

**Workings of Postmemory: Reading Recent Partition Fiction**

Thesis submitted to  
Jawaharlal Nehru University  
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**Doctor of Philosophy**

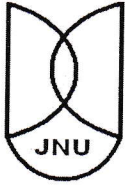
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**CERTIFICATE**

This thesis titled "*Workings of Postmemory: Reading Recent Partition Fiction*" submitted by **Ms. Soumana Biswas**, Centre for English Studies, School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy**, is an original work and has not been submitted so far in part or in full, for any other degree or diploma of any University or Institution.

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## **DECLARATION BY THE CANDIDATE**

This thesis titled "**Workings of Postmemory: Reading Recent Partition Fiction**", submitted by me for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, is an original work and has not been submitted so far in part or in full, for any other degree or diploma of any University or Institution.

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## Introduction

Postmemory as a concept was introduced in the field of Holocaust studies by Marriane Hirsch. This term was first used by Hirsch in an article that she wrote about Art Spiegelman's *Maus*.<sup>1</sup> It discussed the relationship of the 'generation after' with an event which long preceded their birth. The investment of the subsequent generations in the event is through their 'imaginative investment'<sup>2</sup> in the event. It is the relationship that they bear with the memory of the event-- either through familial relationship or through the collective and cultural memory of the event. In this thesis, the concept of Postmemory has been utilized in the context of Partition to understand the way in which the event has been represented in the fiction written by second and third generation authors.

Holocaust and Partition have several differences in terms of the victim-perpetrator scenario and in their ways of memorialisation. Whereas Holocaust was an openly state-sponsored event where the Jewish population was targeted by the Nazi authorities to exterminate them, Partition riots witnessed violence by two communities against each other, communities who otherwise lived with one another in considerable harmony before the Partition. Holocaust has been memorialized in various countries like Israel, UK, United States, Germany and the perpetrators have also been subjected to legal trial. But in India during the Partition riots, based on the scenario a person could have been both the victim and the perpetrator. The people of two major communities, the Hindus and Muslims, who suffered during the Partition, engaged in violence against each other leading to mass destruction of human lives, property and the mass migration of people across borders. But Partition also affected the lives of other communities residing in the country. In case of the Holocaust, the several memorials and museums provide the subsequent generations information about the event and make them aware about the role the Nazis played in the mass destruction of Jewish life. But in the context of Partition, there is a dearth of memorialisation and

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<sup>1</sup> Marriane Hirsch. "Postmemory. Net". Web. 5 July. 2015.< <http://www.postmemory.net/>> .

<sup>2</sup> Marianne Hirsch. *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2012. p. 5.

also no single community can be blamed for the events that took place during Partition. Thus in this scenario, Partition's Postmemory is a complex phenomenon where the subsequent generations are trying to grapple with manifestations of the effects of Partition in their lives. This thesis is an attempt to understand the nature and process of the formation of this Postmemory of Partition. To this end, theorizations from the field of Holocaust studies have been utilized keeping in mind the inherent differences between the two events.

In 1947, the independence of India was accompanied by the trauma of Partition which led to the death and displacement of people across the newly formed nations of India and Pakistan. Among the worst sufferers were the women who were abducted, raped, mutilated, and even branded with communal slogans. But this aspect of human suffering has been suppressed in the nationalist discourses which highlight the glorious history of the nation and its hard earned freedom from British rule. Even after the passage of almost seventy years after the event of Partition, the country does not have any official memorial for the Partition victims. Only recently in October 2016, a Partition museum has been set up in the Town Hall of Amritsar by the Arts and Cultural Heritage Trust (TAACHT), a not-for-profit NGO. This is the stepping stone towards the memorialisation of the event which has otherwise only seen forms of memorialisation through works of literary fiction which have been created by authors as a response to the event. Memorialisation is necessary to create a space for the event in the collective and cultural memory so that the subsequent generations can know about the event as Partition-like violence is still a part of the lives of newer generations of people. In a country where communal violence is still a part of the sad reality of the current times and the communalism is still politicized, it is but inevitable that the subsequent generations will continue to engage with the event which can be looked upon as the founding trauma of the country.

From the initial years after the event, Partition has been a subject for authors who had themselves undergone the horrors of the Partition and the riots which took place. Thus authors belonging to the first generation responded to the horrific violence of the Partition riots and the way in which the various communities which might have otherwise co-existed took up arms against each other. Villages were attacked and burnt, people massacred, trains arrived at stations loaded with only corpses, and kafilas were looted during the maddening times of Partition. People were uprooted from their places of belonging and forced to migrate leaving their home behind. Suddenly the

new borders that were drawn changed the definition and location of 'home'. The initial representations of the event in Partition fiction saw authors trying to come to terms with actions and emotions which went beyond any definition of normalcy. But the representations of the event in Partition fiction has not remained limited to the works of the first generation writers who were writing based on their lived experience of the event. Partition has continued to be the subject matter for authors of the second and third generation as well--authors who have no first-hand knowledge about the event. Thus the representation of the event by these authors is different from the first generation writers because of the temporal distance from the event, their lack of lived experience of the event and by their distinct ways of reaching back to the past. It is the works of these authors of later generations, with no lived experience of Partition, that this thesis will explore. The works of authors which have been taken into consideration for analysis in the thesis are Shauna Singh Baldwin's *What the Body Remembers* (1999), Meena Arora Nayak's *About Daddy* (2000), Sorayya Khan's *Five Queen's Road* (2009), Reema Moudgil's *Perfect Eight* (2010), Amit Majmudar's *Partitions* (2011), Irfan Master's *A Beautiful Lie* (2011), and Vishwajyoti Ghosh's *This Side, That Side* (2013).

