this change, the awful and ghastly experience of human beings involved in a historical, impersonal and dehumanised process. The train suggests the fate of the individuals, the destinies of the two newly formed nations, consequent upon a political decision and the miseries, suffering and privations, which issue from it. Second, the train is also a symbol of the machine age, an era dominated by science and technology. The realisation is paramount that the modern mechanistic, materialistic age has caused severe destruction of humanistic values. The age of machines has led to constantly increasing degrees of dehumanisation. Man, divorced from nature and God, feels rootless and alienated. This rootlessness of man - - his severance from the bonds of the earth which reared him - - is symbolised by the train in **Train to Pakistan**. The

association of Mano Majra, a village on the Indian side in the Punjab, with the train (which connected it with Lahore, the capital of the undivided Punjab before partition) is indirectly a confrontation between the innocent, ignorant farmer and the impersonal machine age.

More important, the train suggests the recurrent rhythmic pattern in the novel. In his analysis of the idea of rhythm in fiction, E.K. Brown has commented on the significance of recurrent patterns and has given several examples, particularly from the novels of E.M. Forster. In a similar context the train in Khushwant Singh's novel is at the heart of the sequence of events and processes of motivation: "Mano Majra has always been known for its railway station." (TTP, 3) Whereas express trains do not halt at Mano Majra, two passenger trains running between Lahore and Delhi stop there; shunting goods wagons spend a considerable time, and the whistling and puffing of engines fill the atmosphere of the village: "All this has made Mano Majra very conscious trains". Thus the train, the symbol both of society involved in movement and of an uprooted community, is closely linked with Mano Majra.

In effect, all the activities of villagers in Mano Majra are closely associated with the arrival and departure of railway trains. Before daybreak the morning mail train from Lahore to Delhi blows its whistles loudly to awaken Mano Majra. Then the Muslim mullah and the Sikh priest call their followers to prayer. The next train, the ten-thirty passenger train from Delhi, finds all Mano Majrans at work - - men in the fields and women in the kitchen. The mid day express passes by when Mano Majrans are at rest

and having a siesta. The evening passenger train again finds Mano Majra active and at work. Then, men return home from their farms, and women are busy with their routine chores. The freight train gives them the signal for sleep and rest. Then “life at Mano Majra is stilled, save for the dogs barking at the trains that pass in the night.” (5)

Thus the train is a dual symbol: it symbolises life and action but it also stands for death and disaster. The scene of the train from Pakistan, which brings in countless corpses to Mano Majra, is awful and heart rendering. The setting and appearance of the train are in tune with its funereal atmosphere. A normal train has a bright headlight, whereas this extraordinary train from Pakistan had no headlight. It was a symbol of darkness and death: “There are no lights on the train”; “The engine did not whistle”; “It is like a ghost.” (142) One recalls the strange atmosphere of the train to the Marabar Caves in E.M.Forster’s *A Passage to India*. Yet the quality of disaster in *A Passage to India* is very different from the quality of the destruction of humanistic values in *Train to Pakistan*. Man becomes the butcher of his fellow men; genocide has become a gruesome characteristic of certain phases of twentieth-century civilisation. The massacres of Arabs in Palestine, of Jews in Nazi Germany, and of Indians and Pakistanis in the subcontinent are an ironic commentary on man’s proclaimed endeavour to cultivate brotherhood, equality and justice.

One morning, a train from Pakistan halted at Mano Majra railway station. At the first glance, it had the look of the trains in the days of peace. No one sat on the roof. No one clung between bogies. No one was balanced on the footboards. But somehow it was

different. There was something uneasy about it. It had a ghostly quality. As soon as it pulled up to the platform, the guard emerged from the tail end of the train and went to the stationmaster's office. Then the two went to the soldier's tents and spoke to the officer in charge. The soldiers were called out and the villagers loitering about were ordered back to Mano Majra. One man was sent off on a motorcycle to Chandannagar. An hour later, the sub inspector with about fifty armed policemen turned up at the station. Immediately after them, Mr. Hukum Chand drove up in his American car.

...The arrival of the ghost train in broad daylight created a commotion in Mano Majra. People stood on their roofs to see what was happening at the station...  
(78)

The villagers and the *Lambardar*, the pretty village employee, were all puzzled by the odd appearance of the train and its sinister, ominous nature. They were later asked to carry firewood and kerosene to the spot and the mystery deepened. At a later stage

...the northern horizon, which had turned a bluish grey, showed orange again. The orange turned into copper and then into a luminous russet. Red tongues of flame leaped into the black sky. A soft breeze began to blow toward 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. (84)...

The "red tongues of flame" symbolise the poisonous and aggressive nature of the snake and show how, in the heat of destructive lunacy, men turn into poisonous reptiles. The distant fires brought "a faint acrid smell of searing flesh," which caused a sense of horror and disgust among the villagers. Imam Baksh, the Muslim priest and Meet Singh, the Sikh priest, were godfearing, good-natured men who wished to uphold humanistic ideals. They realised that the train carried the dead and that it was the outcome of a ghastly, demonic act; consequently, neither the Muslim preacher nor the Sikh priest could utter their sacred word of God in that hour. It was a world without the word of God, bare and naked in its ugliness and horror.

Khushwant Singh's artistic creation of the atmosphere in *Train to Pakistan* has very interesting parallels in E.M. Forster's masterly portrayal of the atmosphere in *A Passage to India* (1924). Forster describes at length the mysterious and "extraordinary" Marabar Caves and paves the way of transmitting to the reader the baffling experience of Mrs. Moore and Adela Quested. As Aziz, along with Mrs. Moore and Adela, boards the train for Marabar Caves, the reader looks forward to a happy picnic scene. But the

atmosphere, sad and sombre, soon dissolves the jollity into uncanny despair, and the situation is overshadowed by an invading tide of disaster.

As they spoke the sky to the left turned angry orange. Colour throbbed, and mounted behind a pattern of trees, grew in intensity, was yet brighter, incredibly brighter, strained from without against the globe of the air. They awaited the miracle. But at the supreme moment, when night should have died and day lived, nothing occurred. It was as if virtue had failed in the celestial fount. (Forster, *A Passage to India*, 137)

The hues in the east decayed, the hills seemed dimmer though in fact better lit, and a profound disappointment entered with the morning breeze. Why then the chamber was prepared, did the bridegroom not enter with trumpets and shams, as humanity expects? The sun rose without the splendour. He was presently observed trailing yellowish behind the trees, or against insipid sky, and touching the bodies already at work in the fields.

The sky turns into “angry orange”, and virtue fails at its celestial source. The sun rises without glory, and man is confronted with nothingness, a world without values, a destructive echo of Marabar. Similarly, a world devoid of values is the tragic outcome of the large-scale genocide represented by the train from Pakistan. This is precisely the *raison d’être* for the absence of the holy word, of Sikhism and Islam, of Meet Singh and

Imam Baksh on that fateful day when they, to their horror, knew the truth about the train.

Another train loaded with the dead arrived from Pakistan at Mano Majra, which was associated with darkness. And then, from across the railway line where a thousand bodies were committed to the earth, “a jackal sent up a long plaintive howl. A pack joined him. The men shuddered...”(TTP, 143) It is not without significance that a heavy bulldozer was used to bury the dead. The dehumanisation of life is demonstrated in this cold, massive, mechanical burial.

Singh’s art of portraying and transmitting atmospheric effects is amply shown in scenes of the trains from Pakistan. Near the train long lines of bats flew across endlessly. Crows began to caw in their sleep. “The koel’s shrill cry bursts through a clump of trees...”(143) The use of words “ghost” and “ghostly” forms part of the accentuation of experience and expression. Adjectives in Khushwant Singh are filled with subtle meaning, and single nouns, like little “drops”, contain oceans of meaning. Thus, the significance of the title, *Train to Pakistan*, is woven into the narrative substance of the novel. It also indicates the process of the connection between meaning and symbol.

*Train to Pakistan* has a well-conceived structure and well-regulated architectural pattern. The structure of the novel in a conventional pattern may imply the process and form of development of action and character. The idea of structure includes, and covers, areas of the play, the sequence of events, the narrative and episodic arrangements. But

this is not all. Form and structure are elusive and elastic concepts which continue to assume new dimensions.

**Train to Pakistan** has an almost conventional structure since it grows out of a chronological sequence of time. Yet the structure is not purely traditional because it is superseded by an intangible current of values and also an evolving form. It is not circumscribed by the areas of action and character, but transcends them and enters the area of value judgement. The architectonics of **Train to Pakistan** evolves out of the combination of the traditional structural pattern with the value judgements. Creative literature, as I.A.Richards has perceptively commented, is a large storehouse of recorded values. **Train to Pakistan** is a realistic novel and is also a unit of “vast storehouse of creatively expressed values.” Thus the synthesis of reality and value is one of the remarkable qualities of **Train to Pakistan**.

In relation to the conventional aspects of its structure, Edwin Muir might have described **Train to Pakistan** as a novel of action and character, and, in part, as a dramatic novel. The dramatic novel, writes Edwin Muir, is “limited in Time and free in Space.”(**The Structure of the Novel**, 88) **Train to Pakistan** alternates between the dramatic novel and the novel of character, between growth in space and movement in time and, therefore simultaneously develops both the dimensions.

Yet is difficult to formulate precisely the quality of the genre of **Train to Pakistan**. The novel as a work of art has an evolving structure, though one may not accept fully

Brunetiere's theory of the evolution of genres because it poses a confusing parallelism between evolution and progress. The novel as a genre evolved out of romance through a continual cultivation of realistic modes, use of irony and exploration of the comic. The evolution of the novel as a "form" from romance, which is essentially a literature of the enchanted world of adventure, to realism, which aims at depicting the world with all its materialistic and naturalistic concomitants is the process of the historical growth of the English novel in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This evolution has coincided with a change in man's concept of reality in fiction. Mark Schorer believes that "as the novel becomes more thoroughly comic or more thoroughly tragic, it passes beyond irony and beyond realism into a new era of fictive expression open to more cosmic and more reflective visions of the world."(*The Novel as a Genre*, 26) Realistic fiction today is no longer confined to the nineteenth-century form of Emile Zola or Flaubert or Dickens and Thackeray, but has transcended its frontiers by moving toward what E.M.Forster calls "Prophetic fiction"(Forster, *Aspects of the Novel*, 126) as seen in the works of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky. This may well be interpreted as a new development in the evolution of the novel as a genre. As new concepts and ideas of reality emerge, new methods of their exploration create changes in the form of the novel.

**Train to Pakistan** is surely part of the march of the novel towards realism, but it also goes beyond it in area of values, the field so subtly and superbly explored by great novelists such as Tolstoy and Dostoevsky. It embodies the exploration of new concepts of reality. **Train to Pakistan**, in spite of its predominantly realistic mores, tends towards prophetic fiction. Paradoxically, it is prophetic because it is so innately realistic. The

exploration of the human world and its related values in *Train to Pakistan* is more profound and more moving than perhaps the most erudite and expert commentary on aspects of twentieth-century civilisation.

The scene of *Train to Pakistan* is laid in India on the eve of the partition in 1947. About ten million people - - Hindus from Pakistan and Muslims from India - - are in flight and in the large-scale communal disturbances and killings nearly a million are dead. Only Mano Majra, a small village, is, at this time, mostly free from communal frenzy and fratricidal strife. Sikhs and Muslims have lived in Mano Majra for centuries, and their relationships are friendly. On an August night, Malli, a dacoit and his gang enter Mano Majra and demand Ram Lal's treasures. Ram Lal, a moneylender, refuses, and is murdered. The gang leaves the village dropping a few bangles in the house of Juggat Singh, who is also known as Jugga. Jugga, who has served several jail terms on several charges, is at that time out in the fields. He was required not to leave his house after sunset, but the call of Nooran, his beloved, the Muslim weaver's daughter, is too compelling for him to abide by the restrictive rules of the police. Jugga and Nooran return to the village only to find the people gravely disturbed by the dacoity and the murder of Ram Lal. Almost at the same time, Hukum Chand, the divisional commissioner, who has arrived earlier at the Officer's Rest Home, is engaged in a sordid affair with Haseena, a teenaged prostitute. He tries to take liberties with her, hears the gunshots and voice of Mano Majrans, swears loudly and then leaves the girl. The next day, the policemen arrive at Mano Majra railway station to conduct an inquiry into the murder of Ram Lal. By the same train arrives Iqbal Singh, a western-educated youth,

who has been deputed by the People's party to work among the common folk. This Westernised young man goes over to the village Gurudwara and is welcomed by the hospitable Meet Singh, the Sikh priest. He is admired by Meet Singh and the village Lambardar. He is however, arrested by the police through misunderstanding. Iqbal and Juggat Singh are both held by the police on charges of complicity in Ram Lal's murder, though no proceedings are started against them. Malli and his gang, the real murderers, are also arrested, but they are later released. The police inspector suspects Iqbal to be a Muslim and, in order to convince himself, has him stripped to make sure that he had been circumcised in accordance with Muslim practice.

Events move fast, and the fate of individuals in Mano Majra is decisively affected by the catastrophic events of partition. The arrival of the ghost train filled with corpses at Mano Majra from Pakistan "created a commotion". The dark clouds of suspicion and fear arise among the Sikhs and Muslims, who have lived together for centuries. Yet feelings of brotherliness have not disappeared, and they meet for consultation in a scene that is both immensely human and touching. Madness has invaded Mano Majra too, in spite of the benevolent character of Mano Majrans. Muslims are evacuated to a refugee camp at Chandannagar, later to be transported to Pakistan. Nooran, who is with Jugga's child, visits his mother but is compelled to go to the refugee camp. Hindu fanatics vow revenge upon Muslims for what Muslims have done to Hindus in Pakistan. Hukum Chand learns that Haseena too would be on the train which is scheduled to carry Muslim refugees from the Chandannagar camp to Pakistan. Jugga and Iqbal are both released at this crucial stage. Juggat Singh goes to Mano Majra only to find that

Nooran has been taken to the refugee camp and that she would be travelling on the train to Pakistan. He also learns of a plot of the Hindu fanatics to blow up the train with dynamite as it passed the railroad bridge at Mano Majra. Jugga climbs the steel spans of the bridge and begins to slash at the rope connecting the explosive material with a sharp instrument, a *Kirpan*. The leader of the Hindu saboteurs fires at him, but Jugga clings to the rope with his hands and cuts it to pieces. The engine of the incoming train “was almost on him”. Thus the train “went over him, and went to Pakistan.”

The division of the plot and the narrative sequence of *Train to Pakistan* illuminate its architectural design. The novel is divided into four parts: (a) “Dacoity”, (b) “Kalyug”, (c) “Mano Majra” and (d) “Karma”. The titles of these parts are characteristically Indian, since the novel presents a kaleidoscopic picture of a turbulent phase of India’s history and the sordid aspect of its life with visionary power.

The first part, “Dacoity”, is an Anglicised form of a Hindi word meaning robbery. This section constitutes the true-to-life description of an actual robbery committed in Mano Majra village, but its ramifications and remote echoes go far beyond the inhuman and cruel actions of the robber Malli and his gang. What the reader ultimately realises is that humanity itself has been robbed of its human attributes, that the world has been dispossessed of its values, and that the universe has been stripped of its significance. The dacoity in Mano Majra is a material expression of man’s inner, spiritual deprivation.

The second part, “Kalyug”, bears a title which according to the Hindu view of Time, means the fourth and last phase in the four cycles of existence. The spirit of *Kali* or strife has entered into the vast masses of men in both India and Pakistan at the time of the partition, and **Train to Pakistan** emerges out of an inwardly felt experience of the novelist. *Kal –Yug* is a Hindu religious and theological concept, but sociologically speaking it is also a widely current, popular superstitious belief. *Kali*, the spirit of strife, presides over the destinies of men in “Kali-yug”, everything becomes topsy-turvy; voices of affirmation are drowned in the abyss of negation. The world in **Train to Pakistan** is portrayed in relation to this cosmic design.

Mano Majra is the microcosm of the world and, therefore, as the name of the third part, suggests the reign of *Kali*. The title establishes an equivalence between the human portent and the cosmic design of the novel.

The fourth part of the novel is entitled “Karma”, which is a highly significant term. The word “Karma” (*Kar’ma*), which in Sanskrit means an act or deed, has two implications in the narrative context of the novel. In the Buddhist and Hindu view *Karma* implies the totality of a person’s actions in one of the successive cycles of his existence, thought of as determining his fate in the next phase of his life. It may also be used to mean the unpredictable turns of fate or wheels of destiny. The title includes both of these implications. This partly deterministic implication of the subtitle is in tune with the realistic design of the novel. It also indicates the Hindu or Indian view of life,

seeking a rapport with, and establishing a correlation between, man's worldly experience and the cosmic design.

*Train to Pakistan* opens with a significant reference to, and description of, the summer of 1947, which "was not like other Indian summers" because the weather "had a different feel in India that year". The summer in 1947 was "longer...drier and dustier". Singh's presentation of the setting of natural phenomena characterised by the unusually excessive heat is symbolic of man's heated state, of his agonised heart, and of his sufferings and his fate. The dry, dusty, parched earth becomes the symbol of suffering humanity, involuntarily involved in the ordeal of the partition of India into two nations. The experience emitted heat, hatred and anger. It seemed that the inner springs of human fellowship, affection and love were drying up and that man was beginning in vain to ask for water. But "there was no rain... People began to say that God was punishing them for their sins." (TTP, 1)

This natural phenomenon of the severe summer of 1947, combined with the popular notion of sin, is a significant element in the novel's narrative and dramatic design. It also illuminates the symbolic structure of *Train to Pakistan*. The aridity of the 1947 summer signifies the process of the world of man turning into a human wasteland, which is the essential subject matter of *Train to Pakistan*. The seasonal setting of the novel recalls the significant background of winter, summer, and the rains in *A Passage to India*, which has a threefold structure. Forster too endeavours to establish a close relationship between the human world and the natural world. Unlike Forster, Singh

introduces an element of Indian or Hindu superstition into this vegetable, botanical and natural world. The allusion to the popular superstition - - that “God was punishing them for their sins” - - establishes a subtle connection between the specific natural phenomena and the two concepts of *Kalyug* and *Karma*.

The parts are linked in a meaningful pattern. The allusion to the widely held superstition of God punishing the sinful is in accord with the concept of *Karma*, and the immoral state of man is a natural corollary of his inescapable involvement with *Kalyug*, the era of internecine strife and the negation of beliefs. Thus, the summer setting provides the scenic, narrative, and symbolic link between the first and subsequent divisions of the book.

The basic human and social tension in **Train to Pakistan** arises out of the interaction of two forces. Forces of division operate in the communities of Mano Majra - - a microcosm of rural India. **Train to Pakistan** presents rural Punjab with its religious and caste divisions, which result in alienation, alternating with forces of union, which result in amity. Hate alternates with love; anger alternates with affection: the desire for revenge alternates with the impulse to sacrifice. Out of the interaction of these mutually conflicting forces arises the fundamental tension of the novel.

Reality in Khushwant Singh is multifaceted, and its realisation of various levels is in accord with the basic tension arising out of contradictory forces. The multiple aspects of reality create this primary tension in **Train to Pakistan**.

Division and disharmony are the ruling principles of the world of Mano Majra. The social and religious stratifications and divisions of Mano Majra community are highlighted against a larger world which is also divided. Sikhs and Muslims, almost equal in number, we are told, form the rural community of the village. Sikhs are mostly landowners, and the Muslims the tenants or tillers of the land; sometimes Sikhs and Muslims work together in the fields. There is only one Hindu house in Mano Majra, Ram Lal's who is the principal moneylender of the village. The Muslim priest calls the faithful to prayer at the mosque; his sonorous notes, "Allah-ho-Akbar", echo in the quiet and peaceful atmosphere of Mano Majra. The Sikh priest utters his prayer at the Gurudwara (a Sikh temple) in monotonous singsong to the sounds of splashing water.

Several families of sweepers in Mano Majra have an ambivalent religious adherence. They seem to be Muslim and yet they are found within the fold of Christian missionaries. The ambivalence is further accentuated by the inscrutable devotion of Mano Majrans for the *deo*, the local deity, "a three-foot slab of sandstone" which is worshipped by all villagers alike. Religious diversities are thus overcome by the centre of supernatural and divine power, and forces of division alternate with religious forces of union. This continual change in the efficacious operation of forces - - good and evil, affection and alienation, friendship and hostility, union and division - - is a significant aspect of the movement of thought and feeling in the novel. Mano Majra is, then, what John Bunyan would have aptly called "the World".

The act of dacoity described in the first part of the novel highlights the this-worldliness of Mano Majra, its deep involvement with materialistic reality. This earthy world in *Train to Pakistan* offers a close parallel to the world of Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders*. "What is important in Moll's world of things is the counting, measuring, pricing, weighing and evaluating of the things in terms of the wealth they represent", writes Dorothy Van Ghent, "and the social status they imply for the possessor." (*The English Novel: Form and Function*, 35) Some characters respond only to material facts because to them only objects seem to contain reality, and they are therefore actuated by a dominant sense of possession. The world of *dakus*, or robbers, in *Train to Pakistan* is marked by a stark, blatant, unvarnished materialistic trend, and by an immoral longing for possession through dispossession of the legitimate rights of others. The materialistic view and the measuring in *Train to Pakistan* are very similar to the counting and the measuring in *Moll Flanders*.

The action of the dacoits is a significant beginning of the novel, as it is only a prelude to similar actions on other levels. On one heavy night in August, Malli, the chief gangster, led his party of robbers to Mano Majra, through the riverbed of the Sutlej. They broke open the door of Lala Ram Lal's house, encountered two women and a boy of seven, and, holding "the muzzle of the gun to the child's face", elicited the information of Lala's whereabouts. The robbers recklessly cast aside the women, who implored them: "Do not kill, brother. In the name of the Guru – don't." (TTP, 8) The gunmen caught hold of the frightened old man, demanded the keys of the safe from

him, and hit him in the face. Ram Lal spat blood. Exasperated, one of the robbers stabbed him in the abdomen, and Ram Lal collapsed instantaneously.

After committing the gruesome murder, the dacoits left the village. On their way, they fired shots into the air and dropped bangles, marks of impotence and womanliness, in the house of Juggat Singh, who at that time was not at home.

The mode of introducing Juggat Singh aims at bringing out the essential duality in the nature of the character. Juggat Singh, a confirmed criminal, and served several jail terms on various charges; at the time of dacoity, he had been released on the guarantee of good behaviour. He was notoriously known as “Jugga, the *badmash*”(Jugga, the scoundrel), but at moments he shows a degree of deep self-awareness. He embodies that rare combination of the criminal and the lover, which is a baffling aspect of the realities and complexities of life, the ambivalence of moral values. He is an individual in his own right, yet he does represent the awful sociological phenomenon of modern Indian *dakus*, who infest mountain hideouts, especially the Chambal valley, and are the despair of highly skilled Indian civil and military police. Basically, Juggat Singh, whose nature is split between earthly brutality and passionate love, represents a significant aspect of Khushwant Singh’s view of man; he is a being inexorably and hopelessly divided good and evil, noble and ignoble, sacred and profane.

The more intriguing aspect of Juggat Singh is revealed in the lovemaking scene with Nooran, the Muslim priest’s attractive daughter. As he lay on the sand in the

riverbed, he saw a meteor shoot across the Milky Way, trailing a silver path down the blue black sky. The moonbeams entered Nooran's soul, and she played hide and seek with Jugga. It may be a comet which is considered a bad omen. It is thus symbolically linked with the outcome of the Jugga-Nooran relationship. She bit him sharply, slapped him on the face, exchanged words of agonising and unfulfilled love, called him "*badmash*" (scoundrel) and he in return, expressed his longing to be locked up with her in a common cell. He overpowered her psychologically as well as physically by slow stages and his "caresses became lustful". The freight train engine whistling at that hour functions as an adroitly worked-out rhythm in relation to the Jugga-Nooran alliance. The call of the body was too strong for both of them, and Nooran found that "the stars above her went into a mad whirl and then came back to their places like a merry-go-round slowly coming to a stop." (14) Strangely, this act of fulfilment was followed by cries in Mano Majra. The robbers were making good their escape, and Nooran asked Jugga if he knew them. Jugga at once spotted Malli and his mates and vowed reprisals. On his return to the village he found Ram Lal dead. The scene of love and fulfilment is thus overshadowed by the event of an atrocious murder. This seems to be a particular demonstration of "star-crossed love".

The scene of the dacoity and the scene of love are portrayed on a principle of contrast between the two widely different, almost mutually opposite, worlds. Dacoity clearly implies the materialistic world in which deprivation and destruction are the dominant motives; love symbolises the spiritual world where the holiness of the heart's desire reigns supreme. The world of matter alternates with the world of the spirit, and

the coexistence of good and evil makes Mano Majra the microcosm of multifarious and many-sided reality. **Train to Pakistan** thus comes to symbolise the world itself.

Almost at the same time when Malli and his gang were committing the dacoity in Mano Majra, Hukum Chand, magistrate and deputy commissioner of the district was involved in an “affair” with Haseena, a Muslim teen-aged girl at the Officers’ rest house on the northern side of the railroad bridge. The shunting of the goods train was in progress when Malli and his gang were involved in housebreaking and murder, when Jugga and Nooran were locked in each other’s arms, and when Hukum Chand and Haseena were engaged in an attempt at physical contact. It appears as though the train had assumed the role of a human character - - taking note of, and keeping watch on, all the three events taking place simultaneously. The train thus constitutes the principal rhythm in the novel. Rhythm in fiction has been defined by E.M. Forster as a process of “repetition plus variation”. (**Aspects of the Novel**, 124) The repetitive movements, whistles, and sounds of the train act as a refrain to the progression, in stages of action and character in the novel.

The three scenes taking place almost simultaneously to the refrain of the railway engine’s whistle demonstrate the threefold mode of operation of the principle of contrast inherent in Singh’s art of fiction. Dacoity is contrasted with love, and spiritual love is differentiated from sheer physical passion. The act of dacoity is conceived in a world of growing materialism in which men are dominated by the desire to possess things and the wishes to dispossess others in the process. In the Jugga-Nooran love scene personal

relations and emotional involvement overcome the objective world, though the rumbling of the freight train is a sad interruption and reminder of that humdrum world. The principle of contrast is further exemplified in the two effectively rendered scenes of Jugga-Nooran involvement and Hukum Chand-Haseena affair. Juggat's genuine involvement with Nooran is based on strong emotion, whereas Hukum Chand's association with Haseena, though initially delicate and ambivalent, is initially a transitory, superficial and casual relationship. In course of time, he becomes sentimentally involved with her; yet this relationship is basically very different from that of Juggat Singh and Nooran. Thus, a variation in personal and human relationships is delicately and subtly portrayed.

Hukum Chand is a major figure on the dramatic stage of **Train to Pakistan**. He at first appears as a typical Indian representative of bureaucracy in British-governed-India. He is the counterpart of Buta Singh, the seasoned civil servant in **I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale**. Three levels of governmental strata are depicted: Hukum Chand belongs to the upper level of Punjab district administration: the sub-inspector of police comes from the middle level: constables belong to the lower level of this hierarchical, administrative structure. Hukum Chand is a type as well as an individual, a person as well as a bureaucrat, and, in various ways, an evolving character.

Khushwant Singh in attempting to capture the physical reality of the human world comprehends and depicts with insights the small, apparently insignificant, gestures, facial expressions, nuances of behaviour of his characters and makes them

come alive in his portrayal. The descriptions of Hukum Chand's actions and attitudes are notable. Hukum Chand "heaved his corpulent frame" out of the "large American car" and "ambled up to the sub-inspector and gave him a friendly slap on the back". Both of them were closeted in the drawing room and discussed in animated tones the complex situations and the challenges facing them. The drawing room atmosphere is in marked contrast to the ghastliness of the incidents which dominate their minds and discussions. Hukum Chand narrates in true bureaucratic style how he heard reports of convoys of Sikhs and Hindus passing through Amritsar and how Sikhs retaliated by attacking a trainload of Muslim refugees bound for Pakistan. It carried a thousand corpses and also the words of bitter irony: "Gift to Pakistan". (TTP, 19) In assessing the awful situation of bloodshed and mass murder, Hukum Chand maintained his characteristic balance and poise, but the Sikh sub-inspector is carried away by the force of prevailing popular prejudices against government action or inaction:

... Sometimes, sir, one cannot restrain oneself. What do the Gandhi caps in Delhi know about Punjab? What is happening on the other side of Pakistan does not matter to them. They have not lost their homes and belongings; they haven't had their mothers, wives, sisters and daughters raped and murdered in the streets.

(21)

The sub-inspector allows himself to be sentimentally involved in the situation marked by communal passion and hostilities, whereas Hukum Chand, the more seasoned, experienced and balanced bureaucrat, does not lose his perspective.

“We must maintain law and order, “ He answered after a pause, “If possible, get the Muslims to go out peacefully. Nobody really benefits by bloodshed. Bad characters will get all the loot and the government will blame us for the killing. No, Inspector Sahib, whatever our views - - and God alone knows what I would have done to these Pakistanis if I were not a government servant - -we must not let there be any killing or destruction of property.” (21)

This is surely an extremely sensible attitude on the part of an Indian bureaucrat, particularly in view of the great compelling provocations of the nerve-wracking period of the partition of India. It anticipates, and sets the tone of, future events created world of **Train to Pakistan**, since Hukum Chand’s ideas, attitudes, and actions set into motion forces which lead to the almost inevitable climax of the novel. From a socio-political point of view, the distrust, rivalry, and mutually implied contempt between old, seasoned bureaucrats and newly crowned power-conscious politicians, which are some of the significant aspects of growing democratic institutions in India, are very well brought out in the portrayal of Hukum Chand and the sub-inspector. The internal tensions of democracy provide Khushwant Singh with fruitful areas for the portrayal of character and situation. The police force in the Punjab suffered from several failings and weaknesses: inefficiency, corruption, unscrupulousness, and greed. Singh rightly concentrates on, and exploits, the weaknesses of such motivations. Khushwant Singh’s presentation of the bureaucratic postures in India makes one recall Charles Dickens’ bitter satirising of the bureaucratic blunderbuss, though there is no comparison between

these two authors. Dickens shows the artist's capacity for a satirical rapier thrust, a profound irony and an abundant sense of virile humour. Though Singh does not have the Dickensian touch, or the characteristic Dickens' sense of the largeness of life, he has other impressive qualities, particularly the ability to present a situation with down-to-earth worldliness and to reveal the tragic in the actualities of life.

The tragic sense is shown through small gestures and through apparently trivial suggestions. Hukum Chand's seemingly casual remark - - "I hope we do not get trains with corpses coming through Mano Majra" - - has a touch of dramatic irony since it constitutes a forewarning of future events.