The common factor that binds all the authors that I have chosen to work with is that the event of Partition that they have chosen to write on had happened much before their birth. So the memories which they deal with in their novels are by no means their own and it might or might not have constituted a part of their family's memory. The writing of their novels thus intermingle research from history books, memories of family members, survivor memories and of course the knowledge from the published testimonies. All the works are by Indian English authors who are diasporic except Moudgil and Ghosh. These works have been specifically chosen as each provides a different and innovative perspective towards the event which in turn enriches the understanding about the event. The works of Baldwin, Majmudar and Master have been chosen for the depiction of the event as well as the interesting authorial politics of trying to establish their legitimacy of choosing Partition as a subject of representation. The works of Nayak and Moudgil have been chosen as they depict second generation characters in their works which brings their works directly into the folds of Postmemory. Ghosh's work merits discussion because of the unique effort of representing Partition in the form of graphic narratives. Texts, sketches and photographs intermingle to form an interesting insight into ways of representing the event of Partition. The chosen ambit of works in this thesis are works by Indian English writers



but the Pakistani writer Sorayya Khan's novel has been included as it provides a unique perspective and a rare insight into the life of a person belonging to Hindu community who refuses to migrate from Pakistan to India even after Partition. As the plight of the Hindu community in Pakistan is rarely available in narratives, this novel has been included for analysis in this thesis.

All the works chosen for discussion in this thesis have been published after the year 1998 which saw the publication of the testimonies of survivors in Urvashi Butalia's *The Other Side of Silence* and Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin's *Borders and Boundaries*. These works are significant in their contributions towards bringing the voice of the survivors, especially the women, to the forefront. The unravelling of the suppressed history of women from the veiled presentation of patriarchal history is what makes these works important in the field of Partition studies. Apart from the works of Butalia, Menon and Bhasin, various other oral history projects have attempted to record the plight of the people during Partition. Some of these projects include Indian Memory Project: 1947 India Pakistan Partition Archives, Andrew Whitehead's 'India: A People Partitioned', 'Partition Remembered' project by the Birmingham City Council and 1947 Partition Archive. But one significant aspect of Partition testimonies that needs to be remembered is that unlike Holocaust testimonies which have been recorded and analyzed as part of clinical psychotherapy, the recording of Partition testimonies has been a part of scholarly and academic work. Since the 1990s onwards, these projects pertaining to the unearthing of lost and suppressed voices about Partition violence have gained prominence and memory has received a central position of attention which might even be termed as an obsession with memory. The importance that memory has received for quite some time now is because of the politics of representation and its accompanying suppression of certain aspects in History. "History cannot tell us the whole truth. It conceals more than it reveals. Every generation negotiates this tension between closure and disclosure in its own way"<sup>3</sup>. Memory helps in questioning History's entanglement with elements of power which defines what is or is not to be represented. Even though the reliance on memory has been questioned by critics like Suresh Sharma, Javeed Alam (Priya Kumar quotes a conversation entitled 'Remembering Partition' between Suresh Sharma and Javeed Alam where

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<sup>3</sup> M. Asaduddin. 'Against Forgetting: Memory as Metaphor in "Dream Images"'. *Translating Partition*. Ed. Ravikant and Saint, Tarun K. New Delhi: Katha, 2001. p. 121.

they question the memory projects)<sup>4</sup> and some critics like Alok Bhalla have viewed these projects as disturbing the peace of mind of the survivor generation by raking up painful memories<sup>5</sup>, there is no way in which the memories of the survivor generation can be ignored. These memories in turn form the memory archive which helps the subsequent generations to be informed about the event from all perspectives rather than only having to rely on official grand narratives as provided by the (three) state(s). Thus to ignore the memory archive is to ignore a very significant aspect of the event.

The subject matter of this thesis is the nature of the memory of Partition that has been received by the subsequent generations, as well as how they received, processed and understood that memory. Subsequently, the representation of that understanding about the event in literary responses by second and third generation writers has been studied based on the texts selected for study in this thesis. The term 'Postmemory' has been used to discuss the subsequent generation's involvement with the event as their relationship with the event cannot be equated and homogenized with that of the experiences of the first or survivor generation. The subsequent generations form a relationship with the event based on the images they see, stories they hear about the event in their familial setup in case of familial connection to the event, or stories they hear about their community's experiences which form the collective and cultural memory about the event in case of absence of any familial connection to the event. But familial Postmemory should not be privileged over non-familial Postmemory because Postmemory is not simply an identity position. Postmemory also draws our attention to the fact that in no way should memory be looked upon with a sense of ownership as it might lead to a limitation of perspective for the subsequent generations. Writers belonging to the second and third generations, with or without familial relationship to the event, have engaged with the event and in the literary representations, a result of such engagement, have been studied in this thesis.

In the initial years after the event, it was the responsibility of Partition fiction to represent the violence and human suffering that took place during the Partition riots. In the absence of survivor

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<sup>4</sup> Priya Kumar. 'Acts of Return: Literature and Post-Partition Memory' in *Limiting Secularism: The Ethics of Co-existence in Indian Literature and Film*. Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2008. p. 92.

<sup>5</sup> Alok Bhalla. 'Memory, History and Fictional Representations of the Partition'. *Economic and Political Weekly* 34.44 (1999): 3119-3128. *JSTOR*. Web. 4 June 2017. p. 3119.

testimonies which would give voice to the human suffering of the times, Partition fiction took up the task of filling the gap found in the official nationalist narrative of the country. Writers like Sadat Hasan Manto, Khushwant Singh, Chaman Nahal, Bhisham Sahni have represented the horrors of the time in their fiction. Their works are a form of reaction to the immediate shock of the event which baffled people and shook their views of what constitutes normalcy in life. These works also looked back with nostalgia at the times when peace prevailed in the nation and communities resided in considerable harmony in the country. But after the publication of survivor testimonies, the question arises about the function of Partition fiction. How differently does later Partition fiction represent the event when the survivors have spoken for themselves? What kind of stories should they unfold to their readers? What is the nature of representation of the event as found in the writings by second and third generation writers? The question arises from the need to understand the distinction between fiction written by the first generation and the fiction written by the later generations. The Partition is not fading from the literary imagination—it is in fact still seen as a traumatic event that affects the present, it is thus imperative to read these works to understand the continuing impact of Partition, to explore the role of Postmemory.

In this thesis, an attempt has been made to answer the questions that we have received. One hypothesis that I begin with is that the analysis of the works about Partition after the publication of testimonies will be showing the impact of their representation of the event. The authors can in no way ignore the presence of the voices of the survivor generation in the testimonies found in published form. They have to take the testimonies into consideration before moving on to the formation of their own representation of the event. In the absence of lived experience, the testimonies become an important source of information about the event. Thus the authors belonging to the second and third generation will be indebted to the recorded survivor testimonies which are available to them as a source on which they can base their understanding of the event. But this leads to further questions about the nature of such representations--of whether these later Partition fictions have anything new to offer to the field of Partition studies or is their creativity somewhere stifled by the presence of oral and recorded testimonies.

Marriane Hirsch defines Postmemory as:

“Postmemory” describes the relationship that the “generation after” bears to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those who came before--to experiences they “remember” only by means of the stories, images, and behaviours among which they grew up. But these experiences were transmitted to them so deeply and affectively as to seem to constitute memories in their own right. Postmemory’s connection to the past is thus actually mediated not by recall but by imaginative investment, projection, and creation.<sup>6</sup>

Hirsch’s definition of ‘Postmemory’ focuses on the relationship of the ‘generation after’ to an event before their birth which becomes an important trope in the understanding of the nature of representation of the event found in second and third generation literary responses to the Partition. Imaginative investment is the key aspect of postmemory because of the increase in temporal distance from the event. The first generation writers who were temporally close to the event have presented a particular representation of the event with their immediate engagement in the turbulent times. As the subsequent generations are temporally distant from the event, their point of view towards the event should be more objective as their response to the event is not an immediate response to the event. Their response to the event is a belated response based on their received knowledge about the event. The second and the third generations reach out to the past and utilize the distance from the past to create a balance between the past and the present. They engage with the past event based on the legacy that is handed over to them by the first generation and in turn they form their own legacy about the event. Their representations about the event need to balance their knowledge of and engagement with the past and their understanding of that engagement in terms of the present. Theirs is a precarious but important position to take. They might not want to engage with the event but the effect of Partition in various subtle forms like the ever-present mistrust between communities has so inextricably become a part of the everyday dialogue that there is no chance of looking the other way. The literary responses by the second and third generation writers are a result of this essential engagement with the event.

The basis of the literary engagements with the event is formed on the information and knowledge about the event received through various channels and modes like literature, histories,

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<sup>6</sup> Marianne Hirsch. *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2012. p. 5.

testimonies, photographs, films and family stories. Among these, survivor testimonies have an essential role in forming an impression about the events which took place during Partition. But since the testimonies are about a traumatic event, it is necessary to understand how much of the actual happenings are narrated in the testimonies. The testimonies available to the subsequent generations through Butalia, Menon and Bhasin's works are majorly those of women. Butalia's work also presents the point of view of children and Dalits who were affected by the event.

Though the testimonies of women highlight their plight during the Partition, there are moments of silences and erasures in their testimonies. As women were and still are looked upon as the ones who bear the honour of a family and community, they were the ones who suffered the most not only at the hands of the rival communities but also at the hands of their own family members. The bodies of women became the sites on which the drama of revenge was played by raping them, mutilating them or branding them with communal slogans. Apart from this, women were murdered by the male members of their family in order to save them from dishonour at the hands of men from the other community. As the dishonour of women meant the dishonour of the whole family and community, it was thought better for them to be killed. In most cases, women were not provided any chance of survival. Further the perpetrators of these killings justify their actions by talking about the courage of the women who, according to them, welcomed death to dishonour. Even women who were recovered from their abductors were not welcomed back by their families as their honour had been tainted. However there is a curious silence in the testimonies of women about any sexual assault which might have taken place. Thus the presence of these silences along with testimonies of men who uphold the murder of women as honourable complicates the representation of the event as found in the testimonies.

Moreover, Partition is a traumatic event and survivors testifying to trauma will evidently not be able to represent the entire event in their testimony. Testimonies, in themselves, are narrations about the event after the event has already taken place. Since trauma suggests a break, it is difficult for survivors of traumatic events to narrate the event in its entirety. Thus any form of narration of the event, once the event takes place, is nothing but a representation of the event. What is received by the subsequent generations is a mediated form of memory of the event as the event itself is lost into an inaccessible past at the very moment of the occurrence of the event. Thus they are twice removed from the actual event that they represent in their works; first

because they haven't experienced the event and rest because the experience is transmitted to them as reconstituted memory—full of stories, erasures, and imagination. The nature of such representations has been analyzed in this thesis to understand the efficacy of the continuing engagements with the event of Partition.