The talk and scenes of bloodshed are contrasted with those of love. The sub-inspector and Hukum Chand, of course have to discuss the disturbed communal situation but they also talk about Jugga, that "very big fellow, the tallest man in the area, six foot four, broad, like a stud bull..." and the big fellow's love affair with Nooran who is "dark", but whose "eyes are darker". The sub-inspector sardonically adds: "what the police of the Punjab has failed to do, the magic of the eyes of a girl of sixteen has done."

Indian bureaucracy in the Punjab is not as unimaginative as its harsher critics would like to make out, and Singh mixes up the colours and traits in order to present lifelike situations. It seems that the long conversations between Hukum Chand and the sub-inspector are tiresome and that they clearly betray prosaic, commonplace,

reportage, bringing out the journalistic aspect of Khushwant Singh's art. Singh the journalist is sometimes oddly combined with Singh the realist in **Train to Pakistan**.

Hukum Chand's confrontation with Haseena has an exotic touch and presents a strong contrast to the earlier prosaic, commonplace scene. It exposes several aspects of Hukum Chand as man and magistrate. Hukum Chand as magistrate expects to be entertained in a manner reminiscent of Punjabi feudal traditions. Liquor, music and girls form part of this entertainment ritual. Making extensive use of cosmetics, Indian and Western, he prepares himself for an enjoyable evening, but he is rather baffled by the sight of two geckos getting ready for fight on the ceiling of the resthouse.

The induction of the gecko motif in the scene between Hukum Chand and Haseena is a brilliant stroke of the novelist's art of atmospheric and symbolic portrayal. The geckos crawled, made odd sounds, and abruptly paused before they collided - - a strange sight.

Before Hukum Chand could move away they fell with a loud plop just beside his pillow. A cold clammy feeling came over him. He jumped out of the bed and stared at the geckos. The geckos stare back at him, still holding onto each other by the tents as if they were kissing. The bearer's footsteps broke the hypnotic stare with which the magistrate and the geckos had been regarding each other. The geckos ran down the bed and up the wall back to the ceiling. Hukum Chand felt as if he had touched the lizards

and they had made his hands dirty. He rubbed his hands on the hem of his shirt. It was not the sort of dirt which could be wiped off or washed clean. (24)

The sudden, unexpected fall of the lizards from a wall or ceiling to the floor is considered a bad omen by Indians. They fell near Hukum Chand's pillow and cast almost an inscrutable shadow over his desire for sexual enjoyment. The geckos held on to each other by the throat "as if they were kissing", an extraordinary posture which seems an inversion and parody of Hukum Chand's amorous expectations. The magistrate looked at the lizards, and they, in turn, seemed to be staring at him, as if an inscrutable and indecipherable word had passed between them. As Hukum Chand dressed and groomed himself like a bridegroom, he found "the geckos were there, staring at him with their bright, black, pin-point eyes." The use of animals, especially birds and lizards, to explain and expand the circle of meaning and significance of character and situation in the novel is a signal feature of Khushwant Singh's art.

Hukum Chand's primary motivation was hedonistic: he wished to escape from the dull, humdrum world of office work into a world of sheer physical sensation and pleasure. He was pleased to see the party of musicians, dancers and singers bowing obsequiously before him. The old hag salaamed (bowed) him several times in courtly fashion, and the young girl, Haseena, merely stared at him with her large eyes lined with antimony and lampblack.

Khushwant Singh is a skilled painter of gestures and small give-and-take, and his descriptions are vivid and effective. His narration of small but significant details of human behaviour and postures is accurate and appropriately presented: “When they (musicians) finished the introductory piece, she blew her nose and cleared her throat again. She put her left hand on her ear and stretched the other toward the magistrate, addressing him in a shrill falsetto.”(26) This description of the singer and her gestures is accurate and aptly communicates the effects of sights and sounds of the peculiarities and oddities of the Indian situation with down-to-earth pictorial fidelity.

Hukum Chand flung a five-rupee currency note on the carpet as a gesture of appreciation. Since he did not have the nerve to take a good look at the girl, he began to drown his conscience in whisky. As the girl began to sing a very popular movie song Hukum Chand remembered his daughter humming it. A delicate feeling and a disturbing thought pierced his projected entertainment and drove him to resort to larger gulps of liquor. Yet he could not suppress his sense of scrupulousness.

...He stared at the girl who sat sheltered from the light. She was only a child and not pretty, just young and unexploited. Her breasts barely filled her bodice. They could not have known the touch of a male hand. The thought that she was perhaps younger than his own daughter flashed across his mind. He drowned it quickly with another whisky. Life was like that. You took it as it come, shorn of silly conventions and values deserved only lip worship...(28)

Hukum Chand the rake tried to dispel his doubts in drink, dismissed the musicians, put out the paraffin lamp, took the girl in his lap, and “undid the strap of the girl’s bodice”. Quite unexpectedly, the girl heard shots being fired in the air. Frightened, she stood up. Hukum Chand dragged her onto the carpet and began “fumbling with her dress”, but again two shots rang out and men’s voices were in the air. Hukum Chand swore loudly and left the girl. The geckos were right after all.

Bureaucracy and its acts of omission and commission are a major operating force in **Train to Pakistan**. The scene of action and confrontation between the two forces - - of bureaucracy and its challenges - - is Mano Majra, the principal protagonist in this drama of agonising death and pulsating life. The town is more important than the role of any single character in the novel in effect. It is the major character in the book. This concept fits with the thought of Khushwant Singh as primarily a sociological novelist and realist.

Bureaucracy began its work of investigating Ram Lal’s murder in Mano Majra. Twelve police constables and a sub-inspector arrived at the station for an on-the-spot inquiry. A young man, carrying an overnight bag got off the same train. His name was Iqbal. “He stepped gingerly off the train pressing his hair and looking all around. He was a small slight man, somewhat effeminate in appearance. The sight of the policeman emboldened him. He hoisted the hold-all onto his left shoulder and moved jauntily towards the exit”. (32-33)

Iqbal was a *Babu*, a city dweller, who had received the stamp of Western culture and education, which was reflected in his urban, sophisticated accent and fastidious style. He dwelled on his stay abroad and on his experiences of European societies in his talks with Meet Singh at the Sikh *Gurudwara* (the Sikh temple), where he stayed. Iqbal carried with him an air mattress, a dressing gown, a tin of sardines, and a bottle of whisky. This paraphernalia amply indicates his Western background and way of life. His mind had been influenced by ideas of proletarian revolution. The implications of Iqbal's name are enveloped in ambivalence: "He could be a Muslim, Iqbal Mohammed. He could be a Hindu, Iqbal Chand, or a Sikh, Iqbal Singh."(35)

The religious ambivalence implied in his name is only an aspect of the basic rootlessness of Iqbal's personality. Meet Singh was struck by the oddity of Iqbal's name, though he assumed he must be a Sikh. Iqbal, the upper-middle-class Socialist and a relentless critic of unimaginative bureaucracy, was bewildered by the news of Ram Lal's murder. Meet Singh was surprised by Iqbal's cautious and unexpected reaction: "Why, Babu Sahib, you have come to stop killing and you are upset by one murder!" Meet Singh's short comment throws light on Iqbal's role in relation to Jugga, the problems of Mano Majra and the Indian situation. Iqbal is a rebel sentimentally attracted to Socialist thinking, but he is primarily concerned with personal leadership. Marx was sceptical, even critical, of the role of the middle class in a revolution. Nevertheless, quite a few middle class men and women have risen in revolt against their societies and trodden the paths of quick changes. But their approach has often been primarily intellectual, academic, impractical and sometimes even divorced from the crying realities of a

compelling social or political situation. It is the incapacity for action which is the hallmark of the young, immature, sensation seeking, fashionable politician. Iqbal Singh represents, as much as Sher Singh does in *I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale*, this interesting aspect of the politically ambitious, rising middle-class stratum of Indian society and its scale of values. Iqbal, the superficial rationalist, is confronted with the odd realities of the Indian situation, which baffle him and expose his anaemic socialism. The central quality of Iqbal is that he does not belong anywhere and, what is worse, he pathetically desires to contribute to the mass upsurge of India's rural communities. He is indeed a *trishanku*, a being without fixity, dangling in vacuum, incapable of belonging anywhere.

The situation preceding Iqbal's arrival at Mano Majra reveals his character. He had boarded the train for Mano Majra which was overcrowded by a large number of Muslims who were migrating to Pakistan. The description of the overcrowding gives the train an individualistic quality and the distinguishing mark: "There were dozens outside perched precariously on footboards, holding onto the door handles. There were several people on the roof. The heat and smell were oppressive. Tempers were frayed..."(38-39)

In this extremely uncongenial and pathetic situation Iqbal "had tried to read in dim light". Muslim refugees had asked him many personal questions, obviously thinking that he was a Muslim. Circumstances had conspired to keep his name, and also his faith, ambivalent and vague. He made no effort to clarify his real position and quietly acquiesced in the situation primarily because he was by nature a *trishanku*.

It was partly due to this lack of belonging that Iqbal could not understand Meet Singh's passionate denunciation of Juggat Singh not did he realise the peculiarities of the Sikh priest's scale of values" "Robbing a fellow village is like stealing from one's own mother. Iqbal Singhji, this a Kalyug - -the dark age". Iqbal could not understand how friendship and loyalty to one's fellow villagers were more significant virtues, which would make man a *nar-admi* (he-man), than the truth or righteousness which are pure moral values. He found the Punjabi's code of conduct even more baffling because it stressed the sanctity of ends over the purity of means. Indulgence in immoral practices could be overlooked if it was motivated by the altruistic desire to help and protect a friend. Meet Singh was not overly horrified by the ugly fact that Juggat Singh was a professional robber or dacoit, but he was shocked by his alleged action of murdering a fellow villager. Fellowship was more important than blind allegiance to an abstract moral code:

What bothered Meet Singh, a priest, was not that Jugga had committed murder but that his hands were soiled with the blood of a fellow villager. If Jugga had done the same thing in the neighbouring village, Meet Singh would have gladly have appeared in his defence and sworn on the holy *Granth* that Jugga had been praying in the gurudwara at the time of the murder (41).

Iqbal was not deceived by Meet Singh's pragmatic approach and empirical reasoning. On the other hand, he argued that "criminals are not born. They are made by

hunger, want and injustice”. Meet Singh was not impressed by Iqbal’s Socialist doctrine or by his stress on the environmental factor in moulding human character. To Meet Singh, Hukum Chand was a *nar-admi* because he helped his friends unreservedly, even going so far to contravene legal and moral codes.

Iqbal attempted to project his Western ideas and Socialist notions on the Mano Majra situation only to realise that “he did not belong”. His food habits, his way of life, and his mode of thinking and feeling were at great variance with those of the Mano Majrans. He was appalled by the insistent, though cordial, hospitality of the *Lambardar*, who bringing him a large tumbler of hot, creamy milk, dipped his fingers into it. Even the first short walk that Iqbal took outside the temple was revealing; he was confronted by the sight of the Officers’ rest house and of the railroad tracks, elements of the physical world which were soon to overtake him and subdue his rebellious notions and plans.

Iqbal was sternly anti-British because he reacted violently to the British colonial and imperial power in India and elsewhere. He was therefore appalled by the crude, matter-of-fact attitudes of Banta Singh, the *Lambardar*, Meet Singh, and Imam Baksh to the role of the British power in India. These villagers expressed the view that the British power was better than its Indian successor government because it at least had afforded security and stability. To Iqbal’s string anti-imperialistic mind, this was sheer blasphemy. He declared that the British, though “nice” as human beings, were politically the world’s biggest “four-twenties” (cheats). Iqbal’s anti-imperialistic stance

did not mean much with the rustics since they could not be easily distracted by abstract ideological notions. This gulf between him and the Mano Majrans caused in Iqbal a greater degree of alienation. Events moved fast, and the next day Iqbal was arrested.

Iqbal's arrest, effected through incompetence, excellently exposes the facile working of the police force in the Punjab. The head constable committed a grave mistake: his immediate superior, the sub-inspector, tried to cover it up by falsely alleging that Iqbal was a Muslim, a Leaguer and therefore a suspect; Hukum Chand, the higher authority, quietly acquiesced, though as subsequent events indicate very clearly, he was aware of the falsity of the charges.

Singh's mode of narrating the event of Iqbal's arrest is absolutely traditional: he is the omniscient narrator who seems to have been almost present in the *Gurudwara*, the Sikh temple, where Iqbal was arrested. The scene of Iqbal's being taken into custody is described in a natural-dramatic-ironic style; elements of the story or sequence of events are combined with those of the plot, the intellectual content and treatment of the novel.

The irony implicit in the scene is well depicted by Iqbal's pompous pretensions to patriotism and also in the police constable's action in holding a yellow piece of printed paper before Iqbal. The policeman asked his name first, then filled out the blanks, and then prepared the warrant for arrest. Iqbal, though a Socialist, had valued personal freedom and dignity, and his cherished values were sharply outraged by a piece of yellow paper. Hukum Chand had obviously signed blank warrants of arrest for the use

of his policemen. The situation, in a small way, is reminiscent of the notorious practices of the unscrupulous French aristocracy in the time prior to the French Revolution, which Dickens dramatised in the moving events of Alexander Mannetter's arrest at the behest of M.Evermonde in *A Tale of Two Cities*. *Train to Pakistan*, though a tale of the birth of two nations in the Indian subcontinent, is very different in texture and structure, point of view and value judgements from Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities*; yet the signing of blank warrants offers a restricted parallel in as much as it presents in concrete terms the utter arbitrariness and unscrupulousness of the administration of law and justice.



The irony is directed not merely at the external world but also at the inner world - Iqbal's self. He dreamed of jail as though it were a better place than the world" a peaceful abode unlike the outer world torn with strife and violence. Jail life for him seemed to be an object of romance and joy because he believed it to be a step toward success of a dream world of poser and popularity. His concern with self showed his anxiety and eagerness for assuming the role of a leader. "he lacked the qualifications. He had not fasted. He had never been in jail. He had made none of the necessary 'Sacrifices'. So, naturally, nobody would listen to him. He should have started his political career by finding an excuse to court imprisonment. But there was still time."

(50)

Thus, his resorting to imprisonment was merely a means to an end, an extension of his acquisitive and domineering self. It is ironic that his dream, which was to escape from Mano Majra, could be a means of getting back to the real world, where ambition is

folly. His dream is an odd paradox because it is not a gateway to the unfathomable unconscious; rather it is door which will open on a real, bizarre world. The dream may thus lead to an eventual experience of the real.

The mode of effecting the arrest of Iqbal has a melodramatic tinge. His political bravado and conceited nature are brought into full play in this process. First he was shaken rudely by the policemen; but his aggressive, curt reaction put them off, and they were overawed by his superior posture. He was handcuffed and marched off from the *Gurudwara* to the Officer's rest house across the river. Iqbal believed that the march would be heroic, but the mild surprise and cold indifference of the villagers disappointed him, and his ego was considerably deflated.

The principle of contrast, which is an essential feature of Singh's scene-making art, is again shown in the way Iqbal was held and the manner in which Jugga was arrested. Whereas Iqbal was eager to be fettered and jailed, Juggat Singh, owing to his earlier experience, had no such foolish, romantic notions. Their arrests took place almost simultaneously, but in very different ways, Jugga was a strong, hefty man, and arresting him was not easy since he had to be physically overpowered. The police managed to do this while Jugga was fast asleep, and he woke up and sensed the new situation with "philosophic detachment". "See how he sleeps like a pig without a care in the world", said one of the policeman.

Since Jugga had no part in the crime of Ram Lal's murder, his conscience was clear. His mother, who was shaken by the arrest, produced a packet of broken bangles which had been thrown by Malli soon after the dacoity. The police did not accept the broken bangles as evidence of Jugga's innocence, nor did Jugga reveal to them the place he had gone to or the person whom he had met. He left home "without showing a trace of emotion for his mother" He also recovered his temper because "he had no malice or ill will toward the policemen". His way of walking was characteristic; he had "a devil-may-care jauntiness in his step". Khushwant Singh brings on the sheer ludicrousness of the situation with a sense of humour which seems almost a psychic release:

Iqbal and the two constables joined Juggat Singh's party by the river. They all proceeded upstream towards the bridge. The head-constable walked in front. Armed policemen marched on the sides and at the rear of the prisoners. Iqbal was lost in the khaki and red of their uniforms. Juggat Singh's head and shoulders showed above the turbans of the policemen. It was like a procession of horses with an elephant in their midst - - taller, broader, slower, with his chains clanking like ceremonial trappings (58).

This scene is quite a contrast to the nerve-wracking event when Iqbal is stripped naked by the police sub-inspector to see whether he had been circumcised and hence a Muslim. Earlier, Iqbal had been greatly shaken by the knowledge that he had been arrested as a suspect in a criminal offence and not for his heroic part in creating political awakening and unrest. The sub-inspector was painfully surprised to see Iqbal jailed by the head-constable, but the mistake had to be acknowledged. The constable was

The sharp difference between the treatment meted out to Iqbal and the behaviour towards Juggat Singh amply indicates the class divisions in Indian society between the rich and the poor, the educated and the uneducated, the Westernised, the townsman and the villager. Though age-old caste barriers are crumbling in many ways, they tend to reappear, with subtle variations, in new forms as indefinable distinctions which seem to be primarily social and cultural in a fast-changing society supposedly moving towards the utopian ideal of a classless society. The police sub-inspector's treatment of Jugga and Iqbal substantiate these age-old attitudes to class. In a society peopled by Hukum Chands and Haseenas, Iqbals and Juggas class distinctions and caste divisions are almost as inevitable as weeds in marshy lands. Khushwant Singh realises that the concept of a classless society is more a nebulous ideal than a tangible reality

*Kalyug*, or the age of strife, implies the inversion of humanist values and their suppression by forces of destruction, disruption, division and negation. The view of the world marked by order and harmony gives in to a world-view characterised by conflict and disorder. Singh, while portraying this inverted world, skilfully suggests that “the time is out of joint”(Hamlet, Act I, Sc. V, 189) and that in Mano Majra the “trains became less punctual than ever”; the alarm clock seemed “set for the wrong hour”; even “children did not know when to be hungry”. *Kalyug* projected itself on Mano Majra, creating chaos and nightmarish atmosphere. The freight train ceased running because there was no lullaby: “Instead, ghost trains went past at odd hours between midnight and dawn, disturbing the dreams of Mano Majra”.

In this nightmarish world a strange train arrived from Pakistan which had a “ghostly quality”. Its arrival was followed by secretive and ominous activities of the police and the Sikh soldiers. The villagers became anxious over the arrival of the ghostly train. Banta Singh, the *Lambardar*, Imam Baksh, the Muslim Mullah, Meet Singh, the Sikh priest and other villagers conferred among themselves but could find no clue to the train. They met in the *Gurudwara* only to exchange expressions of despair and regret. Later they were called upon to carry wood and kerosene to the station. Imam Baksh faithfully carried his contribution and greeted the Sikh officer: “Salaam, Sardar Sahib.” The Sikh officer looked away, insulted Imam Baksh publicly, and Banta Singh expressed his agony to the villagers: “And didn’t you see how that pig’s penis spoke to Chacha? One’s self-respect is in one’s hand.”(83) This was the foreboding of the conflict. The events of the day were climaxed in the large number of the dead being destroyed by fire near the station. The train had carried about fifteen hundred corpses, and when “red tongues of flame leaped into the black sky”, everyone knew the horrible reality of the massacre. This was how the *Kalyug* struck its gong in Mano Majra, spreading darkness over the land. Man did not raise his hands in prayer to God: “ 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.”

The sight of the dead in the ghost train deeply affected even the sun-dried bureaucrat, Hukum Chand, and made him aware of the horror of death. His inward eye re-created the scenes which he had seen in the train: There was a man holdings his intestines, with an expression in his eyes which said: “Look what I have got!”

Lavatories were filled with corpses. An old peasant with a long white beard “did not look dead at all.”(85) His hand “stretched itself grotesquely and gripped the magistrate’s right foot” and then “its grip loosened.” Hukum Chand was completely shattered by the feeling of horror and “broke out of the nightmare with an agonised shriek.”

Khushwant Singh’s portrayal of the horror of the ghostly train and its effect on Hukum Chand recalls the nightmarish descriptions of the novels of war in Evelyn Waugh (*Decline and Fall*, 1928; *Men at Arms*, 1952) and Norman Mailer (*The Naked and the Dead*, 1928). British and American novelists depicted war as a special hell - - particularly the 1914-18 war - - and the soldier’s nightmarish experiences on the battlefield. In Mailer’s *The Naked and the Dead* a group of American soldiers, in their Pacific Campaign, land as an advanced patrol on a Japanese-occupied island named Anopopei. We get a feel of the hot, damp, smell of the jungles and the sweat of the soldiers. Here Hukum Chand, while he saw the train, was overcome by “the nauseating smell of the jungles and the sweat of the soldiers.” The stench of the war and the bad odour of inhuman killings are the same because war is a collective murder-suicide. Singh’s depiction of the fratricidal conflict in the Indian subcontinent makes us recall Norman Mailer’s trenchant portrayal of the war in *The Naked and the Dead*.

Hukum Chand shrieked with horror, which shocked his servants; but slowly recovered his composure and became very tender in his responses to Haseena. The change in his attitude to Haseena, from considering her as a teen-aged prostitute to viewing her merely as an inexperienced child, who reminded him of his deceased

daughter, is tenderly portrayed. Hukum Chand “stroked her thighs and belly and played with her little unformed breasts;” yet in the end he “snuggled against her like a child and fell asleep.”(TTP, 90) Haseena, a teen-ager, was quite lively and had a child like sense of humour. Hukum Chand asked her whether she was Muslim. She replied, “Yes, I am Muslim. What else could Haseena Begum be? A bearded Sikh?” Then she related to him the funny incident (40) of the party of *hijras* (hermaphrodites) who beat their drums and sang to convey the idea that they were neither Hindus nor Muslims, but a peculiar lot by themselves. Haseena got over her nervousness, sat in Hukum Chand’s lap and put the buttered toast in his mouth. Hukum Chand’s latent feeling of affection was invoked by this action, and, recalling his deceased daughter’s face, he began to stroke her hair with “a vague sense of fulfilment.” He asked her to be careful in those disturbed days, and, she, acknowledging his paternal care, said that no one could harm a hair on her head as long as the powerful magistrate gave her his protection. Hukum Chand was overwhelmed by these expressions of affection and could not say anything: “Words would not come out of his mouth.” Later he said gallantly to her: “I am ready down my life for you.”

Hukum Chand’s spontaneous, tender expression of feeling for Haseena impelled him to manipulate a situation which would make it possible for Mano Majra Muslims to migrate to Pakistan in peace and with honour. His confabulations with the sub-inspector resulted in the release of Malli and his men from the police, though the police knew that they were guilty and also that Iqbal and Jugga had no part in Ram Lal’s murder.

Meanwhile, Juggat Singh attempted to be friendly towards Iqbal by pressing the latter's feet as a mark of devoted service. Juggat was an extrovert and freely confessed his abnormal and immoral deeds and practices to Iqbal. Jugga's visits to prostitutes and his religiosity indicate his dual nature. His attempts to learn a few expressions in English are odd and superficial, but his involvement with Nooran is deep, and he almost confesses that it was this emotional response that brought him to the jail, since he could not tell the police where he had been on the fateful night of the dacoity.

It was this deep feeling for Nooran that provoked his outburst against Malli and also his most violent attack on his person. Malli on his way to the prison deliberately provoked Jugga by expressions of "mock friendliness." He asked, "why can't we say 'Sat Sri Akal' to our old friend? Sat Sri Akal, Sardar Juggat Singhji. Is there any message we can convey for you? A love message maybe? To the weaver's daughter?"(115) Jugga was shocked by this provocation, and he yelled like a tiger and, gripping Malli by the hair, shook him "as a terrier shakes a piece of rag from side to side, forward and backward..." Malli began to bleed and Jugga spat in his face until the sub-inspector brought their brawl to an end.

Malli is conceived as a foil to Jugga, though he is ignoble, violent, immoral and mean. The significance of *Kalyug* partly lies in the fact that Malli, the real culprit in Ram Lal's murder, was freed, whereas Jugga and Iqbal, innocent, remained behind bars. The dacoity in the first part is symbol of violence; the second part, "*Kalyug*" ends

on a note of violence. In the first section, Malli got away with his violent deed; in the fourth section, he is himself justifiably subjected to violence and is momentarily subjugated.

The symbolism of rain is a significant aspect of the atmosphere in *Train to Pakistan*. Singh accurately portrays the seasonal cycle of rain in India - - summer rain and winter rain. The summer monsoon brings out the most pleasant fragrance from the earth, which, scorched in the severe sun for months, is bathed in divine waters and blossoms as a thing of beauty. But before this final phase of joy and fulfilment there is a period of false hopes for man: it is the dust storm which brings down the severe summer heat though it does not bring showers. The first heavy rain after the severe summer is extraordinarily joyous but is followed by thunder and lightning; and as the season advances, towns and villages on the riverbank are swallowed by the river's swelling waters. The rain, which is the principle source of life in nature and civilisation, also causes death and destruction: "With the monsoon, the tempo of life and death increases."(93)

The rain is thus an ambivalent symbol pitch-forked between conflicting forces of life and death, of creation and destruction, of good and evil. The year 1947, the time of India's partition was marked by a late monsoon and a scanty rainfall. Hukum Chand saw raindrops falling in a gentle patter: "At long last, the rain." Though it was late, it was welcome. The ambivalent quality of the rain is revealed in this description: "It

smelled good, it sounded good, it looked good - - and above all, it did good. Ah, but did it? ...”

Did the rain do any good to the sad earth or to the suffering humanity? A thousand charred corpses sizzled and smoked and the rain put out the fire and the smoke. Thus, in effect, the rain washed away the sins of man and his destructive deeds so that he could create a new life and a new world out of the ashes of the old. The *Kalyug* had claimed human and animal life and humanist values, but there was still hope, all was not lost.

The arrival of the train loaded with corpses is a moving symbol of *Kalyug*. It creates a conflict and division in Mano Majra. Mano Majra was a small rural world where Sikhs and Muslims had lived together in peace for generations, but that small world had become invaded by the larger world of India-Pakistan or Sikh-Muslim conflict. The symbol of this invasion was a train carrying the dead from Pakistan to India. The machine had taken hold of man and had succeeded in dehumanising him. Under the impact of *Kalyug*, men cut the throats of their fellow men, and the swollen rivers carried the corpses and carcasses, the tangible victims of man's self-destruction.

The head-constable, who was a blind instrument of *Kali*, had arrived and “divided Mano Majra into two halves as neatly as a knife cuts through a pat of butter.” (120) He deliberately created in the minds of the villagers about Iqbal and Sultana and ignored Meet Singh, who unsuccessfully emphasised that Iqbal was a shaven Sikh. The

fifty Sikh refugees who came to Mano Majra created a new problem for the local Muslims. The atmosphere was thick with stories of atrocities, real and imaginary, in Pakistan; Muslims and Sikhs became mutually suspicious: "Quite suddenly every Sikh in Mano Majra became a stranger with an evil intent." The Sikhs, reviving past incidents of Muslim oppression, began to distrust Muslims. They were angry and agitated since "logic was never a strong point with Sikhs; when they were roused, logic did not matter at all." (120) In this emotionally surcharged situation, created by distrust and fear, the meeting between Sikh villagers and their Muslim fellowmen is exceptionally well portrayed. In this moving drama, forces of union and love alternate with forces of division and hate. Meet Singh was provoked by the remarks by the educated Sikh and asserted that Mano Majra Muslims were innocent and not responsible for massacres which took place elsewhere. Imam Baksh and his co-religionist joined the group of Sikh villagers, and they talked animatedly about their problem. Imam Baksh: "Well, brothers, what is your decision about us?" The *Lambardar* replied: "This is your village as much as ours." The others reiterated their fraternal approach: "we die first and then you can look after yourselves... we first, then you..."

Imam Baksh was overwhelmed their spontaneous expression of affection and fellow feeling and "wiped a tear from his eyes." He said, "What have we to do with Pakistan? We were born here. So were our ancestors. We have lived amongst you as brothers." Then he broke down, and Meet Singh embraced him and began to sob. *Imam* means a religious and pious person and *Meet* means an affectionate friend, so that these

names have an allegorical significance in the context of the tragic conflict in **Train to Pakistan**. The name “Iqbal” means “fortune”, “compromise” or “agreement” and Iqbal Singh’s role in the novel signifies these implications of action and thought.

The rigid realities of life break into the ideal world of mutual friendships and loyalties, and the Muslims decide to leave for the Chandannagar camp for safety. The Sikhs also agree that this was the best possible course of action in the circumstances. They realised that this was the way of the world. After all, the *bulbul* does not sing always, nor does the spring last forever.

While the Muslims were preparing to leave their homes, Nooran who was with Jugga’s child, visited his mother and said that had promised to marry her. The mother was taken aback by this revelation: “Go to Pakistan! Leave my Jugga alone.” Nooran knelt, clasped the old woman’s legs, and, began to cry: “when Jugga comes back just to tell him I came to say ‘Sat Sri Akal’ ”. The mother assured her that Jugga would bring her back to his home, and Nooran felt “as if she belonged to the home and the home to her.” She went home and packed her few belongings carrying with her, symbolically, “the piece of broken mirror in her hand.” The broken mirror symbolised her fate as well as the future of Jugga’s life.

Against the setting of personal relations, the scene of the evacuation of Muslims from Mano Majra to Pakistan in trucks brought by Pakistani soldiers symbolises the working of the dominant, compelling, dehumanising process. The Muslim officer

declared: "I will give you ten minutes to settle your affairs. Then the convoy will move." Men were treated like chattels. The small world of personal relations is overcome by the objective, impersonal, cruel world of external forces. The outer life supersedes the inner life. The Sikh and Muslim villagers who were so deeply attached to each other could not even say good-bye. Pathan soldiers rounded up the Muslims, drove them into carts, and then took them away in trucks; the evacuation symbolised the blind forces of history and the wheels of destiny.

The irony of fate was revealed in Malli becoming custodian of the property of Muslim evacuees. His gang "unyoked the bullocks, looted the carts, and drove the cows and buffaloes away." The process of dacoity thus came full circle in an organised way, and the full impact of *Kalyug* was felt in the hearts of men.

The last part, "*Karma*", is a kind of a crescendo of the waves of action and feelings that rise and fall in the disturbed world of *Train to Pakistan*. *Karma* is action, consequent upon fate or upon the record of previous birth, and its ramifications are delicately portrayed. *Karma* takes hold of man, but man too, by virtue of his free will, fights against his destiny and tries to reclaim his lost soul.