The works of the second and third generation authors published after the testimonies came out in 1998 have been analyzed in this thesis through the lens of postmemory to understand the way in which Partition has been represented in these works after so many years. These works depict the event from various perspectives based on the postmemory of the authors about the event and in turn creates an image of the event for the future generations. Shauna Singh Baldwin, a writer of Indian origin residing in Canada, has a family connection to the event but she also mentions her indebtedness to the work of Butalia while writing *What the Body Remembers*. The novel presents the precarious position of the Sikh community during the Partition riots specifically focusing on the lives of women. Roop and Satya are two women whose life stories are narrated in the novel with respect to the way they navigate through their lives guided by patriarchal codes. It also depicts a picture of pre-Partition days and then presents the event and its aftermath within the narrative framework. Roop's life is controlled by her father Bachan Singh, her brother Jeevan, her husband Sardarji and also the women in her family who have inherited the patriarchal codes of correct behavior of women. None of the women characters in Roop's family have any agency in the patriarchal world that they live in. These characters include Roop's mother who dies after successive childbirths, Roop's elder sister Madani, Roop's Nani, Revathi Bhua, Gujri, the servant woman and Kusum, Roop's sister-in-law. Though Satya is an otherwise strong character, even she has no agency when Sardarji, her husband, brings home Roop as his second wife because of Satya's inability to bear children. Roop also has to give every child of hers to Satya as Sardarji wished to appease his first wife by giving her his children. Baldwin shows the continuation of this patriarchal control over women's lives when during the Partition, Roop's father Bachan Singh, kills Roop's sister-in-law Kusum in his bid to save her honour when a Muslim mob was on the verge of attacking Pari Darwaza.

Amit Majmudar is an author who resides in Ohio but has no family connection to the event and has written the novel *Partitions* based entirely on his received legacy of Partition through history books and reading of testimonies. Majmudar also acknowledges his indebtedness

to Butalia's work in shaping his perception about the event. In this novel, Majmudar focuses on the aspect of human suffering during Partition by presenting the plight of all--women, children, Hindus, Muslims, and Dalits. According to him, Partition violence did not spare anyone.

Majmudar's postmemory of Partition directly bases itself on episodes as narrated by survivors in Butalia's work. His postmemory of the event is preoccupied with images of the past that he has received which he blends with his imagination in the novel to create characters whose diverse lives and sufferings overlap to bring forward a tale of human suffering irrespective of class, caste, age, gender or religion. He depicts the character of a Brahmin doctor, Roshan Jaitley, whose spirit is the narrator of the novel. Roshan's wife Sonia who is of unknown birth and their twin sons, Keshav and Shankar, try to escape on a train to Delhi when they are separated from their mother at the overcrowded train station while trying to board the train. Sonia is kidnapped by a Muslim man Ghulam Sikri and the twins struggle to find their way through the chaos around them. They meet Maya Rani, a young Dalit girl whose description and actions are strikingly similar to a woman named Maya Rani who had been interviewed by Butalia.

Majmudar also depicts the character of the Sikh girl, Simran Kaur who escapes her family as they attempt to kill the women by poisoning them only to fall prey to the abductors lurking on the road. Simran and the twins, Keshav and Shankar, are rescued by Masud, a Muslim doctor, who is presented as a figure of benevolence during the maddening times of Partition. Majmudar ends the novel by showing Sonia committing suicide by jumping into a well already full with the bodies of women reminding the readers of the Thoa Khalsa episode.

Irfan Master is also an Indian origin writer residing in England who has written the novel *A Beautiful Lie* based on familial memories recounted to him and the information available to him in history books, testimonies etc. Master's narrative is about a young boy Bilal who wants to shield his dying father from the harsh reality of the Partition of the country. Master has written the novel with the aim of educating the children and adolescents about the event of Partition. He thus has presented an image of the event with quite some details portraying the tension and growing mistrust between communities which led to the violence during the Partition riots. Bilal has a close group of friends who belong to different communities and this portrays the idea of religious harmony even in a volatile scenario which Master wants to convey in the novel. Master depicts the dedicated support that Bilal's friends, his Hindu teacher Mr. Mukherjee, and his father's friend Doctorji extend towards helping Bilal in achieving his aim of hiding the truth of

the division of the country from his father. There is a significant absence of women characters in the novel which perhaps points towards Master not wanting to deal with the atrocities against women in a novel written for a young audience. Thus Master, through his postmemory of the event, depicts the strength of communal harmony even in times of communal conflict and turmoil and this is the message he wants to convey to the subsequent generations.

Meena Arora Nayak's *About Daddy* is a harrowing tale of a daughter's journey who carries the sin of the father on her shoulders. Nayak resides in Washington DC and has combined the memory of her parents with her research. Nayak presents the story of Simran who comes from America to India to fulfill her father's last wish of spreading his ashes at the border of India and Pakistan. Simran is arrested at the border as she tries to take a photograph of her father's resting place. The novel brings together Simran's story and also that of her father. She faces difficulties in the Indian prison and also later outside the prison when she tries to retrieve her father's ashes from police custody without which she refuses to return to America even when her boyfriend Scott comes to take her back. Simran is haunted by what her father had told her before he passed away. Her father had killed many Muslim people in the market place in the days before Partition when violence had broken out between the two communities. Though this was a reaction to the killing of Gajji Pehelwan whom Simran's father looked upon as a friend and guide in his life, Simran's father carries the guilt with him till the end of his life. Simran inherits this guilt from her father and her life is entangled with her Daddy's guilt of wrongdoing towards his country. Simran meets Arun, the journalist, and Kalida, the head of an NGO working for peace in the country and forms a unique friendship with a girl in prison named Sultana who had murdered two people in order to take revenge for the burning of her house in a communal conflict. Nayak juxtaposes the memory of Partition as presented by Simran's father with the present day communal clashes in the country. The Postmemory of Nayak is one which views and judges the event of Partition in terms of the present situation in the country and shows the effect of the memory of Partition on a member of a later generation.