The Sutlej river swelled to great proportions, and the *Lambardar* and other villagers went out to watch it. They saw a "black oval object" which "looked like a big drum" but it was, in fact, the dead body of a cow with bloated belly. Jackals howled plaintively, and the men shuddered with fear. They saw Sutlej water carrying bloated

carcasses of bulls, horses, and dead bodies of children; then came the revelation that “they were not drowned, they were murdered.” Near the station the soldiers carried the dead on canvas stretchers, and the bulldozer was at work for the whole day burying the dead and flattening the ground.

This was a world of the naked and the dead. The dead were being deposited into the earth by the bulldozer: the machine which overwhelmed and controlled man. All humanist values were shattered, the bulldozer becoming the symbol of the forces oppressing humanity. Into this world of the naked dropped a few strangers, who were Hindu reactionaries, and their leader, who “had an aggressive bossy manner.” This leader, who looked like an American cowboy, was rather effeminate, and strangely enough, called for revenge. He wanted the Sikhs to retaliate on Muslims for what was happening in Pakistan. Meet Singh argued in vain that it was a sin to kill innocent people and that the Muslims of Mano Majra could not be made scapegoats for the crimes of the people in Pakistan. The leader spoke to the villagers in the *Gurudwara* about the train which was scheduled to carry Muslim refugees to Pakistan: “Tomorrow a trainload of Muslims is to cross the bridge to Pakistan. If you are men, this train should carry as many people dead to the other side as you have received.” The leader outlined his plan to blow up the train on the bridge and asked for volunteers. Quite ironically, Malli, entering the *Gurudwara*, volunteered for this gruesome act. The boy wanted all those present to pray since Meet Singh did not wish to lead the prayers. The words of the prayer had an element of irony:

In the name of Nanak,  
 By the hope that faith doth instil,  
 By the Grace of God,  
 We bear the world nothing but good will.(152)

The leader, who spreads a map on the bed to explain his strategy of blowing up the trainload of innocent Muslim refugees, claims ironically that he bears nothing but goodwill for all men. He then reveals his diabolic scheme that the following day they would stretch “a rope across the first span of the bridge” and that when the train passes under it, the people sitting on the roof would be swept off. He asks the volunteers to be ready with their swords to kill the passengers on the train.

Hukum Chand, the sober bureaucrat, was shaken by the sight of the corpses. He was almost dazed for a time by the violent expression of the madness of groups of men. He was so physically and mentally exhausted that he appeared to age rather suddenly. The sub-inspector told him of the evacuation of Muslims at Chandannagar, but Hukum Chand was not himself and could not grasp what the inspector intended to convey. Later he asked: “You mean to tell me there is not one Muslim family left in Chandannagar?” “No, Sir, not one,” was the reply.

Then he was told that all the Chandannagar Muslim refugees were being taken by train to Pakistan that night but they would be afraid because people feared an attack on the train. Hukum Chand discussed in vain the possibility of postponing their departure

and then his fertile brain, it seemed, conceived a plan. He asked the inspector the names of the two prisoners, Jugga and Iqbal and at this point revealed the fact that he had known all along that Iqbal was not a Muslim: “Do you think any party would be foolish as to send a Muslim to preach peace to Sikh peasants thirsting for Muslim blood, Inspector Sahib? Where is your imagination?”(159) He ordered the immediate release of Jugga and Iqbal and wanted them to be released in Mano Majra before the evening.

The sub-inspector carried out the orders at once by releasing both Iqbal and Jugga, purposefully informing Jugga that all Mano Majra Muslims were to be evacuated to Pakistan by train that night. They were also told of Malli’s misdeeds in looting and killing Muslims. Iqbal and Jugga got into a *tonga* (horse carriage) on their way to Mano Majra. On the way, Iqbal dreamed of being a hero consequent of his being in jail. Jugga’s main concern was the fate of Nooran and her welfare. He jumped off the moving *tonga* and disappeared in the darkness.

Iqbal met Meet Singh at the *Gurudwara* and learned of the diabolic plan to attack the refugee train. He asked Meet Singh to “do something” to stop the dark deeds. Meet Singh said he could only pray to God; others, including Iqbal, could do something to stem the rot. “Me? Why Me?” asked Iqbal with a startled innocence, “what have I to do with it” I do not know these people. Why should they listen to a stranger?”(168)

Iqbal was involved in the dilemma of the self. He had no moorings, and he felt incapable of positive action. He was not able to take any positive action because he was

so overcome by chaos within and without. He could not face violence and believed that self-preservation was the best policy in times of disorder. He realised that India had many drawbacks, but he was unable to escape from or to overcome them. He drowned his doubts and nervousness in whisky. He seemed to face the agnostic's dilemma and was therefore unable to find either a code of God or of man to guide his conduct. He appeared indifferent to all values; nothing seemed to matter for him. He was a looker-on of the game of human affairs, a dreamer, an agnostic groping in the dark unaware of his identity.

Jugga's arrival at a late hour at the *Gurudwara* to seek the blessings of the Guru underscores the duality in his character. He asked Meet Singh: "I want the Guru's word. Will you read me a verse?" Complying with his wishes, Meet Singh read the prayer that God, the Giver of Truth, honours the work of men who want to perform good actions. In the rest house, Hukum Chand thought of Jugga as a "notorious daredevil" and his mind went back to Haseena and lingered on the hope that she would be hale and hearty and safe.

The ways of feelings and expectations in the minds of Jugga, Hukum Chand, and Iqbal rise to a crescendo in the final climactic scene in *Train to Pakistan*. The moon rose a little after eleven in the night, and the large eyes of the signals shone brightly in the darkness. A jeep arrived, and the men dispersed in the neighbourhood of the railroad bridge. The strangers whispered among themselves since they were keen on implementing their diabolic design. The leader guided and watched the operation. A

man appeared running on the rails and the leader shouted: "Come back, you fool!" At long last, the much-awaited train was on its way to the bridge. Meanwhile, a man climbing the steel span of the bridge tugged at the rope. He stretched himself on the rope near the point of the knot. The train was quickly approaching the bridge and its roof was occupied by men. The leader shouted at the man who was clinging to the rope, "Come off, you ass! You will be killed. Come off at once!" But the man began to slash at the rope with a small *kirpan* (a sharp dagger) and went on hacking it powerfully. The leader, in sheer desperation, fired at him and the man's leg was hurt and it began to dangle in the air. But he was still at work hacking the rope and the train seemed very close to the spot. Another shot was fired but the man clung to the rope and continued to attack it until it was cut in shreds. He finally cut the tough strand with his knife and teeth and the engine was almost on him. His body was subject to a volley of shots and he collapsed and fell, but the rope was at last cut in the centre. "The train went over him, and went on to Pakistan."(181)

The form of the plot of *Train to Pakistan* is, to borrow a term from Norman Friedman, in part "pathetic" and in part "punitive". In the "Pathetic plot" a sympathetic protagonist is shown undergoing misfortune through no particular failing of his own. The protagonist has a weak will and a naivete of thought. His lot of suffering and misfortune makes him a pathetic being. Jugga's will, of course, is not weak, but his thinking is naïve, and he suffers quietly and heroically. It is through suffering and sacrifice that his lost soul is reclaimed, and in this context he seems to be a character emerging from, and growing in, the area of the "pathetic" plot. He also seems to be part

of the “punitive” plot because he is a hero-villain, with an apparent affinity with the hero-villians of Elizabethan and Jacobean drama - - with many inevitable deviations. The reader’s responses to Jugga, as to these hero-villains, are curiously mixed and compounded of admiration and indignation, love and hate, sympathy and apathy, fondness and dislike. Whereas the hero-villains of Elizabethan drama succeed in victimising truly good people and thus create a sense of horror, Jugga, who is surely a different type of a hero-villain, rehabilitates himself in our eyes by his supreme self-sacrifice. Although he is compounded of good and evil, he ultimately becomes a power for good. He is neither satanic nor Machiavellian in the Elizabethan sense; he is truly an uncouth Indian rustic, who, caught in the quicksands of evil, successfully struggles out of it and reaches the shores of spiritual reclamation.

Another interesting aspect of **Train to Pakistan** seems to revolve round the idea of Hindu trinity. The Hindu triad, or the *Trimurti*, is composed of Brahma the creator, Vishnu the preserver, and Shiva the destroyer. Brahma is also the supreme God of post-Vedic Hindu mythology, and in later pantheistic systems he is the Divine Reality, of which the whole universe of matter and mind is only an external manifestation. The symbolic interpretation of the roles of the three main characters in **Train to Pakistan** seems to follow this three-dimensional philosophical postulate of the Hindu triad. Hukum Chand, the humanistic bureaucrat, is the preserver, whereas Iqbal Singh, the Communist, is the destroyer. Juggat Singh plays a dual creator and destroyer. He destroys only to create again and thus symbolises the triumph of good over evil within himself as well as the concept of renewal. His soul like that of the phoenix, rises from its

ashes only to proclaim that at least his 'Train to Pakistan' is a symbol of hope and light in the cruel world of darkness and despair.

Although Juggat Singh occupies a very central position in *Train to Pakistan*, he cannot be called the true hero of the novel. Mano Majra is the real protagonist in *Train to Pakistan*, and neither Jugga nor Hukum Chand nor Iqbal has a fully dominant role which may be described as the hero's imperial sway over the created world. The individual is important in Khushwant Singh's created cosmos, but not obtrusively, because he is part of a vaster and greater reality of man and nature. In effect, the fate of the individual is so closely linked with what is in store for his community and his religion that the conclusion is inevitable: the collective destiny of groups and communities dominates the individual's fate. Man has his own self and his own free will, but at least for a time, he becomes part of the train and is overrun by it.

A significant aspect of Singh's realistic art, which has been commented upon elsewhere, needs to be emphasised with respect to *Train to Pakistan*. The quality of realism in *Train to Pakistan* is very different from the general characteristics of nineteenth-century realism of the French novel as reflected in the works of Gustave Flaubert and Emile Zola. Realism as a doctrine was fully crystallised in France by 1858, when Taine's well-known essay on Balzac, "Honore de Balzac; vie et caractere; l'esprit; le monde; grands personnages; philosophie." (in *Balzac: A Critical Study*) appeared. Zola strengthened the realistic tradition by his adherence to the naturalistic mode. "He virtually established naturalism", writes Harry Levin, "as an official doctrine of the

Third Republic, a hardening orthodoxy from which the divergent movements of the twentieth century still take their departure.”(Realism in Perspective, 109) The photographic and accurate representation of reality which characterises naturalism is far removed from the qualities of the created world in *Train to Pakistan*. Whereas Khushwant Singh exhibits a genuine faith in the humanistic ideal, in depicting a real Jugga laying down his life for the woman he loves, naturalists seemed to be content to portray merely the sordid actualities of life. It is Khushwant Singh’s deep and ethical humanism that governs his portrayal of the real and the actual. *Train to Pakistan*, therefore, is no mere realistic tract, nor is it a bare record of actual events. On the contrary, it is a creative rendering of the real, and it reaffirms the novelist’s faith in man and renews artistically his avowed allegiance to the humanistic ideal.

## **Chapter 3**

**The Partition and Manohar Malgaonkar**

## Chapter III

### The Partition and Manohar Malgaonkar

Manohar Malgaonkar's *A Bend in the Ganges* concentrates upon the painful drama of the partition comprehensively and suggestively. It shows convincingly how the 'terrorist movement' - - a symbol of national solidarity - - designed to oust the British from the Indian soil, degenerated into communal hatred and violence, and how the emphasis from the struggle between Indian nationalism and British colonialism shifted unfortunately to the furious and malicious communal hatred between the Hindus and the Muslims, throwing into shade the basic Indian fight for freedom from the British rule. The double conflict led to freedom and the division of the country, but before it happened, a hell was let loose in many provinces of the nation.

The novel depicts powerfully the horrible developments resulting in the partition, the triumph and tragedy of the hour of freedom, the screams of the victims renting the morning air, the dawn of freedom greeting the sub-continent in the pools of blood, the barbarous cruelties heaped on men and women, catcalls of the crowd and innumerable women being carried away naked, struggling and screaming at the top of their voice. The Muslim fears of being ruled by the Hindus in the absence of the British rule in the country where they had been rulers, their notion that Hindus were more dangerous than the foreigners and ought to be their real target and their subsequent striking at

them, their struggle for a safe homeland from India leading to the partition, and the terror and pity of it - - all these form the content of the novel.

The novel opens with the ceremonial burning of British garments. The cries of “Boycott British goods”, “Bharat Mata Ki Jai” gave expression to the fire of freedom that was burning in the heart of the Indian masses. The ceremonial fire that raged in the market square was “just one of hundreds of thousand fires similar all over the country”(7). Gandhiji himself appeared on the dais. He did not speak, it being Monday - - his day of silence. Gian, a young student from the college, felt overwhelmed at the sight of the apostle of truth and non-violence. He was swayed away by the conviction that non-violence was not for the weak, that “ ‘the path of *ahimsa* is not for cowards’...”(9). He threw away his blazer - - his most elegant garment made of imported English material - - into the fire, and thus showed the zeal of a nationalist.

Gian, a student from Konshet with limited means, surprisingly received an invitation for a picnic on the sands of the old riverbed at Birchibagh from one of the important boys at the college, Debi-dayal, the only son of Dewan-bahadur Tekchand Kerwad, a member of the elite of the town. He reached Kerwad House at the appointed hour, and was fascinated by Debi’s sister. In the absence of Debi’s father, Gian showed a desire to see the museum - - a prize collection of bronzes. Sundari took Gian to the museum. Gian had a strange feeling there. For a moment he became “the statue, lifeless, age-less, unbreathing.”(14) As the spell broke, Gian found Sundari holding him by both the shoulders and her eyes staring with alarm. His announcement of becoming a

follower of Gandhi was subjected to sharp criticism. Strangely, he was in the company of the terrorists headed by Singh – viz., Shafi Usman in disguise.

The revolutionaries criticised Gian for being a follower of Gandhi, but Gian took pride in having come under the influence of that hypnotic power because he fervently believed that only Gandhi could lead India to victory. Singh's agitated invitation to name any country that had shaken off foreign rule without resorting to war perturbed Gian but he declared in a sudden defiance that Gandhiji was a God. Singh cited the examples of America, Turkey and Shivaji, and affirmed:

“... Freedom has to won; it has to won by sacrifice; by giving blood, not by giving up the good things of life and wearing white caps and going to jail. Look up at America – the United States! They went to war. Turkey. Even our own Shivaji. Non-violence is the philosophy of sheep, a creed of cowards. It is the greatest danger to this country.” (18)

The picnic threw enough light on the two distinct ways in India's fight for freedom: the one of non-violence hated and rejected by the terrorist; and the other of revolution dreaded by Gandhi and his followers. As the events clearly showed, it needed superhuman discipline to follow the path of non-violence. Gian Talwar, who announced to follow *ahimsa* even in the face of the strongest provocation, very soon took to violence showing the hollowness of his defiant statements. Shafi Usman, in the disguise of a Sikh talked of fight against the British, but very soon this fight changed its

target - - his own Hindu associates and the Hindus in general became the object of his attack. The fervent advocate of shaking of foreign rule through violent ways degenerated into a narrow-minded communalist siding a particular, community against the other, and eager to have blood bath.

The bloody battle between the two closely related families - - the Big House and the Little House - - has an important bearing on the theme of the novel. Vishnu Dutt was killed by the same Gian, who, a little earlier, had taken pride in proclaiming himself a true disciple of Mahatma Gandhi. The two houses in the small village were in an unwarranted struggle. All this was a pointer to the main acts of horror caused by the partition. "Like a prologue to the main act", as Iyengar aptly observes, "This story of family feud - - suspicion, hatred, vindictiveness, murder - - is to be viewed as the advance rivalry, micro-tragedy foreshadowing the macro-tragedy on a national scale in the year of the partition."(K.R. Srinivas Iyengar, **Indian Writing in English**, 433).

The terrorist movement was very active in Duriabad. It was an integrated group of young men hailing from different communities and province, and all were united in the sacred cause of fight against the British rule. The members of the club were nationalists and fellow terrorists. Shafi Usman, alias Singh, with his battle cry, 'a million shall die', was the leader of the club. His close associate was an outstanding figure, Debi-dayal. All young men despised the foreigners. As Malgonkar states: "Debi hated the British, as they all hated the British; that was what brought them together,

Hindus and Muslims and Sikhs, men of differing religions united in the cause of freedom as blood brothers; the Freedom Fighters.”(BG, 68).

The ‘Ram and Rahim Club’ stressed the need and the survival of the national solidarity to oust the British from the Indian soil in the face of the hot wave of religious fanaticism that swept the country:

They were all fervent patriots, dedicated to the overthrow of British rule in India. Anyone, who represented that rule, British or Indian, was their enemy; anything that represented that rule was their legitimate target. “*Jai-ram!* answered by ‘*Jai-rahim*’ was their secret mode of greeting. The name of Rama sacred to all Hindus, and that of Rahim equally sacred to the Muslims.”(71-72).

The Indian national scene of the time revealed signs of sharp religious differences between the Hindus and the Muslims. But this group under the secular leader, Shafi Usman, remained unimpaired. The terrorist movement “was the last gasp of those who wanted to carry on the struggle united. They were all willing, almost eager, to die for their motherland, and it needed a leader of Shafi’s calibre to keep them from making thoughtless sacrifices.”(72) They knew exactly that the religious differences were the root cause of the country’s slavery, and that the British played upon this weakness and continued to rule India by dividing the Indians into different communally antagonistic groups. All the thirty seven members of the club kept themselves away from the fire of religious differences that burnt in the country: “ They themselves were the elite, having

smashed down the barriers of religion that held other Indians divided; blood brothers in the service of the motherland.”(73)

The Congress and the Muslim League “had come to a final partings of ways, with Hindus and Muslims separated into opposite camps, learning to hate each other with the bitterness of ages.” (81) Hafiz, the erstwhile leader of the terrorist movement was won over by absolute and fanatic Muslim considerations. He now thought only on a particular line. The battle cry against the Hindus came to Duriabad with the cuttings from the *Dawn*, the *Awaz*, the *Sulah* and the *Subah*. He was now a strong advocate of Muslim point of view, a stooge in the hands of the British, playing to their tune of divide and rule. In his secret meeting with Shafi, he very calculatingly tried to impress upon him the popular fear that in the absence of the British rule, the Muslims would have to live as the slaves of the Hindus and their lives, property and religion would be in danger in the face of the overwhelming majority of the Hindus. Jinnah’s conversion into an orthodox Musalman, standing up for the safe land for the Muslims and vomiting hatred for the Hindus was exemplary for the Muslims.

Shafi’s rejection of Hafiz’s outburst in the name of fanaticism prompted the latter to remark: “ ‘Fanatics! We have to turn fanatic in sheer self-defence...’ ”(90) made it clear to Shafi that the Hindus were a danger everywhere. The Muslims were second rate citizens in the Congress-dominated states. The inclusion of one or two Muslims in the government was a big farce. The Muslims were not safe in a Hindu nation, and hence they needed a separate safe state - - their own homeland. Hafiz voiced the general

Muslim view - - the inevitability of the partition of India for the welfare of the Muslims - - when he tried to dispel the feelings of national solidarity from the mind of Shafi Usman in a forceful religious fervour.

‘ ... One or two! Are we to be satisfied with crumbs? We who ruled the whole country? Have we now become dogs? And who are the one or two? Who - - I ask you? Stooges - - their own men. Muslims, who are members of the Congress, renegades. Don't you know that the Congress will not have any one who is not a member? That is what will happen here too. You will find a Congress ministry, a Hindu ministry with a couple of Muslims who are obedient servants of the Congress. Even today, there are Congress administrators in eight of the eleven provinces. What is happening? They will not take any Muslim who will not join them. Jinnah had exposed them: ‘The Hindus have shown that Hindustan is for the Hindus.’ Now we Muslims have to look after ourselves. Organise ourselves before it is too late. Carve out our own country...’ (90)

The statement of Hafiz was a clear reflection of the mentality of the Muslim leaders and of their influence on the orthodox Muslim minds. He fanned hatred and ill will against the Hindus, who, he thought, by their hateful deeds in the provinces where they ruled, had paled Jallianwalla tragedy into insignificance. The Hindus were to be dreaded far more than the British. The Hindu-dominated freedom was undesirable. He averred:

‘... We don’t want freedom if it means our living here as slaves of Hindus. If we succeed in driving out the British, it is the Hindus who will inherit power. Then what happens to us? We are heading for slavery far more degrading. Struggling for it. That’s what Jinnah is worried about. That’s what all of us are worried about.’ (91)

Shafi read the dangers of the Hindu-Muslim rift, knew it to be the mischievous doing of the British, and felt that the only way to free the nation from slavery lay in communal harmony. Rejecting Hafiz’s call for reorienting the organisation for a more sacred and indispensable fight against the Hindus, he remarked: “ ‘But this is just playing into the hands of the British. They want to keep the Hindus and the Muslims divided, so that they can go on ruling. Our only salvation lies in solidarity - -that is the only way to oust the British’.”(91)Hafiz railed at Shafi and wanted him to change the tactics to cope up with the newly cropped up dangers. He gave vent to the Muslim hatred at the time and stated that in the recent Dassera riots in the Congress-ruled state the police actually sided with the Hindus: “I saw policemen shooting down Muslims, picking them out.”(91) Shafi warned that such an action would lead the Hindus to retaliate. This, according to him, was a danger signal for civil war. Hafiz attempted to prepare him whole-heartedly for such a consequence. This, he asserted strongly was inevitable. It was bound to happen in the absence of the British rule. Infusing the bitter communal hatred in Shafi, he said:

‘That is exactly what we have to prepare ourselves for a civil war. We have to think ahead, a year, two years from now, to a time when the British will leave this country, leaving our fate in the hands of the Hindus. Are we to sit back and take whatever indignities they have in store for us? We must hit back ten-fold. It is to that end that we must all work, must all recognise the new enemies: the Hindus.’(92)

Shafi, who had always striven for communal solidarity found it irreconcilable to prepare himself for civil war. He would prefer Gandhi’s movement to a communal organisation. This made Hafiz condemn Gandhi as a hypocrite, concealing violence in the name of non-violence.

The conversion between Hafiz and Shafi is of immense significance in that it reflected the Muslim line of thought before the partition of the country. It voiced the eagerness of a school that worked hard for having a safe land for the Muslims. It expressed Muslim anxiety that they will be ruled by the Hindus in the absence of the British. It showed the conversion of the Muslims, who devoted themselves earlier to communal solidarity, into the fanatics propagating and working for the cause of the Muslims alone. Men like Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and Jinnah, who first worked for national solidarity and then became champions of the Muslims, were clearly ideal Muslims for Hafiz and Shafi Usman. Shafi’s shifting to Muslim considerations alone displayed the peculiar Muslim character that was lamented by Maulana Shibli, the celebrated Professor of Persian at the Aligarh University. It reveals the unfortunate,

mean Muslim mentality of preferring slavery under the Britishers to minority in self-government. Usman studied the situation.

The betrayal of Debi by Shafi was a glaring example of the rift between two communities, Debi was arrested, tried, and sent to the Andamans. The young British police officer suspected the rift in the terrorists when he explained the movement to the captain of the ship sailing to the Andaman Island with Debi on it as a lifer. He said clearly:

‘The terrorist? Oh, yes; they are all over the place... Once they know we’re on to them, they go underground. Take this particular going. We knew they were certainly more than thirty in it. But we, that is the police, seem to have bungled it, rather. They operated from their club, a sort of gymnasium. When our men raided the place, only seven were there. The others had fled it is rather funny; all seven were Hindu; not a single Muhammad in the lot; which makes us think that there was some kind of a rift among them...’(131)

In Debi, the national awareness was supreme. He hated his father and Shafi Usman who had betrayed him and his colleagues. He was keen to take revenge upon Singh showing clear signs of the rift between the two warring foes. Tekchand was also conscious of the Hindu-Muslim rivalry. He knew that the bitterness, existing between the two communities, would never permit them to live in harmony. He was one of those millions who felt that the presence of the British was necessary to keep the nation

quiet and away from the horrors of civil war. However, his fears of the feelings of bitterness among Hindus and Muslims came true. He knew that, "In the chaos that would follow the withdrawal of British authority, Hindus and Muslims would be at each other's throats just as they had always been before the British came and established peace. Men like Churchill were not fools; the alternative to the British quitting India was civil war."(246)

Debi returned to India with the help of the Japanese. The Quit India Movement had by now possessed the whole country by storm and acquired new dimensions. Debi-dayal came to Calcutta and met his old friend, Basu, who had been an active member of the terrorist movement at Duriabad. He was leading a miserable life in quivering poverty in a *bustee* with his mutilated wife and the two unkempt children. Basu, in his hearts, nursed a great desire to take revenge upon Shafi Usman the once solidarity leader, turned violently communist. Debi was keen to see Shafi. He has a score to settle. Basu, too, wanted to see Shafi's face when Debi confronted him.

Basu's attitude explained the great rift between the Hindus and the Muslims. Now the scene had completely and dramatically changed. The terrorists were made to fight among themselves. It was the triumph of the British; their shrewd game of 'divide and rule' bore fruit and succeeded in making the Hindus and Muslims the die-hard enemies of one another. Debi-dayal understood it and lamented this ugly suicidal development he regretted: " 'It is almost as though just when they are on the point of leaving the country, the British have succeeded in what they set out to do. Set the

Hindus and Muslims at each other's throats. What a lovely sight!' "(289) Basu suffered the humiliation of his wife's lovely face mutilated by an electric bulb filled with sulphuric acid. It must have come certainly from the hand of a Muslim: " 'Who else? Who would attack a Hindu house? When a race riot starts, it is the time for settling private scores.' "(289) The electric bulb, filled with the sulphuric acid, was the standard weapon of the Hindu-Muslim riots. The disfiguring of his wife's face was exactly "what has happened to the face of India - - the mutilation of a race conflict." (289)

The communal tension bred distrust. The Muslims stood with Jinnah and worked for the division of the country. The Congress was branded as a Hindu organisation and was hated by the Muslims. Before the actual partition, India was being disintegrated. Basu gave vent to the Hindu-Muslim attitude before the partition when he heatedly pointed out the developments from national solidarity to communal violence:

'What had been aimed against the British, has turned against itself. And the ugliest thing it has bred is distrust. No Hindu can trust a Muslim any more, and no Muslim trusts a Hindu. The country is to be divided. That is what Jinnah wants; that is what the Muslims want. But before that division comes, every town, every village, is being torn apart. The Muslims don't want freedom for India unless it means carving out of a separate state for themselves. They fear that Hindus will dominate them. They insist that when the Congress ruled, just

at the beginning of the war, they treated the Muslims as a subordinate race.’  
(290)

Basu’s study of the situation reminded one of the arguments of Hafiz to win Shafi-Usman to the Muslim side. It expressed the popular Muslim notions of the time. The call of the Muslim League, with Jinnah as its spokesman, for a separate and independent state carved out of India was the burning subject of the day. It celebrated the triumph of the British in alienating the Muslims from the national stream and in turning them into blood-thirsty foes of the Hindus. Basu thought of the horrors and chaos that awaited the exit of British authority from the Indian subcontinent; the hardened attitudes would create anarchy and bloodshed. He anticipated the slaughter of hundred thousands, the rape, abduction and mutilation of a hundred thousand women, and the scene of complete rotteness. He envisaged this tragedy and remarked:

‘... The moment the British quit, there will be civil war in the country, a great slaughter. Every city, every village, every *bustee*, where the two communities live side by side, will be the scene of war. Both sides are preparing for it, the Hindus and the Muslims. The Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha are both militant...’(290)

Basu wanted the Hindus to prepare themselves against the Muslims. The Hindus, he feared, would perish, if they failed to return violence for violence. He pointed out Gandhi’s fears, and they quoted his words that form an epigraph to the

novel: "What if... 'when the fury bursts, not a man, woman or child is safe and every man's hand is raised against his neighbour?' "(291) He warned the Hindus of the hazards of the doctrine of non-violence. He wanted them to rise, awake and strike. He defended the Hindu Mahasabha and affirmed that it was an answer to the wrong doings of the Congress.

The long Debi-Basu conversation pointed to the cruel ways that men in India were resorting to in the pre-independence days. The partition of the country looked imminent. The Muslims demand for a separate nation was at its highest pitch, and the violence was let loose among the Muslims and the Hindus and vice versa. Both the communities were determined and defiant, and hence civil war was at hand. The cities and towns were riot-torn. The game of divide and rule was in full swing and was to attain its logical culmination. Basu, a terrorist and the erstwhile member of the Hanuman Club, stressed the necessity of joining the rival camp in sheer self-defence. He had suffered and his sufferings, coming in the wake of Gandhi's non-violent movement, made him despise the champion of non-violence: to him 'an eye for an eye' and 'a tooth for a tooth' looked the only answer to the situation.

Shafi was at peace with himself. He was "aware of a sense of purpose and direction. He had changed, almost inevitably, as the whole of India had changed.' "(294) He now felt convinced that the Hindus and the Muslims were traditional enemies, and there was no possibility of their living together. The spell of provincial government had demonstrated it fully. Shafi nursed the popular Muslim notions that

they were the superior race and that in the absence of the British authority they would become second rate citizens in the face of the overwhelming majority of the Hindus. He detested the Sikhs more than the Hindus. He felt it absurd to go about as a Sikh as he once did.

Like many Muslims, Shafi detested the Congress. Freedom through the Congress did not mean anything to him; it was unacceptable. Shafi believed along with the millions of other Muslims:

The Congress had been desperate to grab power and create an India ruled only by Hindus so that they could ride roughshod over the Muslims who once ruled them. It was the vengeance of sheep. The Muslims would never agree. To them independence was worth nothing unless it also ensured freedom from the domination of the Hindus. They would never live in an India where they were only tolerated minority. (295)

For Shafi and innumerable Muslims the demand of a safe homeland for their community was a great necessity. The absurd conception of a separate nation that Hafiz had given to him six years earlier appeared a reality: "the resolution of the Muslim League in which Jinnah demanded the creation of a separate state carved out of India, had crystallised the issues." (295) The Hindus were now to be eliminated: "Now the fight was no longer against the British, but against the Hindus who were

aspiring to rule over them. It was *Jehad*, a war sanctioned by religion; a sacred duty of every true believer.”(295)

Jinnah had shown the way, and so Shafi, Hafiz and others did not believe in disciplined constitutional means to achieve their goal. They believed in creating terror - - the only way the Hindus would be forced to yield. The Hindus “would never concede their demands with grace. It was essential to draw blood, to shed blood, confront their adversaries with fire and steel, the prick of the spear.”(295) The Muslims were active in achieving their objective in Rawalpindi and Multan and Bhagalpur. The Hindus were compelled to leave the districts. They were to ensure that no Hindu remained in the part of India that was going to be theirs. The work as long as the British did not show their back, was to be done secretly. Shafi was waiting for plunging into war with the Hindus at the right moment. He thought that the Hindus were also planning to do the same. But he knew well that the Hindus would never be a match to the Muslims in civil war. Assessing the Hindus, he felt that they “were pacifists at heart, their leaders fond of extolling secularism. They were soft and shrank from bloodshed. They would never be a match for the Muslims in civil war - - not even the Mahasabhaites... with all their talk of a pure India which was nothing but a retort to their own demand for a pure Pakistan. Even their militancy was a false imitation of the creed of the League.”(296). Shafi only regretted the want of money among the Muslims. He remembered the days when “the Muslims ruled the entire country, and were not struggling for just a portion of it.”(296)

In their bid to take revenge upon Shafi for his ugly betrayal, Debi-dayal and Basu came to Lahore. Basu felt, like Shafi, that the proper time to settle score would roll in after the exit of the British. He asked Debi, who went into 'out of bounds' zone to meet Shafi, not to pick a row with him right away. Basu feared Shafi's concealed designs, and hated his erstwhile leader; but Debi did not feel any real hate for Shafi the moment he met him. He took Shafi sincerely and felt that the latter had an inclination to be friendly with him.

Basu saw things in their right perspective, and suspected Shafi. He burnt in the fire of revenge. Debi felt that Usman was genuinely repentant, but Basu thought otherwise; he knew very well how things had changed in the country during the last six years. The Hindus and the Muslims no more stood united; they nursed hatred for each other. While Debi was willing to believe every word Shafi uttered, Basu found different meanings in him. His fears came true: the police was informed that " 'a runaway convict and a paroled terrorist are living in Sehgal Lodge.' "(301) The police raided the house, but Basu's watchful care saved them from the hands of the police. Shafi's attempt to get Debi-dayal and Basu arrested by the police proved abortive and he stood exposed. Debi-dayal was disillusioned, and he decided to pay Shafi back. Basu thought that a letter to the police about Shafi's whereabouts was enough to take revenge. But that was not the way of Debi's paying the enemy back. He went to the brothel and took away Shafi's mistress. Mumtaz. It brought him indirect confrontation with Shafi Usman. Shafi hurled at Mumtaz a broken electric bulb filled with sulphuric acid, but

Debi caught it in mid-air and hurled it back harmlessly into the shadows where Shafi had stood.

The Debi-Shafi affair fully revealed how things had changed. Shafi concluded that friendly relationship between Hindus and the Muslims was impossibility. Debi, on the other hand, still thought of recapturing the warmth of the old days, of the possibility of the Hindus and the Muslims working together and of regaining the lost leader. But he was very soon disillusioned. This disillusionment was the tragedy of the nation. The British game of dividing people of India into warring camps bore fruits. The demand of a pure state for Muslims – viz., Pakistan became persistent and fruitful. The division was complete, and the communal hatred showed signs of a gruesome tragedy.

Debi's decision to accept the snatched Muslim girl, Mumtaz, as his bride pointed to his emotional blindness. But it clearly demonstrated the caste-free conscience of the two lovers. Debi was duped and deceived by his erstwhile leader Shafi, who plunged himself whole-heartedly into the communal fire that swept the country before and after the independence and the partition. But Shafi's betrayal did not make him hate the whole Muslim race. He stayed secular amid the sounds of guns and slogans and accepted Mumtaz as his wife.

These developments and the exposition of the guilt in Gian assumed significance when during the post-independence communal violence Gian redeemed himself at Duriabad by saving Sundari from being raped and murdered and helped her to come

out of Pakistan. The scene of Duriabad at the time of partition, like those at many towns was one of complete chaos and anarchy. Sporadic disturbances between the Hindus and Muslims were a common feature. They had almost become an inevitable part of a festival. These regular disturbances were always sternly dealt with by the authorities. But the riots, preceding the partition, were different. They were the 'anatomy of the partition', and were the direct consequence of the unfortunate division: "A vast landscape packed with people was now being partitioned according to religious minorities: the Muslims in Pakistan, the Hindus in India." (331) The nature of the present riots was peculiar. Everyone was a participant in the furious drama of the blaze of hatred of the civil war. The atmosphere was one of utter disbelief, and, "no one could be trusted to be impartial." (331)

There could be no looker on: "When men and women of your own religion were being subjected to atrocities, you could not expect to remain friendly with adherents of the religion of the oppressor (331). The administration, the police, even the armed forces were caught up in this fire of ill will and hatred. Religious civil war was waged all over the country. It was a shameful, tragic sight. Every village, town and city that was peopled with the two communities turned into a battlefield. Terrible happenings were occasioned by the partition:

Tens of millions of people had to flee, leaving everything behind; Muslims from India, Hindus and Sikhs from the land that was soon to become Pakistan: two great rivers of humanity flowing in opposite directions along the pitifully

inadequate roads and railways, jamming, clashing, colliding head-on, leaving their dead and dying littering the landscape. (332)

The communal hatred, which resulted in the massive exchange of population, the mad killings, rapes and abductions, presented the cruellest and the most barbaric scenes. Animality in man became dominant, and all values suddenly collapsed:

The most barbaric cruelties of primitive man prevailed over all other human attributes. The administration had collapsed, the railways had stopped functioning because the officials and technicians had themselves joined the mass migrations. Mobs ruled the streets, burning, looting, killing, dishonouring women and mutilating children; even animals sacred to the other communities became the legitimate targets of reprisals.<sup>37</sup> Gandhi's fears had come true. The long awaited freedom brought only misery to millions of people. The pre-independence scene was, indeed ghastly: "The entire land was being spattered by the blood of its citizens, blistered and disfigured with the fires of religious hatred; its roads were glutted with enough dead bodies to satisfy the ghouls of a major war." (332)

The escape from Duriabad was not possible. There was the danger of being cut to pieces on the road by people mad with hatred. Tek Chand could never visualise such things in the twentieth century world. Gandhi became ineffective and irrelevant. The moment the British grip on India loosened, the people of the country discarded non-

violence and “were now spending themselves on orgies of violence which seem to fulfil some basic urge. (333)

Tek Chand regretted for not having accepted his wife’s suggestion of pulling out of the troubled town a fortnight ago. He needed a car to drive out, but his chauffeur, Dhan Singh, who had gone out in the car to bring his family to live with them, did not come back. He could not dare tell his wife what had happened to Dhan Singh and his family - - how they were brutally butchered. Dhan Singh’s “wife and two children were dragged out. They stoned the children to death in front of their parents, then poured petrol over Dhan Singh’s hair and beard and burned him alive. After that they had taken his wife away.”(334) The tragedy befalling the family of Dhan Singh was not an isolated affair. It was the destiny of millions of people shaped by the partition. The car had been turned into a burnt out shell. The servants of the house were assiduously instructed by the master not to say anything about this misfortune to Radha - - the lady of the house.

The stream of men, crossing the border, presented a pathetic sight on the eve of Independence. Everything was in a bad shape. Sleepless nights presented fearful sight of fire, arson, wailing, weeping and roaring. Duriabad had turned into a peculiar riot torn town. Human cries became a familiar sight for Tek Chand and the members of his family: “Even from their bedroom window, they could see the red glow in the sky, like a winter sunset, the glow caused by the houses burning in the city, and now and then they could hear the roar of the mob, like the din of migrating swarm of bees, punctured

by shrieks, catcalls and the occasional report of firearms.” (334) The town was running without milk. All the Saiwal cows were killed “just because they belonged to the *gowalas*.” (335)

Suddenly life had become absolutely unsafe and insecure. Normal life was completely paralysed. No bank was functioning. The thought of the convoy, escorted by the army right upto the border on their way to Jullundur, was the only consoling feature of the whole drama. The expected convoy was not to be had easily. Already it was delayed by two days and there was still no sign of it. Tekchand was in great pain to see and imagine ghastly things. He faced a psychological crisis. The city was his, as it was of others. His family, like those of some Muslims, had contributed a great deal to beautify this town. But the changed circumstances had brought about unexpected ruin. It made him utter angrily to his daughter, Sundari:

“ ‘That it should have come to this!’ ... ‘After a life time spent in this part of India, in this town, and giving one self to it and taking from it; letting one’s roots sink deeper and deeper. There is a street named after my father, a library after me, a maternity home and a girls’ school after your mother. This is my city, as much as that of its most respected Muslim families - -the Abbases, the Hussains, the Chinois. I, my family, have done as much as any of them to make it prosperous and beautiful. And what are they doing? Burning it down! And look at us waiting for police protection because its citizens want to finish us off.’ (337)

The emotional separation caused by the partition was one of the most unfortunate developments in the history of mankind. Tek Chand never wanted to be separated from the town of his ancestors. His attachment with the things at Duraibad made him scorn his wife's fear. He was now feeling a sense of guilt in misplacing his trust in the people of the town. His outburst, analysing why could not pull out of the disturbed city at the suggestion of his wife was enlightening. He confessed to Sundari in this connection: “ ‘ Because I wanted to keep all this, all that my family and I myself have built. One of the best houses in town, a name honoured in the whole province, the best private collection of Indian bronzes in the whole country. And suddenly someone had decided that this land which is mine should be foreign territory - - just like that! And merely because some hooligans take it into their heads to drive all the Hindus away from their land, I have to leave everything and go, pulled out by the roots, abandoning everything that has become a part of me.’ ” (337-38)

Sundari reminds her Abaji of his being luckier than millions of others who had to find shelter and work, for he could have money and house in Delhi. This made Tek Chand realise that money could not make up for emotional attachment. This very thought of abandoning the place, he belonged to, was unbearable. He in a moment of utter depression, cried out to Sundari, flinging his hands in disdain: “ ‘Money’ ... Do you suppose all the money in the world would make up for this? My house, my bronzes... I could spend hours just looking at them, over and over again, feeling an inner peace, a religious exaltation almost, to be in the midst of all that beauty. True art

that lived a thousand years ago and still lives and breathes...’ ” (338) This agonising experience of a sensitive man told the tale of the horrid partition.

Tek Chand went to the museum and found relief in the company of gods and goddesses who were like living creatures to him “more alive than many people he knew.”(339) The gods in the museum held a message for him, The psychic crisis in him was glaring. He was surprised at the beastly way the people had suddenly resorted to; religion and community had caused barriers among men and turned them into foes of one another. Better sense might one day drive people to realise their grave mistake of fighting among themselves. He felt that he was among his own people and the vicious and dangerous days of hatred would soon end. He thought of sending away his wife and daughter with the convoy and of his staying behind with “his men and women and half-beasts and half-gods of metal.”(339) He felt sure of his plan: “He would like that; somehow he would be able to manage. It was his land, his town; its people were his people. They would come to their senses, as soon as this wave of hatred had passed; they would realise he was one of themselves and not to be spurned.” (339)

However, the moment did not last long. He knew his wife would never go away leaving him behind. He remembered his son Debi who could have dealt with this situation in an appropriate and convincing way. He knew his duty now. He contacted the police inspector by telephone and inquired about the convoy. The delay was disturbing. The police waited for the convoy of the Muslims from Delhi to arrange a convoy of the Hindus from Duriabad. The Hindus were now almost being treated as

hostages to see that the authorities on the other side sent out the Muslims safely. The news of the killing of Muslims on the other side of the border was disgusting. Violence bred violence, hatred, suspicion and confusion. Men had turned into brutes. Inhuman deeds became the order of the day. The Inspector made it emphatically clear to Tek Chand that violence would be returned with violence when he gruffly said to him on telephone: “ ‘ Everything depends upon how they treat our people on the other side. I hear a train was attacked in Patiala by the Sikhs; a convoy butchered in Amritsar. If that sort of thing is allowed to happen, how can we protect the Sikhs here from the mobs? ...’ ” (340) A telephonic call from Sardar Avtar Singh, inviting them to his house, gave a great sense of relief to Tek Chand. The second call by Sardar Avtar Singh a few minutes later was horrifying. The house was put on fire and the telephone line was dead.

Debi's attempt at reaching Duriabad along with his wife unfolded the scenes of train-disasters that preceded and followed the partition. The trains, consisting of a hotchpotch of passenger carriages, cattle wagons and timber flats and packed to maximum capacity, protected by military jawans, presented a pathetic sight. The train in which Debi travelled to Pakistan looked “like an enormous dead snake with myriads of ants clinging to its body.” (354) Men, women and children were squeezed in windows and doors. These unfortunate people were going away from the land of their birth to a place unknown to them. Tragedy had befallen them: “A week ago, they had all been citizens, of India; men and women jubilant at the advent of the long-awaited,

long fought-for freedom. Today, they were just a small section of a seething movement of humanity.” (354)

Everything had changed. The partition and freedom brought misery and misfortune to millions of people on both sides of the border. Malgonkar very powerfully shows the plight of the displaced when he describes the people being carried away to Pakistan in the train in which Debi was travelling. “Here, they were the Muslims, the counterparts of the ‘displaced persons’ on the other side, who were Hindus and Sikhs, both sides making for a border that was yet to be officially demarcated. They were, at the moment, stateless citizens, hounded out from the land of their birth as much by collective fear of racial massacres as by the actual outrages perpetrated upon them by their erstwhile fellow-citizens.” (354)

The poor people had fallen victim to the whims of the politicians. Communal hatred, suspicion, the fear to be ruled by the majority, and the careful propaganda not to be ruled by people who once were slaves led the partition and brought about the mass movement of population. It brought untold misery to the millions of people for no fault of their own; their plight was simply horrible:

Political expediency had suddenly transformed them into refugees fleeing from their own land as though it had been invaded by an enemy. They left behind everything they possessed; their lands, houses, cattle, their household goods. They also left behind scores of thousands of dead and dying, sacrificial offerings

to freedom. They fled without caring for the weak or the lame who had fallen by the way side, unable to withstand the rigours of the migration. (354-355)

Tired, hungry, thirsty and sleepy people travelled in the train. These people were on their way to Pakistan - - the land that most of them had never seen, the land that promised relief to them, and the place that cut them off" from their environment as effectively as by a surgical operation." (355). The brutal violence reminded Debi-dayal of the often repeated words of Shafi Usman the terrorist leader: " 'A million shall die.' " (355)

Independence was only three days away, but the tide of violence, rape, abduction that swept the country destroyed thousands before the sun of freedom dawned upon the land. It puzzled as how the people, proclaiming brotherhood earlier had come to this state of affairs; and how the centuries-old ties of fraternity were suddenly shattered leading to this upheaval. It was the failure of Gandhi and the success of the shrewdly propagated British policy of divide and rule. Manohar Malgonkar raises certain important questions about this unprecedented event leading to the mass massacre of people in the name of religion:

After living as brothers over so many generations, how had they suddenly been infected by such a virulent hatred for each other? Who had won, Gandhi or the British? For the British at least had foreseen such a development. Or had they lost through not having allowed for structural flaws in the human material they

were dealing with? Had Gandhi ever envisaged a freedom that would be accompanied by so much suffering and release so much hatred? Had he realised it might impose transfers of population unparalleled throughout history? (355-56)

These thought-provoking problems show the hollowness of communal rage and frenzy. In India the Muslims were searched: "Gangs of hooligans went patrolling the streets, making house-to-house searches for the Muslims." (356) The whole land was torn to pieces as a result of gigantic convulsion. An unimaginable chaos had overwhelmed the country. The train services were seriously disrupted and paralysed. All workers had run away for the safety of their lives. The movement of refugees was very slow. There was complete panic: "All Muslim railway servants had fled from posts as the Hindus had fled from their posts on the other side: The station masters, signalmen, engine drivers, fire men, ticket-punchers, clerks, guards everyone was gone. The Hindu staff too had panicked and run away." (358)

Mumtaz and Debi had to camp out at the Kernal railway station in order to catch the train. It was an awful thing to catch the train; many perished in the attempt. The journey of Debi from Kernal to Pakistan presented the terrible sight of general massacre. There was scene after scene of carnage. The previous night a whole trainload of refugees was massacred. The scene presented a gruesome sight; it was "a scene of massacre, transformed by some trick of the morning light into a mirage. The large patches of red which had resembled saris left out to dry, shrank and shrivelled and faded before their eyes, leaving only pools of dried blood. The vultures, the dogs and

the jackals emerged, strutting disdainfully.” (359) Debi was travelling in the guise of a Muslim. It was his Punjab, but it presented a deserted sight. There was complete devastation. The ownerless cattle wandered in the group looking for food: “The land of the five rivers had become the land of carrion. The vultures and jackals and crows and rats wandered about, pecking, gnawing, tearing, gluttoned, staring boldly at their train.” (360) The journey to Duriabad seemed to be an unending process. It showed the great change between the past and the present. The heart-rending sights continuously reminded Debi of Shafi’s warning: “ ‘A million shall die’ ” (360)

Debi-dayal always loved this native province, the Punjab in all its mood. But this time it was in quite a different mood; it presented a scene of destruction on both sides as though by “denuded swarms of locusts or by invading armies.”<sup>63</sup> The train stopped for hours on a station without showing any signs of moving forward. The emptiness of the station and the silence deepened the atmosphere of horror. The brutal picking up of the people for killing was sad and scientific. Appearance was not to be trusted: “They made you take off your trousers to make sure that you were circumcised.” (360) This was an unmistakable process of identification. Debi felt safe in the Indian territory, but things took a violent turn the moment he crossed the border.

It was now the dawn of the fifteenth of August - - the dawn of freedom when the train came to a halt in Pakistan territory. In his heart Debi felt elated to greet the sun of liberty that was his dream. But his blood congealed to see the cruel acts of impending violence. The Hindus, travelling in elaborate disguises with the Muslims, were found

out and killed: “They were denounced by their fellow-passengers and the men were ceremoniously emasculated before being abandoned to the vengeance of the crowd, and the women carried away.” (367) Even children could not escape the wrath of communal frenzy. Debi, too, in the process was suspected and detected. All the protests and pronouncements of Mumtaz, his Muslim wife, who had forcibly accompanied him, proved abortive. He was stripped naked, blinded and killed. His wife was snatched away from him. He could only “see her being carried away, naked and struggling at the top of her voice.” (368) The last thing Debi saw was “the rising sun on the land of the five rivers on the day of their freedom.” (369) He, then, succumbed to pain and died listening to the cries of his dear wife and her determination to go with him wherever he went.

Shafi and his friends raided the house of Tek Chand. Shafi’s intentions were clear. He wanted to snatch away Sundari in a spirit of revenge. They spitted insult on the gods in the museum. Tek Chand implored Shafi not to touch ladies and insult gods. The gods were sacred to them: “Sacred, don’t you see, just as your own god is sacred to you. And these women are my wife and daughter. They should be like sisters to you. I implore you, in the name of all that is sacred to you, your prophet Mohammed himself, not to touch them, your sisters...” (377) This utterance of Tek Chand elicited Shafi’s strong feelings of revenge. He tried to settle the score - - the atrocities Muslim women were put to in India must be avenged. He took exception to the word ‘sister’. Shafi turned on him viciously: “ ‘Is that how you Hindus treated our women? Like sisters and mothers! They were raped in front of their own men; in Nabha, Patiala; in Delhi itself.

Raped, mutilated - - they weren't sisters then!' ” (377) There followed a violent struggle. Shafi caught hold of Sundari, but was unsuccessful in his mission. Radha, Sundari's mother, was killed. Gian and Sundari killed Shafi with the image of Shiva that was once hidden in the little house at Konshet and that was later sold by Gian to Tekchand. Sundari, Tek Chand and Gian joined the convoy to pull out of Pakistan, but on the way, Tek Chand dropped out. He had great sense of emotional involvement in what was left behind. He was lost on the way, and Gian and Sundari returned to India.

Obviously, the novelist reveals a sound historical sense; the unfortunate facts of our national tragedy have been artistically painted. The horrible consequences of the partition are frankly stated. Millions of people became homeless, lost their belongings, fell victims to violence and insult, faced a new challenge and had to start all over again. This was how “the sunrise of our freedom” found millions mutilated and insulted and tens of millions dispossessed of all they had owned and cherished and brutally thrown away on the other side of the artificial border between India and Pakistan.

A **Bend in the Ganges** portrays, in a powerful way, the freedom struggle of the Indian nationalists, the mad and misleading communal frenzy, the Japanese invasion of the British territories in Asia, the bitterness brought about by the partition, the massive exchange of population and the cruel and shameful acts caused by communal hatred. The atmosphere of the country became vicious and hell was let loose. The novel dramatically depicts, in great detail, what is stated briefly in the “Author's note”:

What was achieved through non-violence, brought with it one of the bloodiest upheavals of history: twelve million people had to flee, leaving their homes; nearly half a million were killed; over a hundred thousand women, young and old were abducted, raped and mutilated. (6)

The bloody communal 'vivisection', which swept the country during the early days of our Independence, is excellently presented in **Distant Drum**. The novel highlights the consequences of the partition, the division of the army, the fighting of friends and fellows joining the opposite camps, the Kashmir war that followed Independence and the bitter communal riots in Delhi. The partition of the country divided the army. The reference to it occurs quite early in the story when the novelist writes about Lieutenant-Colonel Ayub Mulla: "Ayub Mulla, with his hawklike features and insolent gimlet eyes which, although his family had lived for five generations around Lucknow, bore testimony to his Pathan ancestry, was one of the few Muslim officers who had stayed on with his regiment in India when the army was divided at the partition of the country." ('Distant Drum', 13)

Kiran's friendship with Abdul Jamal and the latter's finally going away to Pakistan are the other important incidents in the novel. Kiran and Jamal had been together at the military academy at Dehradun. They were together in active service in Burma during the World War II. Jamal, an excellent swimmer, was seriously wounded in the war and Kiran had almost taken him to be lost. Significantly, it was Abdul Jamal who first succeeded in Mrs. Medley's affairs. He was almost a torchbearer to Kiran in

that matter. Kiran and Jamal had faced the riots of 1947, preceded by the partition, at Delhi for three whole days. Abdul had saved Kiran by keeping the latter's name away from the court of inquiry that looked into the causes leading Mrs. Medley to commit suicide. Then Jamal went to Pakistan, became a high-ranking officer there, and ironically faced Kiran in Kashmir. The two friends were put in opposite camps by the partition. Kiran was sad to tell Bertie Howard, once a British Satpura officer in Delhi, that Abdul Jamal had gone to Pakistan and was on the other side. The partition had brought about this separation, and the Kashmir affair was very tragic. Jamal had saved Kiran's life in the Delhi riots just after the partition and now Jamal was in Pakistan. The breaking up of the old team into enemies was the unfortunate consequence of the partition. Bertie rightly remarked: "Pity the old team had to be broken up like that and now fighting each other in Kashmir." (147)

The novel narrates the riots in Delhi, in great detail, and shows the unfortunate developments caused by the partition. Jamal was in Delhi during those days and Kiran had come to stay with him for a few days and had engulfed into the communal riots. It was in September of 1947 "when the army was in the process of being divided and Abdul was to leave in a few days for Pakistan..." (217) Those were the horrible days as Kiran said to himself: "Horrible days, those days of the Delhi riots!" (217) Riots were tragic and inhuman; they were barbarous and brutal, far more shocking than anything that Kiran had known in the war: "For two weeks, there was a reign of terror, when man's most barbarous instincts prevailed without check. Both Hindus and Muslims spent themselves in ghoulish enormities unknown to primitive

man, allegedly in retaliation to each other's doings - - all in the name of religion, even in the name of God!" (218)

The riots showed man to be a ferocious animal, thirsty for the blood of his own fellow beings. There was a negation of all human values. People raged wildly in the cities and towns. There was fire everywhere, and the flames also engulfed Delhi, perhaps, not so terribly as they looked at other places: "The riots were not confined to Delhi, every fair-sized town and village had its own, private, fight-to-the-finish civil war. The riots in Delhi were but a cross-section of the mass killings in the other towns, and perhaps they were a little less brutal than in other places: in Lahore and Ludhiana, or Rawalpindi or Patiala. But they were enough to shake your faith in humanity." (218)

Kiran had come to participate in the festivities organised to give farewell to the officers who were going to Pakistan, but the riots disturbed the whole show. The partition had changed the whole atmosphere. The prevalent feeling was one of doubt and distrust. The Hindus and Muslims had drifted poles apart. Man's faith was widely shaken. The horrible consequences of the cries for a separate safe state were clearly and widely visible and felt: "The country was being torn asunder, the army was being divided; the prevailing mood was one of shock and suspicion. The partition had always created a barrier; lifelong ties between Muslims and others - - Hindus as well as the British who were there in large numbers - - were already broken." (218-19) New Delhi looked almost free from any sign of disturbance, but the billows of smoke could be seen

over old Delhi. Fires were a common sight, and people lived in terror in their homes. The curfew-bound city wore a deserted look.

Kiran's short stay in Delhi with Abdul revealed the dangerous days of communal riots, ill will and antagonism, followed by the partition. The city was placed under curfew, but Kiran and Abdul could move about freely because the curfew did not " 'apply to people in uniform.' " (219) This enabled them to have a first hand knowledge edge of what was happening in the riot torn city. The first day, chasing the smoke, they could go on their bicycles only upto Connaught Circus that "looked like a Hollywood ghost city, eerie and deserted. On the interactions of the road, there were groups of sentries, standing in clusters as though they found comfort in each other's company and were reluctant to venture singly into unlit alleys." (219)

The sounds and yelling of a disturbed city, which was in fire and civil war, did not permit them to have a quiet sleep; Kiran and Abdul went together to the riot-hit streets of Delhi in the truck, watching the destruction brought about by the communal frenzy. It was not an easy drive: "Near the corner of Darya Ganj, they had to stop the truck because a *tonga* which had overturned was lying right in the middle of the road. The pony was still harnessed to it and was flailing the road with its legs in an effort to get up. There was a gaping dark hole in its stomach through which the guts trailed out in a tangled, blood-soaked mess." (222) The sight of the suffering pony made Kiran empty all his six bullets into its head. Even Abdul, who always looked brave, was shaken for the first time that day on seeing a wounded horse. Near Kashmiri Gate the

inhuman deeds were more pronounced. The victims were carelessly thrown away to be eaten by vultures: “In a triangular yard surrounded by a low brickwall, were a hundred or so corpses, thrown anyhow, piled in grotesque postures one upon another. A few ugly vultures with bare featherless necks were busy tearing at the bodies.” (222) The inside of a house wore a stinking look. It was a pathetic sight: “The whole place was reeking with the smell of festering wounds.” (223) Two or three hundred people were crowded inside, huddled and moaning: “More than half of them were lying prone on the floor, groaning in pain; they were some of the wounded and dying victims of the riots. A corner was set aside for the silent dead.” (223)

Abdul and Kiran decided to take the wounded to the hospital, but this too was an arduous task. The people were unwilling to be separated from their relatives. Even the badly injured ones did not like to go away to hospital for fear of leaving their young ones unprotected in their absence: “There was a man with two soft bullets lodged in his leg, for instance, who begged to be allowed to stay where he was because otherwise his five-year-old daughter would be left without anyone in the world to look after her. Anyone could see that his leg needed immediate treatment, perhaps an amputation. It was blue and it had swollen to a frightening size and lay twisted in a horribly unnatural position.” (223) Abdul rang for the fire brigade, but was told that there were about fifty fires blazing furiously at Delhi at the moment and that no fire engine was available then. Kiran heard the piercing scream of a woman being chased by two men: “The top half of her body was bare and she was clutching with both hands the loose folds of her falling sari.” (225) Kiran intervened and saved the woman from the clutches of those

men. Kiran walked to the place of riot-torn victims and met the President of the Vegetable Merchants Association on the way, who had “come to complain to Kiran about the plight of nearly thirty thousand Muslim refugees who were said to be taking shelter in a nearby mosque.” (227) They were said to be living without anything to eat for the last two days. Kiran expressed his disbelief at the report that thirty thousand people were staying in the mosque. The man asked Kiran to see it for himself. As he was climbing up the mosque, Abdul came back with the truck, enquired what the matter was, and warned Kiran not to play foolish in such matters. Abdul himself went into the mosque to see things, and Kiran was asked to stay outside. When Abdul did not come out of the mosque for a considerably long time, Kiran went into the mosque to see what Abdul was doing for such a long time. He found a man who had drawn a knife at him, telling people that Kiran was the Military Officer who had killed his brother - - Sadat. It was at this critical moment that Abdul did his best to save him, though he was jeered for siding a Hindu and a *Kafir* and for standing with one who was reported to have killed a true believer that very morning. Surprisingly, during those days of communal hatred and riots he was saved from a Muslim mob by a Muslim Satpura Officer. It spoke of the code of the regiment and of the unbiased, harmonious relation of Kiran and Abdul. Very soon Abdul Jamal was to cross over to the other side of the border only to meet Kiran in Kashmir as a high officer of the enemy forces. But he saved Kiran from what looked a certain death in the mosque on the face of a hundred Muslims burning with the desire of killing a Hindu, an infidel.

For two more days Kiran and Abdul worked voluntarily in the vicinity of Subzimandi until the troops had taken control of the riot-torn city. Those days at Delhi were full of amazing and bewildering incidents. Violence was the common sight. Bloodthirsty people searched for their victims in the curfew-bound city: "Those three days were crammed with incidents such as other men do not see in a lifetime. Time and again, the frenzied mob had broken the curfew and had come rampaging out into the open, drunk with hatred and fear and madness." (230) The chaos of mass migration played havoc with the lives of people. The one consoling factor was the working together of Abdul and Kiran. There was perfect harmony between them, and none of them could have thought about the things the partition had in store for them at that time: "Neither he nor Abdul had been conscious of the fact that they belonged to the opposing factions in the riots - - that one was a Hindu, the other a Muslim on the verge of setting out for a world of new values. What stood out magnificently secure in that holocaust was the fact that although they belonged to the two opposing communities crazed with vengeance and thirsting for blood, he and Abdul had been able to work together in the closest accord, their loyalties to each other absolutely unruined by that incessant strain." (230)

The story is told through a series of flashbacks. Kiran in Kashmir, facing the forces of Abdul Jamal thought of the days of Delhi-riots where he had worked with Jamal in perfect harmony. Now the unfortunate developments of the partition had put them into opposite camps. Kiran was warned of being cautious about Abdul: "It was unfortunate that he and Abdul now faced each other as commanders of opposing

battalions.” (230) Kiran was very clear in his mind about the duty of the professional soldier. His old association with Abdul had now nothing to do. He was determined to “defend his position as best he could, and when it came to the question of attack, he would lead his men into it with no other thought in his mind except the thought of winning.” (230) There was no question of divided loyalties. The two former friends and fellow-officers of 4 Satpura were now locked in a war against each other brought about by partition. After the partition they found themselves fighting against each other in Kashmir. Kiran met Abdul under the Bushy-Tapped Tree. It was a meeting that defied superior officers. Kiran took a great risk and ran his whole career into danger, but the impulsive meeting took place, which brought a new awareness of poignant realities. It fully revealed the misfortunes, caused by the partition: “It had left a new emptiness, it had given a raw edge to old memories, it had brought on a painful awareness of new realities. A soldier could not remain friendly with someone who had now become an enemy. His relationship had to be subjected to new values, confined to narrow and contorted limitations. The very essence of friendship, frankness, had been completely drained off.”<sup>91</sup> The Partition shattered old ties. Relationship with Jamal was broken. Patently, the novel fully brings out the terrible consequences of the partition.