Reema Moudgil's *Perfect Eight* also presents a second generation character Ira who carries the burden of her mother's painful memories of Partition. Ira's mother had lost her parents during the Partition in Lahore and had migrated to India as an orphan who grew up at the mercy of her father's friend. Ira inherits her mother's fear of happiness and her life remains full of



apprehensions about the people and events that surround her. This novel also brings together the memory of Partition along with the present day happenings in the country. Ira's identity is formed in terms of her involvement with her mother's past. The relationships that she forms with people cannot provide her with any sense of security as she always seems to be in search of happiness which eludes her. Her mother remains a nameless entity in the novel bearing only the weight of her memories and a life which can provide Ira or her with no sense of stability. Ira's mother's life which had been begun by displacement during Partition remains permanently displaced without any anchor as she can never find any sense of permanent happiness. Ira's relationships also cannot provide her with happiness and stability as is evident in her failed marriage to Gautam and her complicated relationship with her love interest Samir. Her only place of solace is the tea estate of Missamari, owned by Samir's father, which acts as a haven of peace for both Ira and her mother. Moudgil's representation of Partition is based on her conscious realization of India's continuing communal conflicts as a result of the founding trauma of Partition. Hers is a non-familial postmemory of the event through which she presents the effect of Partition on the subsequent generation.

Sorayya Khan is an author of Pakistani origin who resides in New York and has shared her indebtedness to her familial memories and to the oral memory projects for forming her notion about Partition. Her novel *Five Queen's Road* depicts the life of Dina Lal, a Hindu man who refuses to migrate from Pakistan even after the borders are drawn. His sons abandon him and his wife Janoo is abducted by goons and is never found again. The house becomes the metaphor for the madness that Partition was and contains within itself the trials and tribulations of two communities living on two sides of the house separated by a border of furniture and doors in between. Dina Lal invites Amir Shah to live in the front part of the house with his two children, Javid and Rubina. He takes minimal rent from Amir Shah as his aim was to keep himself and his wife safe by keeping a Muslim in the house. But his plan backfires. Janoo is abducted which leads to a bitter enmity between Dina Lal and Amir Shah. But beyond this enmity, Dina Lal forms a close bond with Amir Shah's son Javid whom he treats like a son. Dina Lal even arranges and pays for his application to study in a university in the United States. The novel depicts the aftermath of Partition and presents the curious situation that had taken place in the house left behind by an Englishman from the point of view of Amir Shah's European daughter-in-law Irene who is married to his son Javid. Hers is an outsider's perspective about the madness

that took place in the house by Dina Lal and Amir Shah's incessant conflicts. The novel ends with Dina Lal's death and the discovery of years of newspapers collected by him in his bedroom in the back part of the house. The collection started from the date on which Janoo was abducted which points towards the fact that when newspapers were busy discussing political ramifications of Partition, the actual sufferers were the people whose lives were disrupted by the event.

Finally, Viswajyoti Ghosh's work *This Side, That Side* is a compilation of graphic narratives from both sides of the border which is a result of collaborations between people from various professions who have come together to share their notion about the event of Partition. The work's aim is the 'restorying' of Partition by presenting how the subsequent generations look at the ongoing effects of Partition on people's lives even today. The works include people with family history sharing their perception about the event and also people without family history engaging with the ever-present effects of the events in their daily lives. Starting from the issue of mistrust between communities to the difficulty of procuring a visa to visit the neighbouring country, this work covers it all. The perspectives from people from both sides of the border enrich the work even further.

This thesis brings these works together and presents the various forms in which the postmemory of the event has taken shape in the works of Partition fiction written after 1998. All the authors have engaged with the past through familial memories, testimonies, and histories and have created their conscious representation of the event. Postmemory of the second and generation writers, writing without lived memory of the event, can be said to help in the creation of the collective memory of the event which will help further generations to form their impression about the event. The works have been analyzed to reach a further understanding of this legacy that has been created by the authors.

The thesis is divided into four chapters, excluding the introduction and conclusion. Chapter one titled 'Understanding Postmemory: Theoretical Concepts' discusses the concept of 'Postmemory' as proposed by Marianne Hirsch in the field of Holocaust studies to finally come to an understanding of the notion in case of Partition. The chapter lays the theoretical groundwork for the thesis as works by second and third generation writers on Partition is read through the lens of postmemory in the subsequent chapters. The first chapter discusses the reason behind the current preoccupation with memory studies. The gradual loss of the voices of the

survivor generation creates this obsession with memory as History somewhere fails to provide a comprehensive account about an event. The chapter then discusses the ways in which the 'generation after' or the subsequent generations form their perception about the event based on stories, and images of the event in the absence of lived memory of the event. Postmemory is distinct from memory as it is based on imaginative investment of the first generation. It is also discussed how the postmemorial generation creates a relationship between the past and the present. Familial connection can lead to the formation of postmemory because of the stories with which the subsequent generations grow up. But members of the second and third generation without any familial memory can also engage with the event and form their postmemory based on the collective and cultural memory of the event.

Chapter two, 'Modes of Transmission of Memory: From Memory to Postmemory', discusses the various channels through which transmission of the memory of the event to the subsequent generations take place. The authors who are writing about the event without any lived memory have no access to the event except through the various representations of the event that are available to them. The major channel of transmission that has been discussed in the chapter are the testimonies of the survivor generation which are accessible to the second and third generation writers as part of various oral history projects and the works of Butalia, Menon and Bhasin. Survivor testimonies provide a narration about the event from the people who actually experienced the event. In case of Partition, such oral history projects are significant as they bring forward the aspect of human suffering which is otherwise erased from the historical discourses available in the country. However various critics like Ana Douglass and Thomas Vogler<sup>7</sup> are sceptical about the extent to which testimonies by survivors of a traumatic event can provide genuine information about the event<sup>8</sup>. The various nuances of testimonies in the context of trauma--silences, erasures, and relationship with readers have been discussed to understand the kind of representation of the event that reaches the subsequent generations. Apart from testimonies, films, novels, and photographs are presented as other sources of accessing the event by the subsequent generations.

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<sup>7</sup> As mentioned by Priya Kumar in 'Acts of Return: Literature and Post-Partition Memory' in *Limiting Secularism: The Ethics of Co-existence in Indian Literature and Film*. Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2008. p. 95.