## **Chapter 4**

**Chaman Nahal's '*Azadi*'**

## Chapter IV

### Chaman Nahal's

#### *Azadi*

Nahal's *Azadi* delineates the psychological consequences of the partition. It points out how the ugly event caused havoc in the minds of the people and highlights the predicament of the souls, shattered by the unprecedented tragedy. The novel makes a moderate attempt to diagnose the malady, leading to the inhuman catastrophe. It criticises, in clear terms, the Hindu and Muslim leaders responsible for the partition and the bloodshed that dazed everyone. The English, too, have not been spared; their wild and unholy game has been fully exposed. The people of the sub-continent too, stand equally responsible for the tragic events. It excels other novels on the subject in scrutinising the cause of partition and the tragedy accompanying it.

The masses are shown as the mere puppets in the hands of clever, selfish and power-hungry politicians, who exercised profound influence on the thoughts and deeds of men during those fateful days. Violence, the result of mad communal frenzy, has been objectively depicted. *Azadi* stresses how even the mildest of men was spurred on to engage himself in the ghastly acts of violence. Even an ordinary tradesman, Abdul Ghani, was transformed into a Muslim Leaguer. He, like millions of others, was misled by the crafty politicians, hungry to grab power. The novel shrewdly unfolds the conspiracy of the politicians. But amidst the horror scenes of inexplicable violence, it

also indicates the rebirth of, and hope for, a new guilt-free identity; the appalling misery must have some meaning.

**Azadi** portrays vividly the horrors of the partition, the colossal violence that still haunts the Indian psyche. It concentrates on the exodus of millions of refugees from Pakistan, and on the aftermath of the partition. The novel is very suitably divided into three parts; Part I, "The Lull"; Part II, "The Storm" and Part III, "The Aftermath". The suitability and the symbolic significance of the titles of the three sections of the novel are explicit.

The novel opens on the third of June, 1947 when the Viceroy was awaited to make an important announcement in the evening. Lala Kanshi Ram, who was not too literate a person but had grown intelligent by experience, led a quiet life with his wife, Prabha. This quietness indicates the appropriateness of the title, "The Lull", of the first part of the novel. It is the quietness before "the storm" to be followed by "the aftermath". The horrors of the partition, creating havoc in the human mind, are depicted through the protagonist of the novel - - Lala Kanshi Ram. He was influenced by Arya Samaj. He knew Urdu, but his professed mother tongue was Hindi. He spoke Punjabi, and wrote in Urdu, which he learnt from his father and from a primary teacher in his village and "neither of the two was a Muslim." (14) From the beginning of the novel, it has been convincingly shown that Urdu was very much the language of the Hindus, and thus the Hindus and the Muslims were one. Even an Arya Samajist,

whose language was supposed to be Sanskrit, wrote in Urdu. Thus there was no prejudice against any language, and there was complete harmony in this regard.

Lala Kanshi Ram hated the British, and felt elevated at the news of the German Victories during the Second World War. He prayed for the victory of the Germans against the British. Lala Kanshi ram's hatred for the English introduced the theme *Azadi* – independence. The longing for the defeat of the British forces revealed the Indian's curiosity to embrace freedom - - their impatience to see the fall of usurpers of freedom. This was the feeling of almost every patriot during the pre-independence, pre-partition days. Lala Kanshi Ram felt proud of the national heroes - - Gandhiji, Nehru, Bhagat Singh. He, too, “wanted to claim for himself the role of a revolutionary.” (20) He, too, had been to jail, although in a different context and that too reluctantly. But he felt proud of having spent a night inside the four walls of a prison.

The merciless killing of the stray dogs shows the cruelty of the British soldiers. The reference to Jallianwala Bagh spotlights the inhuman acts of the British. Nahal points out satirically that the killing of dogs for their crime was an act of British inhumanity: “Left for themselves the sergeants would have made men pay for that crime - - as they did as recently as in 1919, when they shot hundreds of them out of hand with machine guns at Jallianwala Bagh.” (28) But in the changed times, the sergeants went only after dogs. Lala Kanshi Ram saw the precision of the British Raj in as small an act as the killing of the stray dog, and felt that there: “indeed was no Raj like the Angrez Raj.” (31)

Lala Kanshi Ram informed his wife that morning that the Viceroy was to make an important announcement that evening from All India Radio. Any announcement of the Viceroy would thrill Lala Kanshi Ram. But that particular day he was not jubilant and gay; he looked timid. He looked around and there was silence and peace in the room. He looked at his achievement in Sialkot from his seat., He held Prabha Rani's hand in his hands, and felt unutterably nostalgic. He intuitively felt the dangers that were to follow the announcement. He looked worried and feared the consequences, "if the English agree to give Pakistan to Jinnah." (39) Prabha Rani consoled him, saying that would never happen. She relied on the words her husband had uttered to her: "Gandhi would never agree to a division of the country..." (39)

Lala Kanshi Ram feared the division of the country. He saw in it the shrewd British plan. He knew the British policy of encouraging the partition. His faith in Gandhi's oath of not accepting the partition looked shaken. He said to his wife when she reminded him of Gandhi's strong stand against the partition. " 'That's true. But what if there is no other way out? And you know these English, they would rather divide than leave behind a United India' "(39) He felt that all his efforts of making a comfortable home steadily for over a period of more than twenty five years would be ruined at the creation of Pakistan. He knew that terror, tempest and tumult would follow in the wake of the partition. Making a vague gesture towards the rooms, Lala Kanshi Ram sadly exclaimed: " ' Everything will be ruined if Pakistan is created.' "(39)

Lala Kanshi Ram scented trouble ever since the British had set a time limit for independence. The British commitment that they would leave India by June 1948 in any case embarrassed him. He could not understand why they were in a hurry to go and their designs to hand over power to any constituted authority or authorities further confused him. He was critical of Gandhi – Rajaji offer to Jinnah in 1944. It almost amounted to conceding a ‘homeland’ to Jinnah; it encouraged him to work for the creation of Pakistan vigorously. The Congress was responsible for bringing about the partition. The offer was a tragic one for the country. The talk of giving to the Muslims a section in the East of India and a section in the West made Jinnah aware of realising his dream. It only spoke of a common defence and foreign policy, and gave Jinnah a vision of a separate state: “Until then Jinnah had talked of Pakistan, but he did not know what he meant by it. Gandhi by going to him, not only gave Pakistan a name, he gave Jinnah a name too.” (40) Lala Kanshi Ram believed that the offer crowned Jinnah with undue glory and popularity, and imparted tremendous strength to the disruptive forces - - the Muslim League. It was a personal triumph for the leader of the League. He thought:

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. If the Congress would give this much, why not go for complete separation? (40)

He feared that the British had decided to execute the partition of the country.

The conversation between Lala Kanshi Ram and Prabha Rani introduced the theme of the partition into the novel. Like an average Indian, Lala Kanshi Ram was apprehensive of the division of the country and of the brutal violence that might follow it. His pondering over the delicate situation gave an idea of national scene - - the Gandhi-Rajaji offer to Jinnah, its pernicious results, the February 1947 announcement of the British saying that not later than June 1948 India would be free, their hurry to quit India, and the hollowness of the Congress' promise to shed the last drop of blood before conceding the partition. The announcement from the AIR by the Viceroy filled the protagonist with a sense of unutterable fear, justifying the famous proverb 'coming events cast their shadows before.'

Lala Kanshi Ram was greatly grieved and disturbed to think of the horrible consequences of the proposed partition. He was primarily concerned with the fate of the four hundred million people, if partition took place. He feared that he would have to leave his property behind if the new nation came into existence. He said to Prabha Rani: " 'If Pakistan is created, we'll have to leave. That is, if the Muslims spare our lives.' "(41) He was deeply upset to think about the consequences of the brutal violence, if the Muslims came to power. Stating emphatically that there would be a lot of killing at the partition, he told his wife: " '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' "(41) All this upset him immeasurably, and made him restless. He dreaded the announcement which he was too eager to listen to. It was not only Lala

Kanshi Ram's concern, but "In each home, on each street corner, this was the only subject discussed that day." (47) Arun thought that the Congress had betrayed people by conceding Pakistan, for Gandhi and Congress had earlier said, "India was a single nation, not two." (48) Kanshi Ram's only hope was Gandhi; in fact, most of the people lived in the illusion that Mahatma "would never let that happen." (49) But the Muslim Hookah merchant, Abdul Ghani, was contemptuous of the Hindu merchants, and knew that Pakistan was a certainty. He looked cheerful. Earlier he loved Arun and lived on the generosity of the Hindus but in the last three or four years he had become imprudent. Before the unfortunate developments, there was complete harmony between Ghani and Lala Kanshi Ram:

The fact that Ghani was a Muslim and Lala Kanshi Ram a high-caste Hindu never entered their heads. They spoke a common tongue, wore identical clothes, and responded to the weather, to the heat and the first rains, in an identical manner. If they worshipped different gods, it was in the privacy of their homes, except when Ghani made a spectacle of himself by joining Tazia marched at the time of Muharram once a year and beating his breast in public. But then, didn't Kanshi Ram make a spectacle of himself too, when he joined other lalas of the bazaar in throwing colour on others during Holi? No, thought Lala Kanshi Ram, they were not Muslims or Hindus, they were Punjabis - - or at least they were till the other day. (54)

The 'two-nation theory' was to create two nations out of one and hence it was tragic indeed. It created barrier between man and man, between brother and brother. There was a definite change in the Muslim attitude, and "Abdul Ghani was no longer friendly with the Hindu businessmen of the bazaar." (54) Jinnah had become the ideal of the Muslims; they followed him blindly. Nahal finds the political leaders guilty of the horrid consequences of the partition. Abdul Ghani had lived in peace and harmony with his neighbours, who treated him as an equal. But under the sway of Jinnah he changed and became a Leaguer. The League spit hatred. Ghani, too, started hating the Hindus. The Muslim League "had slowly made him aware of the threat to him in a free Hindu India. It was not a question of his personal views; the League or Jinnah Sahib knew better. They said, there should be a Pakistan, and he should speak for Pakistan." (54) Ghani, like million others of his kind, became a puppet in the hands of his leaders, and followed them faithfully. The atmosphere was surcharged with horror, tension, worry, hatred and happiness. The Hindus in Sialkot feared doom, if Pakistan came into being. On the other hand, the Muslims were cheerful and were impatient to all on the Hindus. Their hatred for the Hindus was conspicuous in such small acts as Ghani's spitting on the ground and abusing loudly enough to be heard by the Hindus. Harmony became a thing of the past and hatred was let loose by the political leaders.

The Viceroy's announcement, scheduled for the evening, created tremendous excitement in the people. It led to a variety of speculations. The Hindu businessmen in Sialkot hoped that their leaders would never give into the demands of a separate state for the Muslims. The Muslims knew things better, and did not doubt the creation of

Pakistan. A safe homeland for them was a certainty. Their firm conviction was explicitly stated by Abdul Ghani, the proud Muslim Leaguer:

When the businessmen were arguing in Lala Kanshi Ram's store, Abdul Ghani watched them in disdain. No power on earth could now stop Pakistan. He knew the noise they were making would be short lived - - they would see this evening when the broadcast was heard.(56)

The wave of excitement led people to surround the radio-sets. Lala Kanshi Ram, along with the members of his family and his neighbours, sat eagerly in the room of his landlady, Amar Vati, waiting for the announcement. Everyone there looked gloomy and embarrassed. The thought of Pakistan and the tragedy that would come in its wake shook them. Then came the much awaited, much feared announcement. It was in English but everyone heard it attentively; perhaps they could know the meaning. The partition came as a shock. The moment Arun explained the Viceroy's speech in a word, the audience felt sad and shocked: "Arun had understood it all only too well, and in a shaken voice he said. 'Partition' and made a gesture with his hands of chopping a thing in two. 'Partition' many voices shouted out aloud and the mouths remained open. 'Yes, partition!' said Arun" (63)

People heard Nehru with utter disbelief. They questioned his senses when he talked of peace and non-violence. His ignorance about the Muslims was lamented. The

beloved leader sounded dull and dry that evening. His thought of peace and peaceful transaction looked a complete nonsense. His voice had lost its effect and charm:

This day he said no abrupt words to them. He sounded meek and gentle, he sounded in sorrow. And in spite of that he could win no sympathy from this group gathered in the mirror-studded living room of Bibi Amar Vati. What stupid things was he talking about? Was he really Nehru? The drawl was the same, the emotion in the words was the same, the disjointed, queer Hindi syntax was his alone, but what had happened to his *akal*, his mind? Have partition if there is no other way, have it that way - - we're willing to make sacrifices. But what nonsense was this of no panic, no violence, full protection from the government, peace the main object! Had he gone mad? Didn't he know his people? Didn't he know the Muslims? And why the partition in the first place? What of your promises to us, you Pandit Nehru? (65)

By the repeated use of the marks of interrogation, the omniscient author emphatically holds Nehru and other leaders responsible for the partition. The people, specially the Hindus, looked with dismay and disbelief at their leaders' going back on their word; their hopes that Gandhi and his associates would never give in to the demand of Pakistan were completely dashed. The repeated promise of their leaders not to agree to the division of the motherland suddenly crashed. The thought of the reality of Pakistan gave the audience a feeling of fear and each "family instinctively drew its members together, as a gesture of protection against the danger." (65-66) To allay his

fears, Lala Kanshi Ram spoke of the possibility of the Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims living peacefully in Pakistan. He himself did not look convinced about his argument, but felt that perhaps the Muslims needed them for their economy. His baseless hopes, were however, vanished by his son Arun, who wanted him to be realistic and to see things in their true colour. He knew that the Muslims, “ ‘can have our money without having to keep us’ ” (65-66)

The news of the partition was taken by the different communities. While the Hindus and Sikhs of Sialkot read their doom in the announcement of the partition, the Muslims, who were in joy and grief upto recently, were jubilant and gay. They went wild at the news. They celebrated it by exploding the firecrackers. The noise and light of these crackers tormented the Hindu and Sikh population, and made them lose their appetite. The Muslim homes and their roof-tops were lit with earthen lamps, and more and more lights came on “as if the earth had suddenly erupted in a volcanic explosion, cutting so many holes in the surface of the city.” (69)

The Hindus feared the Muslim procession shouting slogans, and got together in self-defence. The gates of the streets, installed a few months back for safety purpose, were locked. A few Hindu organisations were giving training in the town in self-defence. The Congress was distrusted and in the wake of its failure, the Muslim attack was feared. The atmosphere for a considerable period in the past was surcharged with suspicion and fear in this largely Muslim-dominated city of Sialkot. The Hindu youngsters were trained to guard themselves, their dear ones and property against the

possible Muslim attack: “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.” (71) The Hindus had a sense of protection and security because of the well-armed police.

The procession was organised mainly by the professional wrestlers, the meat-sellers and the butchers of the Muslim community. It stopped at the entrance to the street. They wanted the gates of the streets to be opened to take the procession through the street. They saw the Hindu heads watching them from the tops of the buildings. They had a design to humiliate the Hindus, though they did not want to harm them that day:

Today, they were only celebrating the acceptance of Pakistan by the British. But they had to make the meaning of that acceptance apparent enough for these *banyas*, the traders who had long dominated the business affairs of the city. (73)

The hatred of the Muslims for the Hindus was apparent. The city, like the nation, was obviously divided into two sections. The shouts of ‘Pakistan Zindabad’ and other slogans were deafening. The Hindus were baffled to find the police passive. The processionists insisted on getting the gates opened. The Muslim city-inspector sided with the Muslims, and upheld their demand of entering the street. He had disliked the idea of beating his Muslim brethren at the command of the British government: “For years he had ordered *lathi* charges on Muslim processions at the command of the

British government. He hated doing it, they were his own brethren, but orders were orders. The only consolation he had was that when the *lathi* charge was to be on a crowd of Congress Muslims, he made it as violent as he could. But on his own Muslims, the League Muslims - - Allah, Allah!" (79) So far, the Muslim City-Inspector had lived with the heavy burden on his conscience. He was garlanded by his Muslim fellows. He ordered Lala Kanshi Ram to open the gates, but the negative response from the Hindu irritated him. All attempts were now made to throw open the gate. Inayat-Ullah was obviously supervising the operation with an evil intention to harm the Hindus. It was at this stage that the Deputy Commissioner and the Superintendent of Police reached the place and saved the Hindus.

Inayat-Ullah created a sense of complete chaos when he tried to throw open the gates forcibly. His activities were, however halted by the arrival of the Hindu Deputy Commissioner and the Muslim Police Superintendent, who were trained in England and were above the politics of the day. In spite of their belonging to two different communities, they remained true to their profession. It is through the conversation between the two senior police officers that Nahal pointed out that it was puzzling as to how the division of the country into two, of one people into two, was to be executed; and how the demarcation line was to be marked. Both these police officers were bewildered by the contents of the partition; the announcement over the radio was quite baffling to them:

How do you cut a country into two, where at every level the communities were so deeply mixed? There was a Muslim in every corner of India where there was a Hindu. And then so soon, at such short notice? The broadcast had said nothing at all about the fate of the minorities in the two new countries. If the logic behind the creation of Pakistan was accepted, there was no place for a minority, anywhere. Pakistan wouldn't solve the problem of a minority, it was going to create new minorities - - minorities which would be hounded out with a vengeance. And what of the civil service to which they belonged? And what of the army? How were they going to cut up the machinery of the government? There were Hindus and Muslims at every level of that machinery! (85)

In fact, the creation of a new nation was as confounding to these police officers as to the millions of people of the country. The writer probes deep into the inner recesses of Niranjan Singh's mind. He makes an interesting psychological study of this young Sikh, burning with a strong passion to retaliate. The fears in the Hindus are excellently highlighted through Isher Kaur, the young pregnant wife of Niranjan Singh, Padmini, a destitute woman, and others. The communal frenzy, fired by the partition, has been depicted effectively. Through the police officers - - the Deputy Police Commissioner, Pran Nath Chaddah, and the Superintendent of Police, Ashgar Ali Siddique - - the anomaly of the partition has been brilliantly portrayed. Violence was writ large on the faces of the people, and the whole situation looked grim and awful. The narrow game of the politicians, who threw the country into fire to serve their end, is beautifully delineated.

The announcement of the creation of Pakistan bred communal feelings. The long-known romance of Arun and Nur - - “now a ‘Hindu’ boy carrying on with a ‘Muslim’ girl” (91) - - was watched menacingly by the Muslim boys of the college. There were wild speculations about the boundary line between India and Pakistan. The Hindus and Sikhs hoped against hope that the dividing line at Chenab Basin would ensure “a clean sweep for India right upto Gujarat, including such important cities like Lahore and Gujranwala.” (91) Sialkot, in such a case, would automatically remain in India. Arun, however, was very clear about the line of partition, and knew that the Sikh demand was a flimsy one and that the boundary was going to be at the Ravi Basin. These speculations expressed the Hindu-Sikh fear of the tortures, if they stayed in Pakistan. They dreaded the very thought of falling into the hands of the Muslim might. Their fears were founded on the events that following the Viceroy’s broadcast. Hostilities and tensions came to surface and hardly a day passed without an untoward happening. The whole look of Sialkot had undergone a sudden change. The Ramlila ground had witnessed the fine Hindu-Muslim harmony prior to the announcement of the partition. Every year huge effigies of Ravan and his associates were burnt on the ground. Dussehra was a Hindu festival, but the effigies were made by Muslim workmen; “the crackers and the fireworks too were supplied by the Muslims.” (93)

The Partition caused a crisis in the lives of the two lovers - - Arun and Nurul Nisar, the daughter of Chaudhri Barkat Ali. Nur, with her unreasoning youth and love, felt that Pakistan should not stand between the lovers. But Arun’s approach to the

whole situation was a realistic one; he knew the fanatics and felt that the Hindus would be forced to leave Pakistan. Nur wanted Arun to stay behind and to embrace Islam. Embracing Islam for Nur had never meant anything to Arun. But now in the light of the creation of Pakistan, he developed a sense of bitterness, and asked Nur to become a Hindu. It stunned her. She expressed her feminine frivolity, and wanted Arun to act boldly. He anticipated displacement and felt that in a new place he would need to support his family. He saw the possibility of coming back and marrying Nur, when his parents settled safely in India. This made Nur label him a 'timid Hindu'. Arun was a 'torn' boy; he was torn by *Azadi* which meant the partition of the country. He, like millions of others, was sore at the dirty game of the politicians and saw that the newly created nation was the result of their conspiracy. Nahal gives full expression to Arun's feelings and belief:

The cry of the new state, the name of Pakistan shouted repeatedly before him as insult, had split Arun asunder. He knew the conspiracy of politicians behind the whole move. Jinnah and Laiquat Ali Khan were coming into as estate; as was Nehru. Why else would they rush into *azadi* at this pace - - an *azadi* which would ruin the land and destroy its unity? For the creation of Pakistan solved *nothing*. One would have to go round with tweezers through all the villages to separate the Muslims from the Hindus. Arun knew this, the game of which he and Nur and millions like them were only victims. But politicians gave ideas legs, even though they were the wrong kind of ideas. And Arun too at the moment was driven by the irrational part of his being. (96)

It was the newly won freedom which resulted in conflict and bitterness between the two lovers. Munir, Nur's brother, told Arun that in the new context it was not safe for him to meet Nur in the open. He apprised him of the temper of the college and warned him to be careful, for " 'the Muslim boys will lynch you if they see you with her.' " (98) The locality where Munir lived had the mixed population. The parochial distinctions, exhibited by the different schools - - Arya Samaj, Islamia, Khalsa and the Mission - - were, perhaps, made by the British or by the communities. There was no fight among these schools on the parochial grounds. It never begins as communal battle, but later on communal shape was given to it.

Munir-Nur family, headed by Chaudhri Barkat Ali, was an ideal one. They were good Muslims, who believed in the unity of all religions. Chaudhri Barkat Ali was soaked with the spirit of nationalism. He was a devout Muslim, but he respected the Hindus. He lived a life of friendship and love, and did not distinguish between man and man. "And the Hindu next door was as much his brother, more his brother than an unknown Muslim living elsewhere." (102-103) Chaudhri Barkat Ali was, thus, a strong critic of religious fanaticism. He was the right man with the right kind of ideas. The locality he lived in Mohalla Maniapura - - stood for harmony. Munir shared the goodwill of his father. He read the pulse of the moment, the excitement of newly announced *Azadi* correctly. The eternal friendship between Chaudhri Barkat Ali and Lala Kanshi Ram and the harmonious relationship between the two families, belonging to two different communities, was well known. The partition tore people to pieces

emotionally and intellectually. Munir wanted Arun to stop meeting Nur altogether. If it was possible he could meet her only in his presence, preferably at home and never in public. The advice certainly was given in the interest of Arun. The agony of the young lovers, created by the situation, could be easily felt. Munir and Arun went to meet their English friend, Sergeant Davidson, in the cantonment to know his views on the partition. The British Sergeant declared that “ ‘the partition was the most stupid, most damaging, most negative development in the history of the freedom struggle here!’ ” (122) He blamed the British for this development, and held that for the Indians the hard days were ahead. He looked at the situation in the right perspective, and feared the partition and its dreadful consequences.

The announcement of a new country for the Muslims overjoyed and excited them. The first riot took place in Sialkot on twenty fourth of June, a day after “the Legislative Assembly of the Punjab formally decided in Lahore to opt for the partition of the province.” (125) Nahal describes, in detail, the communal fire that engulfed the country: “Many cities of the Punjab had been aflame for months; there were large scale killings and looting in Lahore, Gujarat, Gujranwala, Amritsar, Ambala, Jullundar, Rawalpindi, Multan, Ludhiana and Sargodha.” (125) On twenty fourth of June, the Muslims at Sialkot killed some Hindus in their excitement. Since then the killings of Hindus became a daily ritual, and the killers were not pointed out. These stray cases could make one shiver by their sheer brutality:

In no case was the victim allowed to survive the attack and tell what happened; he was stabbed to *death*. The killing was invariably done with a knife, and often the knife, the large blade driven clean through, was left in the body of the victim. Where the victim survived the first blow, he was repeatedly stabbed in the chest and abdomen. Faces were not disfigured, but the killers had a macabre fascination for ripping open stomachs. In each case, the intestines of the man would have spilled from the body and would be lying next to him in a pool of his blood. (126)

The brutal acts were followed by frightening and demoralising fires. Fires were more ghastly than murders, and flared up in the different corners of the city and created an impression of their being well-planned: “The way these fires were spread out it looked as though some planning went behind them, for the fire engines were harassed to the limit in running from north to south and east to west.” (127) These fires, in the initial stage, were only sporadic. The scene suddenly changed with the advent of the suffering Muslims from the eastern part of the Punjab. They were driven out of their homes by the Hindus and Sikhs. The cries of these weeping people were whimpering, smouldering and blood-curdling.

Lala Kanshi Ram was extremely worried. He feared that it did not augur well, and read the signs of doom. There was little surprise when first massive violence broke out in Sialkot. The Hindus were made to leave their homes and run away. This crowd of badly beaten Hindus was carried away by the police to the refugee camp. The

situation had become unimaginable. Nahal maintains remarkable impartiality in narrating these ugly scenes. He puts the blame squarely on the two warring communities. The Hindus were in dire straits in the burning West Punjab, but the Muslims, too, were in miserable plight in the eastern part of the Punjab. These fearful incidents exposed the folly of the partition and showed, in detail, the shameful bloodbath that preceded and followed it.

Violence followed violence. Minority communities stood very vulnerable. These communal riots were poles apart from the preceding ones. The English could put down the earlier riots with firmness. But now the government looked unwilling to control the rising storm. The Hindus felt unprotected and forlorn in the declared land for the Muslims. The leaders were hollow and uncertain, and the government appeared to be against the people. Lala Kanshi Ram felt grieved at the strange role of the government, and said to Arun in a state of complete embarrassment: “ ‘If unwilling, the government is a party to murder. If incapable, we Indians had no right to ask for freedom’ ” (130)

Sialkot turned into a riot-torn city. The Hindu Mohallas were burnt systematically. The Punjab and the Bengal were filled with incidents of murder, arson and rape. There was acute fear and confusion among the Hindus in Sialkot. They found no help from the police, and to their dismay the military men disappeared from the scene. The Hindu shops were looted. The Hindu Deputy Commissioner, who had handled the situation with a firm hand, was murdered. The Muslim constable, his bodyguard, shot him dead. The communal elements in the government were apparent. Their intentions were revealed by Chaudhri Barkat Ali when he said to Kanshi Ram:

'Let me put it like this, either the Congress Muslims were a fraud to begin with, or they have changed sides. I'm afraid there is no organised body of Muslims denouncing what is happening in the city' (140)

Individuals appeals for solidarity by the important Muslims were of no avail. The tales of woe from India fanned communal frenzy. Violence was widespread on both sides of the border. This fact was made clear by Chaudhri Barkat Ali when he stated:

'... that everyday hundreds of refugees from India continue to arrive with tales of terror and disgust. Whatever is happening here in Sialkot, things very much like that are happening on the other side too - - let's make no mistake about it. It is not the collapse of Congress Muslims in Pakistan, apparently it is the collapse of Congress Hindus in India also. When refugees with stories of personal misfortunes land here, the politicians use them to their advantage to fan up further hatred.' (140)

The violence was uncontrollable and unimaginable. It completely destroyed the atmosphere of brotherhood, harmony, trust, love and solidarity and replaced it by hatred, disgust, murder, fire, rape and arson. The trains, too, fell a prey to violence: "Trains had been as much victims of violence as individuals. Many of them were stopped on the way and the Hindus butchered. "<sup>43</sup> It was tragic indeed. The Hindus felt utterly insecure in Pakistan, and the Muslims suddenly became thirsty for their blood.

The Muslims freely looted the Hindu houses and shops, and felt jubilant at these acts. Chaudhri Barkat Ali lamented this tendency of his brother Muslims, when he said to Lala Kanshi Ram: “ ‘All my arguments for peace have failed with my brother Muslims; they have ceased to be Muslims and have become *shaitans*’”(138)

All those tragic incidents spotlight the madness of communal fanaticism. Millions of innocent people were subjected to unbearable torture; confusion and embarrassment gripped them in the riot-hit places. Nahal's *Azadi* exquisitely depicts the psychology of the victims of the partition; Lala Kanshi Ram and other characters fully bring it out. Kanshi Ram had a very great love for Sialkot. But under the changed circumstances he was made to understand the implication of the word 'refugee'. The people had to go to the refugee camp to protect their lives. Lala Kanshi Ram faced the predicament of being a refugee in his own house. It sounded ironical and baffling, and was unbearable for him. He shouted agitatingly: “ ‘I was *born* around here, this is my *home* - - how can I be a refugee in my own home?’ ” (138) He felt weak and old, and the thought of having a fresh start again at an alien place among strange faces was very depressing. In sheer disgust and disappointment, he said to his wife, “ ‘Arun's mother, I'm an *old* man and I cannot begin all over again!’ ” (132) But the thought of leaving his home was far more distressing to him than that of starting business anew. He felt pangs of separation, and faced a deep psychological crisis: “The pinch was he should have to give up his land, this earth, this air. That's where the hurt lay! He breathed deep, filling his lungs with the air of the town to their utmost capacity, and tears welled up in his eyes. How could he give this earth up?” (132) He remembered his remote childhood,

and cried in agony: “ ‘We aren’t leaving yet’ ”(132) He even thought of becoming a Muslim and of staying in his hometown.

Lala Kanshi Ram felt offended when Abdul Ghani wanted him to leave and to make him a partner in his business. He knew that the decent part of Ghani was destroyed and “Argument couldn’t restore his sanity to him; only a calamity could.”(135) Lala Kanshi Ram told this the day his shop was looted. He was greatly shocked, and fell into a state of indecision. Everything looked changed, and he was an alien in his own house: “He now stood motionless, unable to decide what to do, as though he had come to the wrong house or were not the same man.” (137) He reflected that the mass violence was “ ‘really a failure of man’ ” (140) He thought of the causes of the tragic upheaval and concluded that “ ‘the English have let us down.’ ” (140) He believed that it was the duty of the English to protect people: “ ‘If today the man in the street feels insecure and if the government is powerless to protect his life and property, I hold the English responsible for that crime;’ ” (141) His agony at leaving his home found an outlet in his outburst against the Britishers. He said to Davidson very frankly: “ ‘...all that I had taken nearly *thirty* years to build is being lost because *you* refuse to protect me!’ ” (147) Lala Kanshi Ram blamed the English for having the biggest hand in the butchery.