Chapter three, 'Representation of the Event: Partition in Second and Third Generation Fiction', discusses three novels--Shauna Singh Baldwin's *What the Body Remembers*, Amit Majmudar's *Partitions* and Irfan Master's *A Beautiful Lie*. Through the analysis of the novels, this chapter aims to redefine Partition fiction's role as more than a gap-filling project. The authors have acknowledged the role that testimonies have played in the creation of their fiction. All three authors are diasporic and hence are both temporally and spatially removed from the event. The investment of the authors in depicting the event of Partition in their fiction sees them imaginatively accessing the event. The chapter also depicts how interestingly the authors have dealt with their postmemory of the event by intermingling received knowledge of the event with their imagination. Baldwin and Master share familial connection with the event whereas Majmudar bases his depiction on the knowledge he gains through research. All the three novels discussed in the chapter provide varied perceptions about the event--Baldwin's novel focuses on the plight of Sikhs especially that of Sikh women during the Partition, Majmudar focuses on human suffering irrespective of class, caste, gender, or religion during the Partition riots and Master depicts the event from the perspective of a child. The novels have been thoroughly analyzed to understand the nature of representations which combine received knowledge along which in turn form their individual perception about the event.

Chapter four, 'The Shadow of Partition: The Continuing Impact of the Event' analyzes the works which depict the effect of the event of Partition on the subsequent generation within the narrative framework. The works which have been discussed include Reema Moudgil's *Perfect Eight*, Meena Arora Nayak's *About Daddy*, Sorayya Khan's *Five Queen's Road* and Vishwajyoti Ghosh's *This Side, That Side*. The chapter analyzes how each of these works try to make sense of the present in terms of the past which in turn makes the subsequent generations more conscious about the events that take place around them. The chapter aims to depict how the memory of Partition still captures the imagination of the current generation. Moudgil and Nayak present the characters of daughters who carry the burden of their parents' memories of Partition. Moudgil's Ira carries the memory of her mother who was a victim of Partition violence and had lost her parents during the rioting. But Nayak's Simran carries the guilt of a father's memories, a father who had at once been a victim as well as a perpetrator of violence. Ira and Simran's postmemory of the event has been analyzed to understand how they work through their present bearing the burden of the past. Sorayya Khan is also an author who has written based on familial memory

and oral testimonies and her postmemorial presentation of the event involves the discussion of the effect of Partition on the lives of people. Finally, Ghosh's representation of the event is through a collection of graphic narratives which is the first ever attempt to depict the event through such a unique medium and in the process creates newer ways of delving into the far-reaching effects of the event felt by the second and third generations even today.

The concluding chapter of the thesis sums up all the findings in the four earlier chapters and talks about the varied nature of postmemory in the context of Partition. The chapter concludes that the nature of Partition postmemory can be understood through the nature of representations in the works by second and third generation writers. The chapter then looks at the contribution of the works discussed in the thesis to the formation of newer modes of representation of the event of Partition. The role of these works is examined in terms of the political situation in the country today and tries to determine need for such representations. The role of these works to act as memorials for the event of Partition in a country which only recently saw its first Partition Museum is also discussed. Finally, the chapter concludes by commenting on the contribution of these works to the field of Partition studies and Partition fiction.

## Chapter 1

### Understanding Postmemory: Theoretical Concepts

“... memory does seem to be radically singular: my memories are not yours. The memories of one person cannot be transferred into the memory of another. As mine, memory is a model of mineness, of private possession for all the experiences of the subject”.<sup>9</sup>

Paul Ricouer in his book *Memory, History, Forgetting* presents this argument while establishing the concept of the private nature and the inwardness of memory with reference to Augustine. According to Ricouer, the memory of an individual belongs only to that person; it has a sense of the personal and what he terms as the ‘mineness of memories’<sup>10</sup>. The formulation of this notion by Ricouer strongly focuses on the idea that the memories of an individual can only be accessed by the individual himself and there is no scope for the transference of those memories to any other individual. This brings to the forefront the belief that the memories of a particular person can never be available completely or even fragmentarily to another person. But the study of the concept of the transference of memories especially of traumatic memories to the subsequent generations has become an emergent field of study in the wake of human catastrophes in the twentieth century in the form of the two world wars, the Holocaust, the Partition of India, Bosnian war, and the continuing conflict between Palestine and Israel among others. Though these disasters might have had different reasons and agendas behind them, one thing that they had in common is that they created havoc in the lives of people and left death, disaster, fear and trauma for them to come to terms with. The fear and trauma have been such that they have created a deep-seated impact on the minds of the people and have scarred the memory of those who have survived the atrocities of these events. The survivors carry within them a painful

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<sup>9</sup>Paul Ricouer. *Memory, History, Forgetting*. Trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004. p. 96.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. p. 97.

amount of memory of what they had to face, what their near and dear ones had to face and the guilt of a survivor never seems to leave them.

Towards the end of the previous century, the members of this generation of survivors slowly began to perish and there arose a fear of the complete loss of the memories of the traumatic events amongst the later generations. This apprehension of loss saw an overwhelming need to hold on to those memories by means of recording them. This fear or apprehension of loss is intrinsically connected to the fear of forgetting the past as Andreas Huyssen has pointed out in his book *Present Pasts*: “The very structures of public media memory make it quite understandable that our secular culture today, obsessed with memory as it is, is also somehow in the grips of a fear, even a terror, of forgetting.... My hypothesis here is that we are trying to counteract this fear and danger of forgetting with survival strategies of public and private memorialization”<sup>11</sup>. Pierre Nora’s opinion also echoes Huyssen’s point when he says:

No society has ever produced archives as deliberately as our own, not only by volume, not only by new technical means of reproduction and preservation, but also by its superstitious esteem, by its veneration of the trace. Even as traditional memory disappears, we feel obliged assiduously to collect remains, testimonies, documents, images, speeches, any visible signs of what has been, as if this burgeoning dossier were to be called upon to furnish some proof to who knows what tribunal of history.<sup>12</sup>

This phenomenon of the disappearance of ‘traditional memory’ is the cause behind the obsession with the ‘culture of memory’<sup>13</sup> towards the turn of the century which in turn points towards some of the inadequacies in the way history has presented the past.

The field of history has become inadequate in providing a necessary sense of trust and stability in one’s knowledge about the past. The traumatic events of the past add to this sense of inadequacy as, in certain cases like the Partition of India; there has been a conscious attempt to suppress

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<sup>11</sup> Andreas Huyssen. *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003. pp. 17-18.

<sup>12</sup> Pierre Nora. “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire”. *Representations* 26 (1989): 7-24. JSTOR. Web. 10 May 2017. pp. 13-14.

<sup>13</sup> Andreas Huyssen. op. cit. p. 15.

certain aspects of the traumatic past in the official history of the nation. The Indian nation celebrates the year 1947 as the year the country gained independence from two hundred years of British rule and every year the Independence Day on 15<sup>th</sup> of August is celebrated with great fanfare. But the independence of the country had been achieved at the cost of partitioning the country into two parts--India and Pakistan. The moment of the birth of the two nations was forged with pain as mass-scale violence occurred in the riots between the members of the opposing religious groups (Hindus and Muslims) which resulted in the death, abduction, or mutilation of innumerable number of people. Women of both the communities were targeted and they were subjected to inhuman torture, violence, rape, abduction, and mutilation in a bid to mar the sense of honour of the other community. But this aspect which accompanied the independence of the nation of India has always been swept into the realms of oblivion or at least there has been an attempt to do so in the official history of the nation. The official grand narrative of independence is the narrative of the continuous struggle of the brave freedom fighters, their sacrifice and bravado which forced the British to leave the country and helped the country to gain freedom from colonial rule. Though the reason behind trying to veil this aspect of violence can be perceived as part of a nationalist agenda to create a history which is suitable or convenient to remember for a new nation and its citizens, the impact of the Partition riots and the significant loss of human life especially in the north, north-western and eastern part of the country cannot be ignored. This is true even more so because India as a country is still affected by sectarian violence at regular intervals of time. Deepti Misri has pointed out: "... memories of Partition continue to inform newer waves and forms of violence in the subcontinent and therefore deserve close and continued scrutiny"<sup>14</sup>. Be it the Babri Masjid massacre, Gujarat riots of 2002, the riots in Muzaffarnagar or that in the Trilokpuri area of the national capital, violence which has religion as its mainstay seem to be a continuing presence in India and Partition never seems to completely recede from the vocabulary that is used to portray these events. The headline of a report by Harinder Baweja about the Muzaffarnagar riots in *Hindustan Times* published on January 26, 2014 reads: "For Muzaffarnagar Muslims, 'it feels like Partition'" and the report begins with these words: "Wakilludin Siddiqui, in his early 70s, remembers the day well. How can he forget September 8, 2013? That's the day he finally understood what might have

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<sup>14</sup> Deepti Misri. *Beyond Partition: Gender, Violence and Representation in Postcolonial India*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004. p. 7.



happened in 1947 during the Partition”.<sup>15</sup> Another report on the Trilokpuri riots by Muneeza Naqvi in *The Huffington Post* published on November 10, 2014 reads: “Thirty years after the notorious anti-Sikh riots in 1984 — the worst communal violence since the bloodshed that followed the partition of the subcontinent at the time of India's independence in 1947 — religious conflagrations are still surprisingly common in a secular country where tolerance is enshrined in the constitution.”<sup>16</sup> As critics have noted, “Simply put, the Partition is not a bygone occurrence of 1947, but rather an ongoing event whose historical traces cast a long shadow in the region and across the globe today. As William Faulkner would say in relation to the dark legacy of the American South, ‘The past is never dead. It’s is not even past’.”<sup>17</sup>

The phenomenon of Partition seems to have become a metaphor for the depiction of all events of communal violence and upheaval in India and even though the official history of the nation has attempted to erase the memory of Partition from the collective consciousness of its citizens, it seems to have seeped into their memory despite all odds. This is an interesting phenomenon in a country where there is no official memorialisation of the event by the building of memorials or museums. In India, forgetting the event of Partition is viewed as an effective method of creating a glorious history for the nation and trying to hold on to the event is looked upon as a sort of hindrance towards the upholding of peace in the nation. Thus Gyanendra Pandey explains the reason behind this phenomenon:

If modern Indian historians or political scientists could ... distance themselves from 1947--if the violence of Partition was not an on-going presence and an ever-present threat in India, or if the historians and political scientists were located far away (say, in the United States)--we might have seen moves towards the institutionalization of the memory of Partition, in the way of Holocaust museums, Vietnam memorials and reconstructions

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<sup>15</sup> Harinder Baweja. “For Muzaffarnagar Muslims, ‘it feels like Partition’”. *Hindustan Times*. 26 January 2014. Web. 30 June 2015. <http://www.hindustantimes.com/muzaffarnagaraftermath/it-feels-like-partition/article1-1176764.aspx> 30/06/2015.

<sup>16</sup> Muneeza Naqvi. *The Huffington Post*. 10 November 2014. Web. 30 June. 2015. [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/11/10/trilokpuri-hindu-muslim-riot\\_n\\_6110940.html?ir=India&adsSiteOverride=in](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/11/10/trilokpuri-hindu-muslim-riot_n_6110940.html?ir=India&adsSiteOverride=in).