The grain merchant felt very sad to find his wife and son packing for the refugee camp. He was greatly hurt, and his delicate feelings were stirred and shocked. He “watched them with an immense tightening of the heart. They were stripping the walls

bare, and Lala Kanshi Ram felt they were stripping his flesh from his body. The bone was showing - - whichever way he turned.” (144) The sight of the people leaving their homes and going to the refugee camps was very touching. Strong were the pangs of separation. The insistence of Mukunda’s mother on not going away, leaving her son behind, is symbolic of the attachment one has for one’s home. All efforts to drag her away failed, and she returned to her home in a state of frenzy.

Part II, entitled ‘The Storm’, graphically portrays the tragic brutality that followed partition. Life in the refugee camp in rains was a difficult one. But in spite of personal problems they faced, they felt happy and proud at the dawn of freedom. Lala Kanshi Ram lost his daughter and son-in-law in one of the many train-tragedies. There were horrifying accounts of what had happened to the train: “Hindus and Sikhs in the train were singled out and mercilessly slaughtered.” (171) The Hindus read their own tragic fate in these incidents. All of them were in mourning: “No tragedy was an isolated tragedy these days; it hurt each one of them, since the range and dimension of the blow was applicable to them all.” (171) The Hindus and Sikhs were cruelly butchered on the other side of the border. Their houses and property were set on fire. They were either annihilated or converted to Islam. But then similar was the tragedy of the Muslims in India; they, too, had fallen victims to the communal violence. The Muslims, who ran away from India and settled in Sialkot, did not look cheerful. Arun found them very sad, and he wanted to know the cause of their sadness: “They all looked unbelievably miserable. Now why in the name of Allah were they so sad? They

had got what they wanted, their Pakistan. Why this gloom?" (178) The burning of corpses produced a pathetic sight.

The dead lay together; the way they clung to one another when death overpowered them was very touching. The description of the communal frenzy moved all the sensible people with shame and sorrow:

The dead had been removed from the train and dumped there without sentiment or concern. It so happened many of them had their arms around each other or they were holding each other with their legs. And in the disintegration the fire brought to them, there was a constant *movement* in the heaps. Arms were climbing up or they were sliding down. Legs were yielding their hold or they were burying themselves deeper. And the eyes of one skull seemed to look into the eyes of another and send unspoken messages. For the other skull would nod, in a way saying it had quite understood. (184)

All these details - - the massacre in train, the burning of the selected houses, the heap of corpses and their burning without sentiment or concern - - show the immediate consequences of the partition. The communal venom is evident in Ghani's hatred and his barbarous statement about Madhu, Arun's sister: " '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!' " (185) It was enough to send a sensible man like Chaudhri

Barkat Ali into a fit of anger and excitement. These actions and utterances are an indelible blot on humanity.

The death of Madhu crushed Lala Kanshi Ram. He lost all hopes and heart in entertaining the thoughts of returning to the land he loved. He was angry with the leaders for their failure to read the whole situation correctly. He felt agitated at the call of the leaders, asking the minority to stay where they were. The loud appeal of Kripalani annoyed him very much. He lamented and felt aggrieved at the enormous bluff and helplessness of the leaders: "They had neither the power nor the intention of maintaining the minorities in their homes; they had not the power of saving their lives. They should have devised means of mass migration to begin with, before rushing to partition." (211) The failure of General Rees, an Englishman, was a great setback to Lala Kanshi Ram, for he had put his faith in the English General. The army men under him suffered from strong communal feelings. The communal loyalties made the men of the Boundary Force inactive. He heard with disgust "how the minorities in East Punjab and West Punjab were slaughtered while men of the Boundary Force looked on." (211) Even the governments were found to be involved in this mass massacre, and hence people were unable to save themselves: "The two new governments were parties to the fratricidal war, and how could unarmed men and women withstand organised slaughter?" (212)

The announcement of the Boundary Commission's award gave rise to unprecedented violence. Everyone knew "where he stood - - on a part of Pakistan, or of

India.” (213) The award pleased nobody: “Both sides felt they had been shabbily treated.” (214) The British Chairman of the Boundary Commission went out of India two days before the announcement of the award. He had performed an impossible task, and left the country, leaving the people to fight among themselves:

It was an impossible assignment; to cut a country into two in five weeks' time, especially when your fellow Indian judges on the Commission were warring with each other on communal grounds. He had ignored their rival claims, and as impartially as he could, divided the country - -and then left, leaving it to the communal parties to fight it out among themselves. (214)

Consequently, there was complete chaos. Neither of the governments knew its right and privileges in the area of the other. To bring its refugees safe to the homeland became the responsibility of the government. The local authorities offered all kinds of impediments to prevent the other government from functioning effectively.

Rahamathullah, the Camp Commander and an old classmate of Arun, showed no sympathy at the brutal killing of Madhu, and did not condemn it. When told of the ghastly train butchery, he remained unmoved and “sat stonily in his chair staring at the wall above Arun’s head, as if he saw on that blank wall explicitly spelled out a justification for what was happening.” (219) Prabha Rani studied Rahamatullah correctly. He criticised the Hindu code of conduct exclaiming with utter disgust: “ ‘Why must you Hindu boys go round making a sister of every woman?’ ” (225) He had

his eyes fixed on Sunanda, and he unsuccessfully sought Arun's help in achieving his heart's desire. He was unpardonably vulgar.

Arun promised Chandni, the chairwoman's daughter, to make her his wife. He thought that he could do so in the changed context of the partition: "The appalling misery they were going through had to have some meaning. They had to emerge different, modified, reborn. Otherwise one might as well shut being a man." (232) Arun had found a new identity for himself. In his present disposition, nothing - - Chandni's education, her status, her breeding, her poverty - - mattered to him: "He had found a new identity for himself, an identity which had partly been thrust on him by the surge of events, and which partly he had worked out for himself metaphysically." (233) It was the confidence in him that led him to say to his mother that he would marry Chandni. But the partition had a different impact on Sardar Jodha Singh; it made him mute: "His reaction to the partition had been typical of the men of his age: he had gone utterly mute." (243)

The violence in the trains made Lala Kanshi Ram give up the idea of going by train, and so he decided to join the foot convoy. There were the reports of brutal violence at Nankana Sahib, "The town where Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh faith, was born and which was the holiest of holiest for the Sikhs." (247) After the partition it had fallen in Pakistan, and it was reported that "All the Sikhs were massacred there and the shrine was closed." (248) The convoys were attacked on the way. It was common knowledge that only half the number of any convoy would reach

the destination safely. There were also starvation deaths: "They perished of hunger, or disease, or exposure or they were killed by violence." (259) The partition threw millions of people in flight. They were running away In search of a safe land, and their plight was miserable. Convoys of ten miles were not unusual, and they were common in both directions: "Virtually the entire five hundred and fifty miles of the border between East and West Punjab was used by the minorities to cross from one side to the other, the people heading for the points nearest to their own homes."(257)

The psychology of Sardar Niranjn Singh has been very brilliantly portrayed by Nahal. He was advised to cut his hair to escape being killed by the Muslims, for a man with hair was to be identified very soon. The safety of his family depended on his parting with the hair. But for Niranjn Singh it was a difficult proposition, for the thought that shaving off was a deflection from "the path of Dharma." (245) He was prepared to lose his life rather than to get his hair cut. All sincere advice to prefer safety to keeping of hair proved abortive. One day suddenly he agreed to get his hair cut. But he was in great agony. He could not reconcile himself with this humiliation. He gave himself up to flames shouting "in agony but distinctly and clearly: " 'I belong to Wahe guru, Wahe guru is great.' " (262) Sardar Niranjn Singh became a martyr. His views concerning his hair were quite clear. This martyrdom "was something they had heard of but not seen it happen." (262) His cry of pain while he was in the flames showed his attitude clearly: " 'Life I'll gladly lose, my Sikh *dharma* I won't!' " (262)

There were reports of the mass killing of Hindu prisoners inside the prison. Nur's letter to Arun on his departure from the refugee camp regretted the merciless killing. She wrote: " 'God alone knows why people are so full of hate.' " (266) The villages presented a deserted sight. People saw "with their own eyes the extent of the havoc." (283) The Hindu population had been almost completely wiped off. It "had been completely driven out or completely exterminated. Hindu and Sikh places of worship had obviously been defiled, because outside of them there were obscene words written in Urdu." (283) When the Indian army officers inquired about the Hindu families there "the bearded Muslims smiled insolently and said: 'Look for yourself.'" (283) Nahal gives, in detail, the picture of such villages to emphasise the dreadful consequences of the mad communal feelings: "In one small village of twenty houses, every single house had been destroyed and there was not a soul in sight. It looked a phantom village, the men were gone, the collapsed mud walls revealed broken *charpoys* and household goods in disarray, even the stray dogs had vanished from its only street." (283)

Lala Kanshi Ram was surprised to find Gangu Mal accepting Islam for the sake of retaining his property in the city. He decided to stay on there as a Muslim because India held no promise for him. Gangu Mal's conversion indicated the conversion of innumerable people; it spoke of the only possibility that was left for them, if they wanted to stay in Pakistan. Gangu Mal's conversion brought a great change in Bibi Amar Vati; she became extremely serious. Gangu Mal's conversion to Islam and his intentions to take a Muslim wife dawned upon Lala Kanshi Ram "the bare basic meaning of living, shorn of trimmings and embellishments." (270)

There was the thought of creating a new life in Lala Kanshi Ram. He did not accept defeat. The “tasks ahead of him were multitudinous and he faltered and fumbled in his steps.” (274) The novel makes a very close study of his psychology. The death of his daughter was a great blow to his shattered psyche. He had lost his home that he dearly and deeply loved. After Madhu’s brutal murder, he decided to travel to India, abandoning all hopes of ever returning to Sialkot. The loss of the brave spirit in Bibi Amar Vati deeply shocked him. He had now harder tasks ahead. As he went through the fields in a convoy, he was smitten by the beauty of the fields. The Punjab was in his blood, and he loved it immensely. The landscape, with an intensely Punjabi character, made him feel curiously invigorated.

Nahal describes, in detail, the shameful acts done by the people out of communal frenzy. The parade of the naked Hindu women at Narowal was a brutal tragedy. It highlighted the communal ire and showed how men touched the lowest ebb. The Muslims completely demoralised and humiliated them. *Azadi* furnished a very realistic and horrible account of these savage acts:

A number of abducted Hindu and Sikh women were in their custody. Many of the kidnapped women disappeared into private homes. A lone Muslim dragged a woman away, and kept her for his own exclusive use. Or he took her with the consent of other Muslims, converted her to Islam, and got married to her. The rest were subjected to mass rape, at times in public places and in the presence of

large gatherings. The rape was followed by other atrocities, chopping off the breasts, and even death. Many of the pregnant women had their wombs torn open. The survivors were retained for repeated rapes and humiliations, until they were parcelled out to decrepit wrecks - - the aged, the leftovers who couldn't find a wife, or those Muslims who wanted an additional wife. In the meantime more women were abducted and the cycle was repeated all over again. (293-94)

Women were paraded through the streets and the local authorities, the police and the military did not interfere in such matters.

When Arun reached near his new country, he was not excited and elated. Other refugees, including Arun's father, were overjoyed at the sight of their motherland. In a moment of intense excitement, Lala Kanshi Ram chanted "*Vande Mataram*" loudly. But there were no such emotions in Arun. He had lost all strong emotions for independent India after such a ghastly tragedy. He had left his love behind, and had lost his Chandni forever. There was a strong storm in Arun, and he behaved in an abnormal way. He cried and shouted, and ran at the head of the convoy and again at the rear of it. All these acts symbolised the storm that raged within him.

From Dera Baba Nanak, Lala Kanshi Ram and his family moved to Amritsar. The relations did not offer them shelter, and so they feared that they would be turned into wandering gypsies. They were disillusioned, for their troubles were not over the moment they reached Indian territory. The houses of the relations were already

overcrowded. Local people resented the presence of refugees. There was confusion. The government had not made adequate arrangements to receive the refugees. Whatever practical help the refugees received came from the private charitable trusts. The government proved a failure: The government was ill prepared and ill equipped to handle them. Nearly two months after independence, it still had not come to grips with the situation.” (326)

Amritsar presented a fearful look. The Muslims were driven out of the city. Their houses were destroyed. The house of the Hindus and Sikhs were also damaged. At Amritsar there was a procession of the Muslim women paraded through the Bazar. It was a sequel to the Narowar incidents. All kinds of shouts and insults were hurled down at these hapless women. At the station, Muslims were mercilessly massacred in the train. The Indian soldiers, like their counterparts in the Pakistani army, failed to protect the victims. At these tortures many refugees were gay and elated, but Lala Kanshi Ram felt sorry and guilty and looked at the ground in humiliation. The tragic scene did not end there. The Hindus and Sikhs were thirsty for the Muslim blood. A train of the Muslim refugees was derailed at Ambala and the Muslims were mercilessly put to death: “They were laid out beside the track, one dead next to another, and they were covered with sheets. It was clear from certain sheets there was only a child below; the corpse was so small.” (334-35)

The description of the terrible slaughter of the Muslims speaks of the objectivity that Nahal maintains in recording the dreadful deeds. The Muslims in Pakistan

attacked the foot convoys, looted and burnt the Hindu houses, abducted, raped and insulted the Hindu women and massacred the people in trains. They, too, paraded the Muslim women through the market and hurled all kinds of humiliation at them. The Hindus in India were as guilty as the Muslims in Pakistan. This fact was very well stressed by Lala Kanshi Ram when he said: “ ‘We are all equally guilty.’ ” (339) He averred that the Hindus, too, had indulged in the shameful acts of butchery when he said to his wife Prabha Rani: “ ‘Each of those girls in that procession at Amritsar was someone’s Madhu, and there must have been many amongst the dead you saw at Ambala.’ ” (339) He ceased to hate the Muslims because he knew that “ ‘whatever the Muslims did to us in Pakistan, we’re doing it to them here!’ ” (338) He felt guilty and looked for forgiveness: “ ‘We have sinned as much. We need *their* forgiveness!’ ” (340)

The plight of the refugees in overcrowded trains, carrying people on the roofs and in engines and on every imaginable part of them, has been very vividly portrayed in the novel. It was a terrible travel by train that brought Lala Kanshi Ram and his family to Delhi among unfriendly faces. The behaviour of the officer at the crowded station was very shocking. Lala Kanshi Ram faced the problem of resettlement. He knew the difficulties the partition had brought, and the inefficiency of the government to cope with the situation. He thought of his moral responsibility to find a solution to the problem: “They had been pushed into this partition, they didn’t ask for it, didn’t sanction it in any form whatsoever. And no arrangements had been made to meet the consequences.” (345)

Tired of the camp life, Lala Kanshi Ram thought of living under the cemented roof. His efforts to find a private home in Delhi proved futile. The Custodian officers were unfriendly and hungry for bribe. They were refugees once, but now they did not understand the difficulties of the displaced. Frustration, futile search for a home day after day, the hard attitude of the officers, and the big bribes the officers wanted made Lala Kanshi Ram look pallid and helpless. Nobody in Delhi appreciated the idea of letting out rooms to the Punjabis; they were feared to be very quarrelsome. Delhi looked gay and showed no signs of the towns in the Punjab and Bengal that lay in total ruin. The difficulties tore Lala Kanshi Ram to pieces and made him feel weak. The man, who had never accepted defeat in his life, burst into tears before the Custodian Officer, but to no avail. The difficulties faced by Lala Kanshi Ram throw light on the crisis that was created by the partition. His was a shattered soul. The only feeling of establishing understanding and intimacy with his wife after a long interval was on the way to Delhi at Kurukshetra where he was actually able to converse with Prabha Rani. Otherwise he was a man, crushed by the weight of the hour.

The third part of the novel, named 'The Aftermath', shows Lala Kanshi Ram facing tremendous difficulty in putting in his claim for the lost wealth. His regular visits to the officer yielded no substantial result. Bibi Amar Vati felt happy at the news of Gandhiji's assassination; she thought that it was good he had gone: " 'He brought nothing but misery to us.' " (354) She felt that all their troubles came as a result of partition, and " 'it was Gandhi who sanctioned the partition.' " (367) Arun held other Congress leaders, like Nehru and Patel, responsible for the partition. He said they had

turned a deaf ear to Gandhiji: “ ‘In the final days, they didn’t listen to him.’ ” (367) In Lala Kanshi Ram’s family every one was sad at Gandhi’s death; no one ate anything. In “the pride with which each man stood,” (368) Lala Kanshi Ram notices for the first time the blessing *Azadi* had brought to the Indians. In the pre-Independence days people could not feel publicly and openly for the death of an Indian leader. There was the fear of betrayal, violence and persecution. But today “the men stood in pride - - evenly balanced, firm, sure of themselves. Unlike the past, there was no leader urging them to demonstrate their feelings. The feelings had their own recourse. Lala Kanshi Ram raised his head with pride and stretched back his shoulders. He was unrestricted now, he was untrammelled.” (369)

The once well-to-do grain merchant of Sialkot and the family and friends grouped around him formed his little world whose fate reflected the true dimensions of the partition, which brought untold misery, put an end to the neighbouring bonds of friendship irrespective of religion, forced separation of the young lovers, and brought destruction to the millions of people. Lala Kanshi Ram lamented the haste the leaders showed in embracing freedom, conceding the dreadful partition: “Freedom was on its way and nothing could have stopped it. If only they had not given in so easily to partition.” (369) The partition made Arun feel lonely. Family ties were snapped and even thinking about Sunanda did not work: “Arun had lost contact with her too” (371) Lala Kanshi Ram underwent tremendous loss which “could never be made good, never atoned for.” (369) Nahal portrays effectively the small world of Lala Kanshi Ram and his family and friends, their placid, easy and happy lives before the partition, their

terrible misfortunes during the undeclared civil war, and their completely changes lives after the storm was over.

Obviously, the novelist fully succeeds in delineating the true dimensions of the events that accompanied the partition, showing their physical and psychological impacts on human life. The novel brings out not only the irreparable material losses, but also the loss of personality caused by this tragic event. The immediate after effect of the gruesome historic event on man is shown through the condition of Lala Kanshi Ram: "He felt himself standing before a tunnel, where he could not see the other end. How long was the tunnel? And it all looked so unnecessary, so superfluous, to him - - what they were going through." (369) Nahal is the only writer who has been able to evince the tremendous psychological impact of the event on the people - - viz., the complete loss of contact and communication with one another throwing them into a state of complete isolation and alienation, and making each a prisoner of his own "single self." The last few paragraphs of the novel are highly significant in this regard. Lala Kanshi Ram, Prabha Rani and Arun - - the three major characters, belonging to one family - - all suffer immeasurably from this malady: "The three of them lay fully awake. Not being able to fathom their minds and feeling restless about it. Not being able to talk to each other and feeling guilty about it. Not being able to go to sleep and feeling angry about it. A sadness weighed on their hearts, and each felt stifled, crushed." (370) Lala Kanshi Ram felt that he had lost all contacts and communications with his wife and son, and was unable to lay bare his heart to them, and the other two also felt the same:

That was another ruin *azadi* caused. He (Lala Kanshi Ram) had lost the ability to communicate with his family. He couldn't establish a contact either with his wife or with his son. The affection was there. The concern was there. Their respect for him was there, too. Yet the contact was broken. Something had driven them apart. No, he couldn't reach them. For a few moments he had succeeded in the train - - with his wife. That wouldn't come again.

In their beds, Arun and Prabha Rani too were awake... Arun wanted to sit up and speak to his father, but he couldn't. He felt a wall between them, a hostility of a kind, he didn't know for what. His father had been superb throughout, he had carried his pain nobly, and Arun loved him for that... Yet he could not form a connection with him.

Prabha Rani knew her husband was awake, but she did not feel like calling out to him. She was caught in the same snare. She had lost the ease that was between them, and had become confined to her own single self. (369-70)

Inevitably, the vivid description of the loss of contact and communication in people creates a depressing effect on the reader, marring much of the heartening and uplifting note of the closing section of the narrative. The last three paragraphs of the novel, describing Sunanda's sewing machine at top speed, are highly suggestive and significant; they present symbolically the mechanised life without real feelings and contacts. But the sewing machine, with all its continuous, rhythmic movements, sounds

and vibrations, also suggests the continuous, rhythmic flow of life. These last paragraphs of the book, indeed, have more layers of meaning than one:

In the adjoining room, Sunanda's sewing machine was still running at top speed. Occasionally it stopped. Occasionally it made only a slight noise, as when the wheel had moved only a circle or two. And then it went wheezing on at top speed, as though it would never Stop.

Arun tried to imagine her. She must be biting the thread with her white teeth and with those delicately sensuous, delicately curved lips. She must be running the wheel back and forth with her hand. Now the tender hand with its tapering fingers must be on the handle attached to the wheel, for she was running it real fast...

The machine went whirring on, its wheel turning fast and its little needle moving up and down, murmuring and sewing through the cloth. The doors of both the rooms shook with its vibration. (370-71)

The partition made Lala Kanshi Ram feel the loss of his dignity and respect. He discarded wearing the turban: "A turban was a sign of respect, of dignity. He had no dignity left. He now wore a forage cap. Or he sat bareheaded, advertising his bumble position to the world. (366)

## **Chapter 5**

**Other Novelists on 'The Partition'**

## Chapter V

### Other Novelists on 'The Partition'

Of late three Sikh writers - - Raj Gill, H.S.Gill and K.S.Duggal - - have dealt with the partition comprehensively in *The Rape, Ashes and Petals* and *Twice Born Twice Dead* respectively, though none of them emulates Nahal and Khushwant Singh in this regard and evinces any striking originality. Raj Gill's *The Rape* explores the theme of partition quite competently. It reveals the selfishness of the political leaders, criticises the British for their policy of 'divide and rule', shows the religious fanaticism leading to mass violence and shameful acts, holds both the Hindus and the Muslims equally guilty for the ghastly events, and communicates the novelist's vision of life at the time of the partition. The dehumanised society of those terrible times and the unforgettable scenes and sights of the tragic historic events have been fully delineated in it.

The novelist scrutinises the factors responsible for the partition of the country. He criticises the politicians of all kinds and communities, responsible for the division of the country and for the shameful events that followed it, he does not spare any leader and party - - Gandhi, Nehru, Patel, Jinnah, Master Tara Singh, the British Government, the Congress and the Muslim League - - all become the subject of criticism. Dharam Gopal, in a clear voice, accused the British of attempting to disrupt

the unity among the main communities in India. He accused Cripps of having 'a glib tongue and a scheming brain'. The writer shows the selfishness of the political parties in hastily agreeing to the plan of the partition proposed by the Viceroy. Dalipjit, who ignored the ghastly details of riots in the newspapers, clearly perceived through the news columns and editorials that the division of the country was imminent:

Partition of the country had become an established fact. Lord Mountbatten had manoeuvred to bring around the Congress leadership to agree to the partition formula using the native astuteness of an Indian Civil Servant, V.P.Menon. The bait before the Congress was quicker than transfer of power to the natives. The Congress had bit at it avidly just as the Muslim majority had succumbed to the temptation. What they had to settle down to in the end was division of such provinces, namely Punjab and Bengal. (*The Rape*, 57)

Dalipjit was angry at the unholy game of political opportunism, and saw the victory of the Viceroy in the shrewd move. He marked the weakness in the Indian leaders, and feared that even the iron man, Sardar Patel, would succumb to the plan of the division of the country: "He could feel the implicit triumph of Lord Mountbatten in choosing V.P.Menon as his unofficial agent who in turn was to exploit Sardar Patel's dream of absolute dominance of the Congress." (57) Dalipjit clearly observed that the selfish interests of the politicians would greatly harm the national interest. In his assessment of the situation he found that Rajaji Rajagopalachari and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad had already conceded the partition of the country. The only hope to check

the unfortunate tide of this division was Nehru, who, he thought, “wanted independence for an undivided India, at least an India which was not divided on religious grounds.” (58) To Dalipjit, Gandhi remained unpredictable, and he could not believe him. Many of the moves of this saint statesman were unintelligible and inexplicable, and he could not make out what led to Gandhiji’s acceptance of the partition. Gandhi’s outburst at a prayer meeting was baffling both to the Congress and to the Viceroy: “ ‘Even if the whole of India burns, we shall not concede Pakistan, even if the Muslim League demanded it at the point of the sword’. ” (60) Dalipjit, the chief character in the novel made no secret of his dislike for Gandhi. He was sick of him and dreamt of shooting him. It was this feeling that, at a later stage, caused a great agitation in him when the news of Gandhi’s assassination reached him. He could not believe it:

How could Gandhi be shot dead? He was not living. He had shot Gandhi long back, years ago. They could not shoot a dead Gandhi. It was nonsense. He chuckled to himself in his unchallenged superiority over the men around him who were gullible enough to believe in someone’s claim who just craved the credit that he already held. He chuckled again and swam around gleefully in his ocean of warmth. (288)

To his horror, the hero of the novel found that the selfish political leaders were interested only in themselves; they had no sense of involvement in the people they were representing. Dalipjit was upset to think of the fate of the people entrusted in the hand of such irresponsible and unpredictable leaders. He thought that their betrayal would

grieve, irritate and annoy the people, and that no leader could be believed. Gandhi, Nehru, Azad, Tara Singh, Jinnah - -none of them could be trusted. He meditated upon the selfish policies of Jinnah:

Jinnah had won the round. He had won it against the Congress, a party which he hated. He wanted to harm it as much as he could. He had succeeded sufficiently. He was not concerned with the people, the Muslim or the Sikh. He never was. He was not a leader. He had grabbed leadership and sported it as a tribal leader sports rare coloured feathers in his headgear. He did not have the welfare of the Muslims in his mind or he would not have ignored the eight crore remaining Muslims in India. That thin and withdrawn man was as remote from the Muslim masses as he was from the Hindu or the Sikh. (61)

Sham Singh also made no secret of his indignation against the leaders. He saw a foul game in the whole unfortunate development of the division of the country. He remembered Nehru's strong statement against the partition and lamented that even a political leader of his calibre, who thought that the split "was like cutting of the head to get rid of the headache" (67), had inexplicably grown silent. Udhe suspected the secret ambition of becoming the Prime Minister of India in Nehru's agreeing to the proposed partition. Josh, the only communist in the village, found Patel anxious to serve the cause of the capitalists. He said that Jinnah was "a devil in coat, pants and necktie"(67), who wanted "to live like the English and so he will as a Governor-General of Pakistan." (67) He labelled Nehru as Fabian and did not see in him the enthusiasm of a

socialist. Sham Singh railed at the communists and pointed out the corruption in their organisation. Gandhi was vehemently detested for playing a double game. It was greatly regretted that the Sikh leaders remained inactive in the pursuit of their proclaimed aims. The Sikh community was in a strange dilemma; their leaders talked of fight and violence but did nothing. Jinnah did not fear the threat of the Sikhs, and was composed and confident of his powers. Gill points out that Nehru never took Gandhi "as a political guide" (69) and accepted his leadership "as an expedience to an end." (69) The Sikhs had no faith in Baldev Singh's abilities, and reposed a general trust and confidence in Giani Kartar Singh and Master Tara Singh. The latter's historic drawing of sword in the Assembly House in Lahore and his call to strike against the Muslim League had endeared him to the Sikh masses. But the insistence of the Congress on non-violence and the Sikh leaders' lack of initiative to negotiate gave a rude shock and disappointment to their community. The only choice left for the Sikhs was to prepare themselves to face the danger that lurked in their eyes. Dangerous times were ahead. Disappointed by their leaders, they had decided to meet the enemy themselves:

The net result was that the Sikhs started preparing with guns and spears not to obtain what they were denied but to hold on what they had, to meet the onslaught by the Muslims which they vaguely knew would break upon them and which was to be fought back if they were to survive. (70)

The novel records the fierce communal riots, the inhuman atrocities, the burning down of villages and the massive killing of the people, the three month-long communal violence in Gurgaon, the pitched battles in the different parts of the Punjab, the firing of the troops, the massacre of the Sikhs and Hindus in Rawalpindi and Multan and the innumerable cruelties perpetrated by people out of sheer communal frenzy. It relates to the horrors of chopping off women's breasts and the shameful scene of nude women leading the Muslim procession. Dalipjit did not find anything to celebrate on the day of the transfer of power; he only felt that 'the red-faced monkeys' have been substituted by 'the black-faced lemur' to continue the chair of slavery for the people. His mother expressed her hurt feelings at the turn the events had taken for worse. She, too, grew bitter at the word 'independence', and expressed her contempt for it in a piercing, hysterical voice:

"Ashes be on the head of such independence"... "They burn your houses, they take your women and they kill your women and they kill your children, and you call it independence. Making people homeless is independence! True, it is, in a way, you're made free; no land, no house, no cattle, no work. All the time is yours and all the world is yours to wander about." (65)

The above outburst expressed the distressed feelings of the people who saw danger and disaster clearly; they knew that they had to suffer for the misdeeds of their leaders who rode in motor cars and appeared in clean, white clothes. The suffering

humanity in West Pakistan could not celebrate the Independence Day. Dalipjit expressed the grievous sentiments of the victims of the partition in a severe tone:

“I say, Father, after all, how do they expect us the Sikhs and the Hindus in Pakistan to celebrate: by setting fire to our homes; by pinning the heads of our children on lances and sporting them in the streets: by cutting off the breasts of your mothers and sisters?” (66)

Kartar Singh feared shameful and rough treatment at the hands of the Muslims. In a very sarcastic tone he told Dipu that the Muslims would hurl all kinds of brutalities at the Sikhs and Hindus. He praised Islam lavishly but expressed his utter distrust of the Muslims. He alluded to history to point out that wickedness had always been a convenient device for the Muslims; they could not remain loyal, good and dependable. They professed themselves to be the followers of Islam, but their actions showed them indulging in all kinds of nefarious activities against the spirit of their religion. He voiced his hatred for the Muslims emphatically:

“... Even if I’m the army-trained man here, I won’t assure that I’ll kill a million and a quarter Muslims. I won’t be able to do that with a tank mounted with four machine guns, in four directions. And then, how do I know, son, that I won’t be burnt alive in bed before I knew what was happening? Or that I won’t be stabbed in the back while defecating out in the fields? I tell you, I’m afraid of my own Muslim menials though they swear loyalty by the Prophet and cry at the

mention of their turning hostile. I don't believe them. Muslims are always disloyal, undependable. Their history's full of such instances. Did they not turn against their own Prophet and the sons of their Prophet? and the Mughals - - son dethroning the father, the brother. In fact these Muslims aren't what their Prophet Mohammed wanted them to be. I tell you, brother, if you know what the Prophet Mohammed taught, you'd want to be a Muslim yourself. But these here are just pigs, deceivers and betrayers." (66-67)

The future had more horrible sights in store for the Punjab than what had already been witnessed there so far. Nehru felt that the pre-partition violence showed ruin and destruction; he regretted the inhuman violence and criticised men's beastly deeds:

... "I have seen ghastly sights and I have heard of behaviour by human beings which would degrade brutes. All that has happened in the Punjab is intimately connected with political affairs. If there is a grain of intelligence in any person he must realise that whatever political objective he may aim at, this is not the way to attain it. Any such attempt must bring, as it has in a measure brought, ruin and destruction." (71)

Raj Gill points out the utter confusion of the people on the other side of the yet to be exactly demarcated border. Violence gripped the struggling people, and unprecedented scenes of bestial horror were in the offing. Terrible destruction was in sight: "Destruction it was to be, unforeseen, unpredicted, and on an unprecedented

scale; destruction that choked the tears in the eye and the cry in the throat, destruction that was to redden the pages of history for all time to come.” (71)

Raj Gill spotlights the brutality and violence the Sikhs suffered at the hands of the Muslims in the newly created Pakistan. Also, he shows the plight of the Sikhs and their flight in search of a safe home on the Indian soil. Unprecedented caravans of evacuees in Pakistan was seen - - it was sixty miles long, and there were fifteen thousand carts in it. The novel portrays the planned attacks of the Muslims on the people pulling out of Pakistan. The panic-stricken people of the village lived in great danger during those terrible days. The army and the police were employed to kill the Hindus and the Sikhs. General Singh told his audience that the Muslims called themselves aliens and wanted to carry with them a piece of land. But this was not enough for them: “They don’t stop at that. They want your blood and bones, your houses, your lands and even your women... These don’t belong to this country. They must be fought. They must be chastised. You have to do it...”(103-04) With very forceful and eager argument, the General pleaded to the people to fight against the aliens within the country. The apparently short, stiff-lipped General undertook a great task and went from village to village secretly asking people to rise against, and strike, the Muslim League government and its lusty followers. He called the Muslims traitors.

The novel delineates, in detail, the massive and unprecedented violence of those tragic days. The turn of events made anyone feel that civil war was a foregone conclusion. The option before the villagers was either to fight to victory or to flee to

safety. The partition award touched off brutal violence in the Punjab. Even before the announcement of the award, Lahore and Amritsar had seen the ghastly scenes of violence. The award brought the normal life to a stand still; people, filled with fear, decided to stay at the place of safety:

The civil administration started to collapse. The offices were opened only to be closed again. Business transactions came to a dead halt. It was common for the police to abscond since they were more concerned with rushing back home and saving whatever they could of their families and properties. Trains were running late and often did not run at all. Drivers could not be found for the trains running through hostile areas. (129-30)

There was complete chaos with no one willing to control and overcome the tide of violence. To quote the novelist:

Stations were being attacked and the army stood helpless, capable of taking control but handling the situation incapably, the British officer not depending upon the loyalty of a communal group to general command, the Indian officer not told to do anything, and the general ranks brooding sourly at the thoughtless bloodshed and at the incapability of the leaders to size up the dangers and move accordingly. (130)

The Sikhs let loose their cattle in the standing crop to destroy it with the intentions to prevent the Muslims from profiting from the Sikh's hard labour. The exodus started and the violence increased. The trains were attacked and the passengers were butchered. It became extremely hazardous to travel by train:

There was news of two trainloads of people murdered, one on the Indian side and the other on the Pakistan side. A trickle of exodus had already started from the western districts of Punjab. Exodus at the larger scale was afoot from the North West Frontier. It could gain momentum because of the paucity of the trains in the absence of the engine drivers. (131)

The anarchy prevailed and there was seen no discrimination between the innocent and the guilty, the friendly and the hostile. Harassed and tortured, people left their dear possessions behind and set out for shelter. Butchering followed and no leader could explain the cause of the aimless, irrational and beastly killings. The announcement of the boundary was greeted with a holocaust.

It is remarkable that Raj Gill, in spite of showing the scenes of brutal violence, maintains a commendable impartiality in his depiction of the incidents. He holds all the communities responsible for the dire events. He shows the loads of corpses on both sides of the border and paints vividly the plight of the Sikhs and Hindus in Pakistan. The rough and humiliating treatment meted out to the Muslims on the Indian soil also

does not escape his vigilant eyes. He objectively describes the holocaust that immediately followed the announcement of the partition thus:

The Sikhs and the Hindus set with vengeance to scorch out the Muslim population from East Punjab as a belated vindication of the Hindus and Sikhs who were massacred in Rawalpindi. The repercussions were equally dreadful in Pakistan. Army tanks were used in Sheikhapur to mow down the non-Muslim population sheltering in the cotton mills. Armed forces connived at the general shooting of the Sikh and Hindu refugees awaiting evacuation in the Lyallpur camp. Police constabulary was employed in the senseless killing of the departing Hindu population in Jhang and Multan. (158-59)

The novelist points to the riots preceding the exodus of Muslims from the Indian scene, and to the loot of the Muslim houses following the departure of the inhabitants for Pakistan: "The movable property from the Muslim houses was looted within an hour of their departure. The houses were denuded down to the mud-plaster of the walls and the floors. In some cases the doors and windows were also removed." (190) The writer states that the religious fanaticism had become commonplace: "The communal killing was tantamount to scavenging - - a Sabbath bath of blood to the earth." (191) The people, who indulged recklessly in the violence, had lost sight of human values. Dalipjit realised to his horror and grief that "killing was no more a vindication. It was not even a punishment. Killing was weeding. Killing was a sport of cannibals. Killing was witches' Sabbath. It was debased, perverted, sickening." (191) The Muslims

surprisingly organised an attack on Indian soil, and with the help of the Baluch army carried away with them two Sikh girls. The incident made Dalipjit feel greatly distressed. He felt that the Sikhs were not safe even on the Indian side of the border. But, in the other hand, the plight of the Muslim women at the hands of refugees in India was indescribable; they became an object of amusement to men, and were no better than playthings:

She knew there were other Muslim women kept in the village. She would not want to draw even a dying breath of the foul atmosphere in which they lived. They were the playthings of men, their captives, women who proved lustful indulgence. Women who you could use to satisfy your sexual perversion. (219-20)

The writer, thus, impartially paints the ruthless, inhuman and irrational violence taking place on both sides of the border during those terrible times. His unprejudiced attitude is abundantly clear when he remarks:

That which happened this side of the boundary was in no way less ghastly, inhuman, and disgusting than that which happened across the border. Value of human life had fallen below that of the *pariah* dog. (191)

Raj Gill tries vigorously to find out the causes leading to the ghoulish events, and graphically presents the untold agonies suffered by the people of the Punjab as an

inevitable consequence of the partition. One disaster followed another and each produced reaction elsewhere. The plight of the refugees in their mass exodus from the West Punjab was simply horrible. Pakistani army killed the Hindus and the Sikhs. Dalipjit thought that a limited number of the Indian troops were inadequate to save the evacuees in West Pakistan. People on their way to a safe land experienced immense hardship. Essential commodities became difficult to get. Lakha Singh, who carried his eighty-year-old mother on his back, felt extremely tired and thought of ways to get rid of her. To escape the exhausting exercise of carrying her, he desired to put her into the canal to die silently; but the good sense in him saved her. The other day he buried her under the pretext that she was dead, but the plan failed and he was subject to humiliation. Happily the old mother died soon to the relief of his grief-stricken son. The incident showed how quickly the things changed for the worst and how the hard times made people self-centred. Hypocrisy of morals was evident everywhere; no one thought of the other's good without having a personal interest. Things changed with lightning speed. The danger of the women being disgraced by the Muslims in the wake of their attack on the caravan had assigned Dalipjit the job to push the reluctant women and children into the well. The object was to save honour. The refugees felt that their only hope on that desperate march was the Indian military. The scene in the bungalow where the people stayed on their tiresome and hazardous journey reflected death rather than life. Dalipjit was filled with fear and remorse at the way his dear ones and neighbours had lost their lives on the way:

He would experience the tangible touch of the fear in his heart all over again. Jasmit's father dying of cholera; Amla delirious with fever; Kundan dying from a bullet; Sokhi dying because he drank from a poisoned well. (192-93)

In the Indian village Dalip heard that his relatives, friends and allies on this side of the border "killed as ruthlessly as the Muslims in Pakistan" (193)

The anarchic and disorganised way of the forced transfer of population baffled all political leaders, Nehru thought that if it was to take place, it should have been done in a methodical and organised way. The difficulties of these helpless people were many and intricately complex. Ironically, the free food, served to the crawling refugees on the Indian soil, claimed many lives. On the way the long march of the hungry people dried and failed their digestive juices, and so in the safe land of their desire they fell prey to a sudden, fatal colic attack. Their homeland raised in them the visions of starting a new life of love and plenty again. But, unfortunately, death overtook them suddenly. The reunion among the family members showed no sign of happiness or tragedy; it marked a complete resignation. However, bereft of all feelings to cry, laugh or weep, the refugees found new hopes in the Indian soil. They felt a kind of relief and the land bustled with activities. A great change overtook the people after coming over to India. The old spirit of fraternity and love vanished; suffering reduced them to brutes and made them lose their human attributes. In fact, they were completely changed:

Something was happening to them, something subtle, radical, changing their personalities, their outlook, their behaviour. The community feeling, the sense of

oneness and the well-known, generous, extrovert spirit of the people all disappeared, There were now the hurts, hungry brutes, who fought, destroyed, killed. (235)

Obviously, the natives did not receive the influx of the refugees generously, and took them to be aliens. The government thought them to be extra burden on the treasury. The refugees felt hurt and grieved at this deep feeling of resentment among their new neighbours. They ‘felt it, suffered it, and became all the more bitter and, hence, unreasonable.’ (235) Thus the things went wrong with the refugees even after the riots were over. The natives did not like them, as they thought that the things left behind by the Muslims were theirs. The novelist portrays the frustrated psychology of the refugees, who, out of sheer bitterness, turned on themselves, and indulged in senseless destruction. The dejection and the feeling of having been betrayed made them feel lonely and miserable. Their fighting among themselves was only a expression of their inner feelings. The troubled times brought a tremendous change in values and the refugees could not remain normal human beings. Amro told Dalip of these changes in a matter-of-fact way:

“And don’t forget Dipu, these people aren’t normal people any more. If a man would impersonate his dead father and a man would present his own daughter as wife to receive a paltry grant of fifty rupees or a sewing machine or a bag of wheat he would do anything else.” (268)

Egged by the same motive force, Dalip's father almost killed Laila, the Muslim beloved of Dalip. However, owing to a rare combination of moral and physical strength in her, she could stand up even after being raped by the father of the man she dearly and passionately loved.

Focussing on the core of the tragedy of the partition, *The Rape* narrates the story of those dreadful days mainly through Dalipjit, a village Sikh boy. The tension-packed days are described in detail. The partition was considered almost a certainty and there were hectic preparations, especially among the young people, to fight out the Muslims. The atmosphere looked uncertain and uneasiness was evidently discernible. There was tremendous tension and women sought solace in exchanging despair. The times showed people's lust for hatred and killing. The horrid, ghastly details of the riots have been furnished through the newspapers. Dalip became the leader of the group to fight the Muslims. The eighteen-year-old Sikh lad was obsessed with three equally strong emotions - - loyalty for his family, obligation for his community and love for Jasmit, a girl who did not belong to his class and status. He thought that the changed attitude brought by the riots would enable him to marry Jasmit. He, in the company of his associates, showed the newly gained confidence, courage, planning and competence. However, he felt perturbed at the thought of killing Jalal, and realised that the essential nature of man and beast still survived in him.

The mass exodus started signalling the end of the era; people, overpowered by human bestiality, left their homes and started on a weary search for a new home. In the

process they suffered greatly. Suffering brought a great change in Dalip, his father and all others. Dalip saved Leila and brought her home after her father committed suicide. Leila loved him, for he saved her life. Dalip suffered psychologically and thought himself guilty of the death of Leila's father. The suffering made him lose emotionally and he did not feel the impact of the grief. But when his father raped Leila, he realised that the world was terribly sick.

True, **The Rape** graphically depicts the sudden, steep decline in all human values and negation of life at the time of the partition. Dalipjit, the hero of the novel, found the refugees different kinds of people who had lost all values; they knew how to loot, fight, rape, kill and destroy. The partition was followed by the emergence of a heinous and detestable world on both sides of the border between India and Pakistan. People were not normal human beings in any sense of the term. Dalipjit, who was completely stunned to find on his return home that his beloved was raped by his own father, was unable to comprehend the tragic world all around him, marked by the betrayal of a girl by her lover, of a country by her people and of a son by his father. It was Amro who explained him the situation plausibly and correctly:

They aren't the same people among whom we were born and brought up, to whom honour was more precious than all their lands and buildings, who drew blood to establish integrity of their character rather than to prove the cussedness of their victim or to humiliate their adversary... Nobody in the whole village is what they ought to have been - -respectable, upright, honourable working

people. They are a betrayed lot. No doubt they won't hesitate to betray. It's a game now. The betrayed must betray anybody, everybody, their own kith and kin, parents, brothers and sisters. There's no ethic involved in it. The rules of the games permit our pacing, out bidding, outsmarting the other; the game that was started way back by the primitives. (269)

For the refugees, everything, except devastation and violence, vanished; they were completely oblivious of the "fanaticism of Jinnah, the idealism of Nehru, the pragmatism of Patel, and the spiritualism of Gandhi." (128) The novelist fully succeeds in presenting the dehumanised society of those terrible times. Dalipjit was mad with indignation and he felt an uncontrollable urge to kill someone. But as his father was killed in the riots and he killed Gandhi, the Father of the Nation, in his imagination, his rage cooled down considerably. The novel ends on a note of tranquillity and a genuine understanding between the two young hearts, Dalipjit and Leila, showing both of them out of "death daze".

"... Don't hate me for what I did not do. I know I should have died rather than showed you my face. But I could not without meeting you once, without telling you. You would have had a guilty conscience perhaps you were the cause of my death. I did not want you to live down an unknown guilt... Now I will die in peace with a clear conscience and the knowledge, that I did not betray you, your trust and your affection. I never craved your love. I knew it was for Jassi. But I was never in doubt of your trust and affection" ...

Yes I know it, Leila, he said to himself as he watched the enchanting confusion of a rueful smile on her lips and glistening tears in her eyes. (297-98)

Towards the close of the book also, the novelist, through the protagonist, offers us a positive interpretation of the all-pervasive human slaughter during the days of the partition. He thought that a man killed another just to live, though all this might look absurd. The Muslims killed the Hindus and the Hindus massacred the Muslims in a bid to live, and not to die. (296)

In fact, the novel is a brilliant exploration of the theme of the partition. It not only narrates a touching tale of the times of the partition, but also presents some unforgettable scenes and sights of the great historic events artistically. It communicates the novelist's vision of life, his unique interpretation of life through the depiction of the political and historic events. The novel is remarkably vivid in recording the scenes and happenings of those terrible days, and is very profound and positive in its delineation of the theme. Through Dalipjit the novelist has shown the ravaging consequences of the partition. The Hindu-Muslim hatred, loot, arson, killing, rape, abduction, mass exodus, the psychological system, the expression of frustration in the victims, and the fact that both sides killed and looted and were equally guilty - - all these find excellent expression in the novel. The novelist fervently pleads for forgiveness and appears to echo Shakespeare's message in *The Tempest* that virtue lies in forgiveness, and not in

vengeance. He accentuates that the cycle of revenge must be liquidated through love, sympathy, kindness, understanding, restraint and forgiveness.

H.S.Gill's *Ashes and Petals* presents the brutal violence of the days immediately following the partition of the country, and evokes the trauma and turbulence of the tragic times. It spotlights the terrible plight of the refugees who crossed the border, the utter indifference of the officials in charge of receiving the mass exodus from the West Punjab, the frustration and loss of all values in the starving people standing in long queue for bread and pulse, the problem of their settlement, the fearful communal riots in Meerut years after the shock of 1947, the impact of the incident of a day of train disaster on the mind of the old Risaldar, the love and adventure of a Sikh Cavalry Officer and his Muslim girl, etc. In fact, the novel shows the variegated dimensions of the hate-love relationship between the main communities of the country.

Unlike Raj Gill's *The Rape* that covers a brief period of less than a year of the dreadful days of the partition, *Ashes and Petals* spreads over a longer period of the post-independence days. It exposes the stupidity of lust for blood of those tragic times when human values sank very low and the good old days of harmony and love were completely lost. H.S.Gill points out that there was perfect harmony among the Hindus and the Muslims in the villages in the days preceding the division of the country. But the partition shattered the age-old relationship and made the Muslims flee from the Indian soil. The Hindus on the other side of the border were caught in the same dilemma. The novel states this change in attitude and the loss of goodwill emphatically:

In the pre-partition days when the boys played *guli-danda* on the village dung heaps, the sardars had rubbed shoulders with the Muslims. As co-tillers of the fields the Muslim and the Jat Sardar had toiled together and appreciated each other's ways, even though so divergent. The Muslim and the Jat Sardar had toiled together and appreciated each other's ways, though so divergent. The Muslim was the artisan, the cobbler and the potter. The Jat farmer needed all this help in his fields. The two grew up in the village, helping each other. In 1947, when partition came about, the Muslims moved away. The village ties between the Muslims, the Sikhs and the Hindus broke and such ties can't be restored overnight. (**Ashes and Petals**, 128)

It was with this background that the novel opens significantly in a deathly stillness in the dark of night with a trainload of the Hindus and Sikhs on their way to a safe land. The train, halted at the outer signal of the station, wore a dreadful look. A crack train-driver of the Lahore loco-sheds, Anthony Peters, an Anglo-Indian of Jabalpore, felt extremely lonely when he jumped out of the train into the dark to inquire about the mystery of the red signal. All things looked deserted. He loved Lahore and wanted to stay in that beautiful city. But the recent violence there when the mobs went in for human blood dawned upon him the urgency of taking his family away to a safe place. Fire in Lahore made him leave the city in great haste, and this expressed the disturbed and explosive situation there: "Had it not been for last night when the entire Railway Colony was on fire they wouldn't have packed up in such a hurry." (2)

There was utter confusion in the train, and people feared violence and ambush. Guns gave them a sense of security, but they did not open their mouths out of fear. There prevailed deathly silence inside carriage. The partition came as a major traumatic event in the life of retired Risaldar, Santa Singh. The driver found to his horror that the Cabin man had run away to join the attackers. He heard the Assistant Station Master, Nezural, asking him to move the train swiftly to escape disaster. The warning was conveyed at a great personal risk. The sincere advice, however, proved abortive. The train came under heavy attack, and the fear of the people in flight came true:

The sleeping mass of humanity that was barely visible in the dark coaches had by now woken from its fitful slumber. The few open windows were quickly pulled down, and the women and the children huddled into the farthest corners, away from the windows and the danger. Some of the elderly people who were more cautious had already made a rush for the space below the seats and tucked themselves away from the prying eyes and direct firing rifle shots. Some of the braver ones drew out their *Kirpans* and inched towards the doors. The few lucky ones with rifles moved off to the two exits that had been kept in case the train was set on fire. (3)

The novelist describes the train-tragedy vividly and diligently. The travellers stood in utter confusion and embarrassment. The blood-thirsty and women-seeking Muslim yelled “Allah-o-Akbar”, and came pouncing upon the compartments:

On the train, all was utter confusion. The marauders came with spears, swords, bamboo *lathis*, rifles and muskets. When the first wave rushed onto the stricken train someone fired into the big engine loco light and after that there was no light anywhere. There were more than two hundred *goondas* on foot and horse-back, camels and cycles, letting off blood-curdling cries of “Allah-o-Akbar”, abusing their mothers and their fathers and sisters, laughing sinister laughs that rang far into the night. The sweat of fear trickled down the necks of the train. (6-7)

The train was ruthlessly attacked creating utter chaos. Shrieks and screams became clearly audible. The marauders carried away a young girl. It reminded Santa Singh of his young fourteen-year-old granddaughter, Baljeeto. He preferred death to disgrace, and in a desperate attempt to save her from the clutches of the ruffians, he shot her dead. Ajit, the six-year-old grandson, saw the whole scene with dazed eyes. The ghoulish scene set the tone and it was repeated many times in the train. The acts induced tremendous strength in the survivors. They “crossed the last frontiers of fear and became giants... And now united in a common bond of revenge and retribution, the tidal mass swept the shores of sanity and sought the final confrontation.” (9-10)

The train-tragedy gave a glimpse of the dangerous days of the post-independence period. Sardar Santa Singh could never forget the incidents of that eventful day through all his life. He was filled with destructive communal hatred, and he could never reconcile with a Muslim. It was this attitude that prompted him spontaneously to say

that Salma, his grandson's beloved, was "not one of us", as she was a Muslim. He expressed surprise, bitterness and embarrassment when his tall, athletic, brave and gentle Ajit sought his permission to marry Salma: " '... What have you come down to, my grandson? Have you forgotten Baljeeto, your sister? Your poor sister I had to shoot dead in the train? Have you forgotten the partition and the Musalmans?' " (179-80) Ajit pleaded fervently in vain that his grandfather had given him the permission to find a girl of his choice. He said that basically there was no distinction between the communities, and hence lived together both in pre-independent and post-independent India. He gave vent to the feeling that but for the troubled days of the partition the Sikhs and the Muslims had lived together affectionately. He wanted his 'Bapu' not to harbour perpetual hatred on account of the ghastly train disaster. He tried to impress upon the mind of the aged Risaldar that all the persons, belonging to different communities, fought for the dear motherland, and Aslam lost his life in saving him. He expressed his firm determination to marry Salma, and arguing intelligently he asked his grandfather to extend his blessings:

"... Her brother died saving me. I owe my life to him. And you say she is a Musalman. Is that a crime? After '47 aren't we all here? All sitting and eating, living and dying together. Before partition weren't we all the same? Have you forgotten Mida, Gama and Rauf, all your friends in the village in Pakistan? Are we different, any one of us? Bapu 'just think. You think I have forgotten Baljeeto. Or even a single moment of that bloody train. But how long will we keep on simmering and poisoning each other's minds? Out there, on the front, I

have seen all the blood mingle. But never did anyone say it was Hindu, Sikh, Parsi, Jat or Muslim blood..." (180)

Ajit said that everyone, unmindful of his community, fought whole-heartedly on the battlefield. He argued that Salma was not only one of them, but an integral part of their lives. Praising Aslam's adventurous and noble sacrifice, he imploringly sought his Bapu's blessings:

"... Out there we all have fought together and carried each other's sorrow. Major Aslam could have sat still in his tank and come home safely to his sister today. But he saved me and gave himself away. And he was a Musalman, not a Sikh or a Hindu. Did he ask himself then, why he was dying for a Sikh? No. Because he was one of us. And that is how he saw himself. Bapu, Salma is not one of us. She is us. I have vowed before the great Guru Gobind Singh. I will marry her and her alone. Bapu, I beg of you. Please understand. Give her your blessings, and accept her as your own. Bapu, Please." (180)

Santa Singh, for a moment, saw the saving figure of dead Aslam. He, then, remembered the bloody train. He feared his neighbours who, he thought, would hurl down all kinds of abuses at them, if he consented to Ajit's marrying a Muslim girl. The thought made him strong, and he left the scene in tears without acceding to his grandson's request. He maintained that Salma was an alien, and Ajit's insistence made him feel very unhappy and castaway. Salma felt hurt at Santa Singh's contempt for her

community. However, when Ajit regretted that his Bapu still lived in 1947, Salma showed understanding and good sense. She knew what hurt Santa. Ajit wanted Salma to stay as his wife and he accomplished his desire by going in for civil marriage. Ajit-Salma relationship very soon caught the attention of people, and looked absurd to them. Annie remarked that it was altogether a strange sight for her. The Brigadier's wife did not forget the year of Independence, and so considered this kind of relationship undesirable. She showed her awareness of inter-caste marriages, but she pleaded that there should be no marriage between the Sikh and the Muslim. She made no secret of her unhappiness at Ajit's affairs. Referring to inter-caste marriages of this kind, she said:

“... But how many such marriages are there? You read what you like to read. Sure, I have read of the golden wedding made specially in heaven for the Sindhi marrying the Goan girl. Or the modern Bihari marrying the foreign-returned Punjabi. But in all my life have I heard of a Muslim marrying a Sikh... You seem to forget '47. Anyhow, I tell you, I am not very happy with all this. Best if the Sikhs marry Sikhs, and the Muslims, Muslims. These things just don't work out in our country, know what you say.” (116-17)

Sardar Santa Singh's final presence at the grand ceremony where Ajit Singh's posthumously awarded The Mahavir Chakra for laying down his life gallantly for the motherland gave him great relief. He affectionately asked Salma to proceed to receive the award. He said that “Ajit would never have liked it any other way.” (193) His sense of relief and joy, emanating from the acceptance of Salma as his grandson's wife,

became obvious after the victory procession in New Delhi. The novel asserts that the spirit of love is stronger than that of hate. Apparently, it excels Raj Gill's **The Rape** which is mainly preoccupied with the analysis of the political leaders' misdeeds.

H.S.Gill shows the difficulties and tortures faced by the refugees. The government officials showed their gross indifference to the suffering humanity. The completely shattered survivors of the ill-fated train reached the safeland. The uprooted people were camped out in unhygienic places. The refugees experienced tremendous difficulties in getting food. There were exceptionally long queues. The novelist portrays a very fearful and pathetic sight of the starving people. A hungry Jat, in his anxiety to get bread stabbed a social volunteer. Three men and an old woman collected breads and the bloodstained pulse to eat in peace. The sight was extremely horrible. It gave Santa Singh a feeling that Ajit could not be brought up in such an atmosphere. The novelist criticises the social workers who paid no attention to the suffering humanity. He exposes their hypocrisy and opportunism by depicting them as mere aspirants to collect degrees from the Punjab University.

The Meerut riots have been delineated in detail. A cow's head, found in a Hindu locality, had caused the whole trouble. The politicians, to serve their narrow ends, exploited the explosive situation to their advantage. Kishori Lal, a man rejected by the electorate, appeared on the scene and fanned the communal violence. He stirred his audience to action, and wanted them to pounce upon their mischievous enemies. The crowd yelled for blood. Rumours were afloat. In the Lal Kurti Bazar, a predominantly

Muslim locality, the Hindus were pelted with stones, and the trouble started. A tall, lanky and dangerous-looking leader appeared on the scene and in a very ironical and biting language prepared his audience to take up arms and face the Hindu menace. The leaders were blamed. Wali Hussain criticised the liberal-minded Muslims and accused them of bringing disaster to their fellow regionalists. The old man, who shunned violence and stated that the two communists were to live together in love and friendship, was hooted out and threatened. The leader misled the innocent people, and told them that they were absolutely insecure. He asked them to take up arms, and thus the trouble flared up. The police was beaten back, and the army was called out. Major Sheikh was instantly accused of partnership. The leaders deserted the mob at the sight of danger. Kishori Lal, who had arranged many riots before, was, however, caught by the people while he was attempting to slip away. But he received a bullet on his right leg, and this made him go away to the military hospital. The iron gate, conveniently used by the Muslim, was thrown open intelligently. The CRPF took control of the situation and the army withdrew to their barracks.

The Meerut riots exposed the selfish game of the politicians, who made the people fight among themselves with a view to gaining popularity and fetching votes. It might be a pointer to the events, leading to the partition of the country and to the horrible blood bath. The bloody train tragedy, people's killing their own kith and kin, with a strong sense of keeping honour intact, the merciless abduction of women, and the die-hard communal attitude are highlighted in *Ashes and Petals*. The love affair between Ajit and Salma presented an anti-climax to the scene of violence, hatred, anger

and retribution; love melted away baser feelings and this, undoubtedly, seems to be the positive intention of the brilliant novelist in this fine novel.

Kartar Singh Duggal's novel, *Twice Born Twice Dead*, powerfully communicates the trauma caused by the partition. It portrays the whole panorama of convulsion that gripped the Punjab during those fateful days through the experiences of a peasant, Sohne Shah of Dhamyal, a village near Rawalpindi. Sohne Shah, a Sikh village headman stood for perfect religious harmony and had his best friend, Allahditta, a powerful and affluent Muslim. The Muslim friend suffered from no sectarian ill will. He lost his life in a valiant attempt to save the Hindus and Sikhs of his village. Sohne Shah lost his daughter, Raj Karni in communal violence; she was kidnapped. The brave Sikh villager escaped with Satbharai, the daughter of his dear Muslim friend, Allahbitta. With her he suffered great ordeals, wandered from one refugee camp to another, flew to India and suffered miserably, always longing to see her lost daughter. The experiences of these two characters of those traumatic days, the good work done by the Sikh youth, Kuldip who won the heart of Satbharai, the sight of suffering humanity observed by these people and the sad story of love between Sikh boy and a Muslim girl, Kuldip and Satbharai, form the core of the novel - - their experiences present a gruesome and grave tragedy of the partition.

Early in the novel, Sohne Shah was baffled to perceive the unusually and dreadful changes overtaking the village during the pre-partition days. This village headman, with his milk white beard, surveyed the quiet scene with wide-open eyes only

to feel confounded. He returned to the village in the evening and lamented in utter confusion that not a single soul could be seen outside. He was “struck by the unusual stillness all round. The fields where farmers came to plough and graze cattle, laugh and sing - - why were they deserted? A solitary myna sat on a bedraggled *babul* tree: the wind howled through the ruins of the ancient tomb.” (Twice Born Twice Dead, 3)

Sohne Shah found no activities going on in the village. The stillness was coupled with inauspicious events. The spotted dog of Fazi Chowkidar barked at him for the first time. To his dismay, he found a new green flag with a crescent and star fluttering on a tall bamboo post on the tomb of Naogaze Pir. He saw Mauhri, a stranger in a green robe, whispering something in the ear of Khudabaksh, a Muslim of the village. Sohne Shah was surprised to see that the stranger remained grave and serious and spoke no word. Sohne Shah asked this man in green robe what was the serious matter; but to his disappointment and fear, the man got up silently and slipped away.

This unusual calm, the barking of the dog at the respected and rich Sikh of the village, the appearance of the new face in green robe, his silently whispering into the ear of a village Muslim, his utterly grave postures, the fluttering of the Muslim League flag over the tomb of a Pir, respected and revered by both the Hindus and the Muslims - - all these new and sudden developments point to a change from a harmonious world to a fearful one. It symbolises the restless atmosphere of the West Punjab before eruption of brutal violence during the days preceding the division of the country on religious ground. It gave one the realisation of the truth that it was a lull before the storm. Sohne Shah read the news of the disturbances in the East of India and felt perturbed at the

brutal communal killings. Through the newspaper reports he had come to know that the Muslims “had killed Hindus in Naokhali, retribution was now being exacted in Bihar.” (5) These communal riots were completely confusing to Sohne Shah. He had seen the Hindus and the Muslims living in perfect harmony in his village. He could not understand how one could raise a hand against his neighbour. He instantly remembered the cheerful cordiality, perfect peace, excellent neighbourly relations that existed between the different communities in his village. Through the appearance of the strange faces in the village and their whispering and reading secret papers, the novelist explores the genesis of the well-planned and carefully executed policy of hatred and violence. The Muslim League was busy in vitiating the loving atmosphere. Sohne Shah entertained strange fears. He remembered the reports from Naokhali and Bihar. He thought how the two communities engaged in meaningless civil war and bloodshed. The novelist shows both the communities responsible for cruelties. He gives detailed account of the massacre in the eastern part of India.

Like Khushwant Singh, K.S.Duggal delineates the historical truth that the disturbances in the east led to more serious and unprecedentedly violent acts in the Punjab. He shows how the religious persons in green robes prepared the people for the great encounter and upsurge. He explains how the cries of ‘Pakistan Zindabad’, ‘Long Live Pakistan’ that were uttered in sheer amusement without having even an inkling of anything serious about it, soon assumed alarming meaning, threatening the unity of the country. Sohne Shah feared that the cries of ‘Long Live Pakistan’ might result in the creation of a new nation. He had his apprehensions that if tackled tactlessly, the

molehill one day, might turn into a mountain. He feared the eruption of violence, and regretted that the communal battle was to be fought thoughtlessly. Basically, there was no difference between the two communities. He noticed that both the girls, Rajkarni and Satbharai “ ‘were dressed alike’, even their *dupattas* were of the same colour. Their appearance too was identical. Hide one show the other, you could get away with it.”

(11) This observation of the Sikh headman emphasised the basic oneness of the two religiously distinct communities. The reports brought by the three Muslim and two Sikh youths from the village told Sohne Shah a lot of things. It dawned upon him that his fears were true. The Muslims were to go all out to loot and kill the Hindus and Sikhs. The Hindu and Sikh women were to be converted to Islam.

The novel gives, in detail, a horrible account of what was to follow the partition: how the Hindu women were to be disgraced, how their places of worship were to be defiled, and how the cows which they worshipped and respected were to be slaughtered. The rioters were to come from outside - - from other villages - - amidst the sounds of drums and *Shehnai*, and the ruffians were to surround the entire village. Every man looked anxiously thirsty of his neighbour’s blood. Everything was well-planned to its minutest details. Every Muslim was to take part in this *Jihad* - - the sacred battle: “Those who could not handle guns were to fight with lances and spears. Those who were not brave enough were to keep ready canisters of kerosene to set fire to houses as soon as they had been looted and cleared. Butchers were to keep cauldrons on the boil to fry children, to burn old men and to suspend women, who proved obdurate, upside down.”(13) The reports of the well-planned massacre were heart-

rending. It was given that Islam was in great danger, and the Muslims of Pathaor decided to retaliate the misdeeds committed by the Hindus in Bihar. No obstruction in their design to kill ten for one was to be tolerated.

However, the Muslim landlords of Dhamyal remained kind and helping even in the midst of hatred and violence. They worked for the safe evacuation of the people of the village to the city with the help of the military. The Muslims of the village assured Sohne Shah of all protection. The news of evacuating the village created a turmoil. The young village girls had a peculiar dilemma. Their mothers were parting were obviously discernible in their sad looks. These unfortunate developments completely shattered the age-long harmony of the village. In fact, Dhamyal had a remarkable record of communal harmony and understanding. The Muslim had provided free *sherbet* to their Sikh neighbours in every lane and bylane on the anniversary of the martyrdom of Guru Arjun Dev. *Id* was a festival of jubility to all. The Hindus and Sikhs cleaned streets and sent sweets to their Muslim neighbours. But the recent unfortunate happenings paralysed the normal life, and the village came under the grip of fear and bewilderment. There was utter confusion, and the sense of impending horrors made mothers beat their breasts in despair. The road presented a deserted sight. A street dog dragged the carcass of a dead calf on to the middle of the road and it lay there presenting a horrible sight.

The plan was soon executed. The rioters in great triumph entered the village from outside. The government remained surprisingly inactive. The barracks of the Rawalpindi cantonment, to the confusion of the villagers, did not hum with activity at

the noisy and tempestuous arrival of the rioters. Master Tara Singh's warning to the villagers that in the absence of any drastic action they would be wiped off the face of the earth, looked to be true. Allahditta informed Sohne Shah that the Muslims had planned to wipe out the Hindus. This village chaudhri could not tolerate the Muslim designs. He assured his friend Sohne Shah of all help. He was an incarnation of human values like compassion, friendship, love and universal brotherhood. He wanted his friend Sohne Shah to go away to the city with his young daughter, Rajkarni. But it was too late; the *goondas* had surrounded the village and there was no escape possible. The entire region was behind. The village youths - - Panjoo and Basanta - - fell victims to killings. The *goondas* mercilessly cut Panjoo into two halves with his own sword. The Muslim youths, who had gone out of the village to find out the whereabouts of the two young factory workers of the village, indulged in looting and went round shouting 'God is Great'. The Subedar in the village declared that revenge would follow the death of the son of Dost Mohammed, who was declared to be a martyr. A hundred Sikhs were pledged to pay for his life. The cries of 'God is great' and 'Long Live Pakistan' resounded everywhere. The village harmony was completely ruptured. The Muslims, who had assured Sohne Shah of all protection, became enemies and looked for blood. Fire raged all round. Only Allahditta held that the son of Dost Mohammed was killed by the bullet of a British soldier, and that it was wicked to call him a martyr. The Sikhs were not to be blamed for this murder, as the dead youth, Dina, was a wicked character. Sohne Shah saw the futility of the communal killings and the fanaticism and madness of this upheaval.

The troubles at Rawalpindi, the murder of the two Sikh youths of Dharmyal, the loot in the cantonment, the killing of an unwanted Muslim youth, Dina, by a bullet while indulging in loot and his subsequent elevation to martyr, the quiet cremation of the Sikh youths - - all these events portrayed the explosive situation of the pre-partition days. The utter helplessness of the Sikhs stood exposed. Sohne Shah heard that the British were responsible for this trouble. The novelist analyses the causes of ten dire events. He, through Sohne Shah, expresses the folly of the entire drama of pain and horror. The writer fully shows how fanaticism caused terrible destruction to the people living in perfect harmony and peace in West Punjab.

The condition of the villages deteriorated immeasurably. The fires were seen almost regularly. The villages burnt and the helpless spectators of Dharmyal wailed, wept and burst into loud lamentations. Old Hindu-Muslim friendship met a disaster; it was completely discarded. The Muslims cried for revenge, and felt that the events in Bihar should be retaliated. The rioters were warmly welcomed by the Muslims of the villages with sweets. But Allahditta could not imagine a safe future for the Muslims in the absence of the Hindus. His sane thought found expression in his confusion at the sight of the well-planned attacks. But his attempts to dissuade the Muslims from violence proved futile and he could only make the Muslims his enemies. The novelist, like Bhishma Sahni in *Tamas*, paints elaborately the scenes of violence that swept the west Punjab before the proposed division of the country. It was the reign of anarchy, rioters came with spears and guns beating drums and playing *Shehnai*, and then followed the horrible deeds of murder, rape, abduction, loot and brutal violence. The

Pir wanted to save the Hindu women and children for conversion. These women, he shouted, were the property of Pakistan. He said loudly that the children adopted the religion of the home in which they were brought up. The Pir thought that conversion of women and children was the only way to propagate Islam. Horror was let loose; “Children were transfixed with spears, women cut up with axes, old men dragged by their beards and hair, and youths massacred with bullets.” (37)

The Hindus and Sikhs of the village were destroyed one by one. The brave goldsmith Sundar and his wife put up a valiant fight against the rioters, whose number was overwhelming. Allahditta lost his life in an attempt to save the Hindus and Sikhs from the rioters. Kamal Khan, the man entrusted to dispose off the loot, was angry with Allahditta for his siding with the Hindus in the hour of crisis. He, too, had some Sikh friends. But, he thought, “when Islam was in danger, when Pakistan had to be won, when a divine message had come that not a single Hindu or Sikh was to be left alive, when the Pir of Juma Masjid himself had ordained that all *Kafirs* were to be destroyed, their properties looted, their houses burnt to ashes then what else was left.” (40) For these brutal cruelties, the writer does not hold merely the Muslims completely responsible and guilty; the Hindus in Bihar had acted in the similar fashion. Kamal Khan justified the killing of all Hindus and Sikhs in West Punjab, and felt that the hatred leading to destruction sprang from the caste distinction. The rioters took away Rajkarni, while Sohne Shah and Satbharai lay unconscious in a distant ravine. On the third day they got out and were escorted by a military lorry to a refugee camp. On the way they saw their village in utter ruin. The police officers had their share of the loot.

People, in panic, ran away from one place to another. Satbharai felt the pangs of separation, and she witnessed great bloodshed helplessly. The events reminded her of the days of Nadir Shah.

In short, the first part of the novel shows the early and age-long cordiality among the neighbours belonging to different communities. It surveys the serious changes in atmosphere, and the hand of the religious priests in inciting violence. The Britishers and political leaders like Master Tara Singh, too, shared the blame. The Bihar and Naokhali incidents could not be forgotten. The riots leading to a complete chaos and the absolute failure of the government have been realistically delineated. But in the midst of communal fire stood Allahditta, Sohne Shah, Rajkarni and Satbharai, who were so noble and good that they were absolutely free from religious hatred and distinction; they were the voices of sanity in a world engulfed in the drama of fanaticism and violence. The brutal acts fully exposed the folly of the people and the novelist misses no opportunity to show these dire offences against humanity in their true colour.

The novelist describes, in detail, the refugee camps that came into existence as a result of partition. Sohne Shah reflected on Pakistan and thought that it was a strange nation founded on the blood of the innocent. The soldiers engaged in rescuing acts were strangers speaking different and unintelligible language. Ironically they saved people while their very close neighbours had turned against them. The horrid happenings of the pre-partition days made Sohne Shah a refugee. Lorries carrying the refugees to the camps were overcrowded. The plight of the haggard refugees from the neighbouring

villages was heartrending. They were in rags and had seen their men and women slaughtered mercilessly. Gurudwaras and temples were defiled lamentably. Temples were sacked, and Gurudwaras had witnessed the killing of unarmed people and the rape of women inside their premises. They were set on fire ruthlessly. In the refugee camps, the deities were installed and the holy Sikh scriptures were recited. Yet the terribly tortured people could not dare go to these places. They had the experience of the futility of their prayers. The camp showed different and strange people in tents. The horrid tortures weighed heavily on the mind of the victims and made them act strangely and unpredictably. The haunted psyche of the refugees betrayed itself in their actions and strange behaviour. It was irritatingly awkward for the political leaders to face the refugees; they encountered strange and baffling questions. The refugees narrated the harrowing tales of the atrocities inflicted on their fellow sufferers. Every one had a tale of woe to tell. The story of Harnam Das from the village Moghal Parhi was as tragic as any. The rioters had cut one of his arms and had plucked out one of his eyes. Besides, his “young daughter was stripped naked, made to dance, then taken out in procession through the village. Finally, ‘Long Live Pakistan’ was tattooed on her breasts and a crescent and a star on her forehead.” (56) Harnam Das had to watch all these cruelties with one remaining eye. He always fainted while narrating these events. He sighed helplessly and said: “When the seventh goonda was raping her, I fainted.” (56) In spite of their woeful tales, the people, however, felt that the separation of brother from brother could not exist permanently; they said that nail could not be separated from the flesh. Kuldip, a young and attractive Sikh youth served his distressed brethren in the camp. Pothoar, land of fairies, had been set on fire. It was commonly observed that the

Hindus and Sikhs had to live lovingly together. Sohne Shah, in a military lorry, made an abortive search for Rajkarni, but found no trace of her. Satbharai, the daughter of his lost friend, Allahditta, was now everything to him. Sohne Shah felt sorry for his Muslim friends. It was sad that the main gurudwara was converted into a tobacco depot. Muslims defended their action, and to justify their cruelties they gave out a lie saying that first their locality was on fire. A gurudwara had been turned into a mosque. This made Sohne Shah happy simply because the holy place would be devoted to the worship of God. Satbharai fell in love with Kuldip in the camp.

Part Two of the novel shows the merciless acts of killing, fire, rape, conversion, arson and loot. The rioters rampaged from village to village abducting, raping and killing the Hindu and Sikh women. The refugee camps went on increasing in number. The effect of the gruesome and terrible tragedy on its victims has been shown in detail. The tales of woe from the lips of the tortured people exposed the wickedness and shame of communal frenzy. The sinking of human values, reign of goondaism, anarchy let loose upon the people, horrible experience of the suffering humanity, the hypocrisy of the Muslim leaders and the ineffective and inadequate arrangements at the camp - - all these are vividly portrayed in the second part of *Twice Born Twice Dead*. True, the novelist minutely describes the incidents of those terrible days. The cries of 'Long Live Pakistan' and 'Down with Khizar Ministry' were heard everywhere. The rival groups were formed in the train. The Muslims abused the Punjab Chief Minister, Khizar Hyat Khan, and the Hindus retaliated by abusing Khan Mamdat. The heated arguments led people to blows in the lower class compartments. The train was attacked near a Muslim

village. The Muslim newspaper of Lahore condemned and criticised the Sikhs for the violence in trains. They reported that the Sikhs slaughtered the Muslims with their swords. Another version of the incident appeared in the Hindu papers, which gave as much colour to the truth as they could. They incited the people and asked the Hindus and Sikhs of the Punjab to avenge the massacre of their brethren. The riots broke out. The atrocities that the Muslims inflicted on the Sikhs in the past were remembered, and the present cruelties were elaborated.

Killing and stabbing became a plaything. Satbharai watched the cruel killing of a Sikh postman by the playing children. Children killed the postman "just as one kills an ant." The people of Lyallpur, where Sohne Shah had come to stay with Satbharai condemned the riots. The lonely girl remembered her village. At Lyallpur, the Hindu-Muslim harmony at a time when almost the whole Punjab was burning in communal flames, was a happy and unexpected experience for Sohne Shah and Satbharai. The life at Lyallpur was completely normal. The Muslims respected the religious sentiments of the other communities. Duggal describes this harmonious life, in detail, to give a glimpse of the basic Hindu-Muslim unity and to deride the communal and war-like preparations in the other towns and cities of the province. Kulwant suggested to Satbharai the need of social justice. He always reminded her of the tyrannies perpetrated in the name of religion. He lamented and laughed at the fact that India was divided into two parts on the basis of religion. The conflicting reports about the fate of Lyallpur swept the city. The provocative statements in the papers excited the people and made their blood boil. The news of riots in other parts of the Punjab held people in

terror. Riots had flared up throughout the Punjab. There were alarming news from Lahore and Amritsar. The reports created confusion and isolated people. The villagers ran to the city, and the rich flew away in planes. A Muslim leader visited Lyallpur and motivated his co-religionists privately to attack their Hindu and Sikh neighbours. The news from the East Punjab of the Massacre of the Muslims created tension. With immediate transfer of the strict Deputy Commissioner, riots broke out in the city. Sohne Shah could not even visit his newly purchased land and orchard. Violence was let loose. Duggal gives a long and sustained description of the riots and the cruelties heaped on the Hindus in Lyallpur that forced Sohne Shah and Satbharai to go to the overcrowded refugee camp to experience all kinds of hardships and tortures.

Part Three of the novel, thus, shows the violence at its worst. The peace-loving city of Lyallpur was sent reeling under blood and horror at the partition of the country. The mischievous elements held sway and took control of the situation. Violence was returned for violence. The terrors of the East Punjab found retaliation in the West of the province. The cycle of revenge was put into motion. Duggal shows the madness of the people and exposes their narrow communal attitude - - the basis of the partition of the country. The novel makes a strong appeal for harmonious and peaceful living. Also, it portrays the miserable flight of the refugees in great detail. They looked lost in vacant thoughts and grew completely unaware of the world around them. The rioters indulged in all kinds of barbarous activities. The old man, a white bearded Sikh, remained engaged in sharpening his *Kirpan*, and did not pay attention to the crying demands of his daughter and wife. Violence, corruption and black-marketing pervaded the place.

People in horror wanted to fly away to the safe land. There were disturbances at the refugee camp. A young Hindu girl was kidnapped by goondas. The refugees experienced tremendous difficulties on their way. Sohne Shah and Satbharai, however, escaped and ran away to Amritsar. The refugee camps were overcrowded, and they wandered from camp to camp to find shelter.

Duggal vividly describes the horrible sight of a caravan of the Muslim evacuees going to Pakistan. The Muslims were not allowed to draw water from the Hindu well. The Pothoar neighbour picked up a fourteen-year girl and took her to be his wife. He, alongwith others, attacked a train carrying the Muslim evacuees. These incidents, described in detail, show that the Hindus in India were as cruel and guilty as the Muslims in Pakistan. No refugee felt happy in a camp in India. The refugee women expressed anti-Muslim feeling unhesitatingly. The refugees in the camp planned a secret raid in a Sikh-Hindu refugee camp. The stories of the girls, restored from Pakistan, were horrible: they were very badly treated by the Muslims: “ “The Pathan would offer us for sale and demonstrate our charm by pulling our breasts””(154) The cruelties of the Muslims in Pakistan were matched by the Hindu and Sikhs in India. The Muslim girls, forcibly sent to Pakistan, were pregnant. It was baffling to conjecture how these girls were to face their kith and kin after living with strangers for so long. The tale of Sita made one shudder with fear; she was ill treated in Pakistan and her father refused to accept her. Kuldip knew the miseries of the abducted women. To him duty was more than love, and thus against the request of Sohne Shah he sent Satbharai - - the object of his love - - to Pakistan. The separation was too painful to be tolerated both by him and

by Sohne Shah, but love demanded sacrifice and Duggal celebrates the sacrifice in his novel.

In a word, *Twice Born Twice Dead* highlights the trauma, gloom and tragedy of the partition. It shows the perfect harmony existing between the two communities before the partition. It points out the role of the religious people and political leaders in creating trouble. The hand of the British rulers has also been suggested. The novel describes elaborately the violence and ruthless atrocities perpetrated in the name of religion on both sides of the border. He holds both the communities responsible for shameful deeds. The violence preceding and succeeding the partition finds heart-rending expression in the novel. Also, it powerfully depicts the plight of the refugees and evacuees, people abandoning their homes and living in refugee camps, and of the haunted psyche of the tortured men and women. Amidst the gloom of the unfortunate tragedy, the writer suggests that the violent bloodshed was the creation of a handful of mischievous elements. Duggal's suggestive stress on a peaceful co-existence is both relevant and commendable.

Conclusion

## Chapter VI

### Conclusion

An attempt has been made in the foregoing chapters to examine comprehensively the Indian-English novels dealing with the partition. Communal considerations, the selfishness of the politicians, the British policy of divide and rule, Jinnah's insistence on his 'two-nation theory' and his influence on the Muslim League, and the inability and incompetence of the Congress to check and control the terrible tide paved the way for the partition of the country. The result was violence at its worst. Inevitably, it affected the Indian creative writers who stood bewildered at the ghastly scene. In an objective and secular spirit these writers have recorded their reactions to the whole tragedy of the partition.

However, different Indian-English novelists have reacted to the horrors of the partition in their own way. There are writers like R.K.Narayan, Attia Hosain and Balchandra Rajan who treat the theme of the partition only as a side issue in their novels. R.K.Narayan and Balchandra Rajan lived far away from the scene of tragedy and hence, as Pratap Singh in Rajan's *The Dark Dancer* points out, they could not appreciate the many-sided dimensions of the communal frenzy. Attia Hosain shows Lucknow to be the scene of activity, and this capital too, did not witness the horrors of communal violence. R.K.Narayan's *Waiting for the Mahatma* primarily concentrates on the Indian political scene before the dawn of freedom. It is only towards the close,

and it is true chronologically, that the writer refers to the partition of the country and the violence that broke out in its wake. The idea of naming children without disclosing their religion is commendable, for it can be an important measure to prevent the disintegration of the society on the communal basis. Alongwith the partition, the writer refers to brutal killings, and to atrocities inflicted on women and children. It is strange that **Waiting for Mahatma** shows the eruption of the communal violence in the eastern part of the country - - the Bengal and Bihar; it does not touch the Punjab where the naked drama of man's beastly deeds was enacted without any sense of shame of shame and guilt.

Attia Hosain's **Sunlight on a Broken Column** mainly studies the psychological crisis in a Muslim home caused by the partition. In an amazingly impartial way the writer surveys the scene of national struggle, and looks into the genesis of the creation of Pakistan, 'a neo-paradise' for the Muslims. In a very clear tone, she finds the Muslim fanaticism contributing tremendously to the demand of the partition. She accentuates that the division had its complex implications. It resulted in the division of 'Ashiana', a happy home at Lucknow. The members of the once integrated house stood split and divided. Saleem and Nadira went away to Pakistan and unfortunately, it became impossible for them to visit their 'home' in India. Kemal and Asad pledged their loyalty to India and stayed behind. 'Ashiana', the nest was deserted and the narrator was haunted by memories when she visited it. She focuses on the impact of partition and finds it to be an extremely tragic phenomenon. Her picture of the whole development is saturated with emotional and psychological tortures.

Balachandra Rajan's *The Dark Dancer* shows the violence caused by the partition in a greater degree than *Waiting for the Mahatma* and *Sunlight on a Broken Column*. The writer makes an attempt to show that the distance was immaterial; a man sitting away in South India was as much concerned about the pains and pangs of the partition as his brothers in the Punjab. He maintains that the tragedy involved all of us, and shows the protagonist of the novel making a valiant search for identity. He highlights the noble soul who remained unprejudiced and free from all communal thoughts. Thus Kamala sacrificed her life in an attempt to save a Muslim girl from the evil hands of the Hindus. Such sacrifices, he suggests, are an attempt to expiate and give human beings a sense of dignity and nobility. The novelist looks beyond the tragedy of the partition, and does not fail to see hope and redemption for mankind.

In his two novels, *A Bend in the Ganges* and *the Distant Drum*, Manohar Malgaonkar concentrates upon the tragedy of the partition. *A Bend in the Ganges* throws light on the cruel and shameful acts in which people freely indulged during the days of communal frenzy. The acts of plunder, fire, abduction, mutilation and rape baffled the imagination of the people. Tek Chand had never imagined that "such happenings could be possible in the middle of the twentieth century, after more than a hundred years of sanity and orderliness of the British rule, and after thirty years or so of Mahatma's non-violence." <sup>1</sup> The novelist, however, offers a very narrow view of the factors leading to the partition. Through Debi-Shafi rivalry for leadership even in their early days of close relationship, Malgaonkar foreshadowed the future enmity between

the Hindus and the Muslims that reached its bitterest point in the days immediately before and after the partition. **Distant Drum** shows the drama of communal frenzy that the nation witnessed on the eve of independence. It gives a detailed account of the riots in Delhi. It speaks of the divided loyalties and the changed values. It dawned upon Kiran that a soldier could no longer remain friendly with a man, who joined the enemy's camp. The partition turned the friends, forcibly and necessarily, into enemies. The friendship needed to be reviewed in the light of new values.

Khushwant Singh's **Train to Pakistan** depicts the brutal killings in the Bengal and Bihar and the retributory consequences in the Punjab, millions of people in flight, and the savage turn the events took in the name of religion. He however, reveals that those barbarous incidents had a redeeming and humanising effect on even depraved men like Juggat Singh and Hukum Chand who underwent a complete metamorphosis and were transformed from utter rakes into compassionate men. Jugga, the fearful dacoit, with his supreme sacrifice, turned out to be a tragic hero. In performing the heroic deed to save the train carrying his beloved Nooran, along with other passengers, he became a sacrificial figure like Rajan's Kamala. His act redeemed the abuse of religion that led to inhuman acts of violence. His sacrifice exhibited a profound sense of nobility. The novel also abounds in naturalistic scenes and descriptions. However, the novelist closes the novel with the affirmation of joy, nobility and glory of life.

Chaman Nahal's **Azadi** offers an epic and psychological treatment of the partition. It gives a vivid picture of the savage acts of plunder and rape, arson and

murder, and many other insane and inhuman acts. The magnitude of these horrible deeds completely embittered and dazzled the law-abiding and peace-loving citizens like Lala Kanshi Ram. The sudden, quick and hazardous movement of millions from one side of the border to the other with all their dear possessions left behind was a shocking experience; they were made to quit their hearths and homes in the most adverse circumstances, created by communal riots, and they reached their destination very often as paupers. Nevertheless, the novel portrays good men like Chaudhri Barkat Ali and Hakim Saheb of Narowal; they stood above narrow communal considerations and showed understanding and compassion. Hakim Sahib was filled with deep compunction, when he watched a procession of naked and shaven women. *Azadi* scrutinises, in detail, the causes of the partition and the subsequent tragedy. Above all, it makes a very fine study of the psychology of people who suffered immensely. With an impartial and humane attitude, the novelist finds the Hindus in India as much guilty as the Muslims on the other side of the border. With its detailed description of the causes of the malady, the storm and its aftermath, and the impact of the whole affair on the minds of the people, Nahal's *Azadi* excels all other novels written on the theme of the partition so far.

Among the recent Sikh novelists on the partition, Raj Gill explores the genesis of the division of the country in *The Rape*. His novel is filled with newspaper reports and speeches of political leaders that are often reproduced verbatim. The novel vividly describes the horrors perpetrated by people during the brief period of nine months. The plight of the refugees leaving their homes, the mass-exodus and the terrible ordeals find

a powerful expression in it. The love affair between Jasmit, a Sikh village girl, and Dalipjit Singh is elevating. But it is really horrible to find a father raping a girl whom his son had rescued and who was living with him.

H.S.Gill's *Ashes and Petals* evoke the trauma of the refugees who crossed the border by trains in the weeks immediately following the partition. The novel shows a trainload of Hindus and Sikhs on their way to a safe land. On the way the train, carrying the refugees, was stopped and attacked. Women were forcibly snatched away. Risaldar Santa Singh shot dead his fourteen-year-old granddaughter to save her from dishonour and disgrace. Many Sikhs emulated Santa Singh and enacted this ghoulish drama. The incident is a realistic one; it was one of the many incidents recorded in G.D. Khosla's *Stern Reckoning: A Survey of the Events Leading up to and Following the Partition of India*. The events coloured Santa Singh's attitude towards the Muslims. Naturally, he felt completely baffled when his grandson, Ajit Singh, a Cavalry Officer, sought his permission to marry a Muslim girl. The novel, however, suffers from the writer's preoccupation with the military life and the details of war, specially the tank warfare.

K.S.Duggal's *Twice Born Twice Dead*, like Raj Gill's *The Rape*, covers a very brief period. It refers to the political personalities, and to the innumerable instances of inhuman acts in which people indulged during those terrible days. Originally written in Punjabi, it is a very powerful novel on the theme of the partition. Like *The Rape*, it abounds in historical material and hundreds of anecdotes of human suffering. Like

Bhishma Sahani's **Tamas** - - a novel in Hindi - - it depicts the violence spreading far and wide before the creation of a new state. Like Khushwant Singh's **Train to Pakistan**, it refers to the violence in the eastern part of the country - - Noakhali and Bihar - - before it broke out in the Punjab in a retributory vein with unprecedented hatred and venom. The people of a village, Dhamyal, lived in peace and harmony like the people of Mano Majra . But fanaticism very soon changed the complexion of the village which was almost littered with corpses and blood of Sikhs. The impact of these horrors on the minds of the victims has been faithfully delineated in the novel. The book accentuates the dire necessity of human values like love and compassion to counter insanity of the worst kind.

It is interesting to observe that the majority of the novels on the theme of the partition are written by the Sikhs - - Khushwant Singh, Raj Gill, H.S.Gill and Kartar Singh Duggal - - are among the major writers on the subject. This interest of the Sikhs in the partition is understandable. The Punjab was their prosperous motherland, and they were usually far richer than the Muslims. It is an undeniable fact that the Sikhs were the worst sufferers and the holocaust of the partition may be described as the Muslim-Sikh war. The Sikhs lost their homes and valuable possessions. The hungry Muslims found in the partition of the country an opportunity to enrich themselves by looting the Sikhs. The class distinction showed itself. Hence, it is natural for the Sikhs to remember, and write about, this dire event.

A few patent, common features can be marked in the novels written by the Sikhs. First, all principal characters in them are Sikhs - - Juggat Singh and Bhai Meet Singh in **Train to Pakistan**, Dalipjit in **The Rape**, Ajit Singh and Risaldar Santa Singh in **Ashes and Petals**, and Sohne Shah and Kuldip in **Twice Born Twice Dead**. Secondly, all these novels paint, in detail, the horrors brought about by the partition, though they maintain an objective attitude and do not hold any particular community guilty of massacre and violence. Thirdly, these novels (and it is also true of the novels written by the non-Muslim Indian-English novelists) invariably depict a romance between a Sikh boy and a Muslim girl. In this regard, they are not free from racial and caste prejudices; they do not show the love affair of the opposite kind - -that is, a romance between a Hindu or a Sikh girl and a Muslim boy. Thus **Train to Pakistan** focusses on the romance between Jugga and Nooran, **The Rape** between Dalipjit and Laila, **Ashes and Petals** between Ajit and Salma, and **Twice Born Twice Dead** between Satbharai and Kuldip. Likewise, Nahal's **Azadi** describes the love affair between Arun and Nur, and Manohar Malgaonkar's **A Bend in the Ganges** shows Debi taking a peculiar revenge upon his old companion and leader, Shafi Usman, by snatching away his mistress Mumtaz. These Indian-English novelists are strikingly different from the Hindi writers on the partition in this respect. For instance, Yashpal - - a celebrated Hindi novelist - - in his **Jhootha Sach** does not seem to suffer from such a prejudice; he presents Tara's attachment to Asad with as much vigour as he shows Jubeda's love affair with a Hindu boy, Pradumn.

To conclude, the effect of the partition on Indian-English novelists varies from person to person; every one of them sees and treats it according to his own experience and understanding. But all of them analyse the reasons of this terrible tragedy and reveal considerable impartiality in their assessment of the situation. It is remarkable that all these writers, who have dealt with the partition in their works, point out the folly and wickedness of the horrible deeds. All the barbaric acts, they maintain, were unwarranted and meaningless. A little understanding and sympathy, restraint and rationalism could have averted this gruesome upheaval. They make it very clear that all communities that indulged freely in the cruel acts must hang their heads in shame. Every one of them exposes the vice of narrow communal considerations; and emphasises the necessity of having a wider and all embracing attitude of love and sympathy. The sacrificial figures like Kamala and Jugga atone for their failings and sins. The good and noble characters - - Sita, Kemal, Asad, Ranjit, Bharati, Chaudhri Barkat Ali, Hakim of Narawal and others - - need to be emulated. Patently, these writers sound an optimistic note even in the midst of terrible tragedy and reveal the bright side of future by their stress on the nobility of life and vulnerability of evil.

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