<sup>17</sup> Amritjit Singh, Nalini Iyer and Rahul K. Gairola. *Revisiting India's Partition: New Essays on Memory, Culture, and Politics*. Google Book Search. Web. 3 June 2017. p. xvii.

of Hiroshima. The historian or political activist therefore clings to a number of hackneyed nationalist propositions about what is singular about India, and appropriate to Indian history.

If it is the question of guilt and the necessity of the remembrance of suffering that has animated the German debate on the historiography of the Holocaust, it is... the question of India's unity and the need to forget in the interests of that unity, that Indians are asked to take (and to a large extent have taken) as guide in their historical scholarship on the Partition of 1947.<sup>18</sup>

In this scenario, the memories of the survivor generation take a crucial position of importance in the emerging scholarship of Indian Partition. Thus the obsession with the 'culture of memory' can be witnessed in the sub-continent as well and, as Pierre Nora says, "We speak so much of memory because there is so little of it left"<sup>19</sup> or rather there will be so little left of it in a few years. Nora's theorization regarding memory and history is helpful in this context as he provides an understanding of the need for this 'obsession' with recording or holding on to the memory of the event of Partition. It is not only that history cannot provide a sense of completion in providing the knowledge about the Partition; it also has a sense of rigidity associated with it whereas memory is always in flux and can provide an alternate sense of multiplicity in contrast to the grand official narrative.<sup>20</sup> This is the age of 'history of history' where historiography is being questioned and history is being critical of itself.<sup>21</sup> History is usually conceived as a "discipline of inquiry and as a mode of knowledge"<sup>22</sup> which somewhere has proved to be inadequate in providing a complete narrative about the event of Partition. From the perspective of Partition, the historiography of the nation seem to be caught in the discourse of maintaining

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<sup>18</sup>Gyanendra Pandey. *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism and History in India*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001. p. 60.

<sup>19</sup> Pierre Nora. op. cit. p. 7.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. p. 7-8.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. p. 9.

<sup>22</sup> Shoshana Felman. 'Camus' The Plague, or a Monument to Witnessing'. Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub. *Testimony: Crisis of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*. New York and London: Routledge, 1992. p. 93.

and upholding the motto of ‘unity in diversity’ and the traumatic memory of the survivors seems to have the power to disrupt that notion. Scholars like Javeed Alam, Suresh Sharma, Alok Bhalla adhere to the notion that the case of Indian Partition is exceptional from that of other traumatic events and this obsession of holding on to the past through the memories of the survivors is nothing but an attempt to disrupt the normalcy that needs to be achieved for the growth of the country. Javeed Alam says: “A new generation has emerged for whom the Partition is a distant historical event. It has gone back into their memory, which is important for our politics, for our social lives, for normal interaction between communities. The everydayness of life becomes normal when you forget this experience”.<sup>23</sup> Alok Bhalla also writes: “I would like to urge that, 50 years later, as we think about 1947 again, we resist the temptation either to write celebrative narratives of nationalist victories or to become chroniclers of communities of suffering. A generation later, it is imperative that we make....a self-conscious attempt to develop a twofold vision in which...we record stories about events and people which are instinct with pity and thoughtfulness”<sup>24</sup>.

But the interesting point to note is that the new generation has anything but forgotten the event and quite a significant number of projects have come into existence to record the memory of the survivor generation in the form of testimonies. Some projects which are worth mentioning are Andrew Whitehead’s ‘India: A People Partitioned’, ‘Partition Remembered’ project by the Birmingham City Council, Indian Memory Project: 1947 India Pakistan Partition Archives, 1947 Partition Archive. Among these, Andrew Whitehead’s project is the earliest as it was a radio series which was made on the fiftieth year of India’s independence in 1997 for the BBC World Service. This project was specifically aimed at capturing the lived experiences of the people who underwent the trauma of the Partition riots. Whitehead wanted to go beyond the political aspect of the independence of India. The Birmingham City Council’s Project came about in the year 2009 in the form an interactive educational resource which recorded twenty individual accounts by people who experienced the event of Partition. The Indian Memory Project is presented by The Memory Company which was established in the year 2010 by Anusha Yadav. It is an online

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<sup>23</sup> As quoted by Gyanendra Pandey. op. cit. p. 60.

<sup>24</sup> Alok Bhalla. ‘Memory, History and Fictional Representations of the Partition’. *Economic and Political Weekly* 34.44 (1999): 3119-3128. *JSTOR*. Web. 4 June 2017. p. 3119.

archive which reads the history of the Indian nation through photographs, letters and narratives shared by members of various families. It provides a peoples' narrative about the history of the country. 1947 Partition Archive also started in the year 2010 by the efforts of Dr. Guneeta Singh Bhalla and it aims at collecting and preserving first-hand accounts of Partition survivors. Currently, this project has a huge archive of first-hand accounts and is even aiming to make these available for scholarly and academic research. Thus these projects have created an archive which can prove to be a useful resource while engaging with the subject of the event of Partition.

Through the establishment of these memory projects, the notion that modern memory is archival<sup>25</sup> gains more strength. The creation of this archive helps in preserving the memories of the survivor generation so that the events which are recorded through these memories are not forgotten by the subsequent generations. Gerd Bayer speaks on similar lines in the context of Holocaust when he says: "As time moves away from World War II, memory takes on a different quality as it becomes transformed from direct witnessing and the resulting testimonials to archival and mediated forms of remembering that carry the responsibility of firmly embedding the Holocaust in the cultural memory of later generations"<sup>26</sup>. But the oral testimony projects in the context of Partition are facing quite a lot of criticism from those who believe in the philosophy of forgetting the Partition violence for the return of normalcy in the lives of the citizens of the Indian nation. Suresh Sharma says: "We have to be sensitive to what a project of recovering memory may do to [the inheritance of the gestures of kindness present even during violent times in the people of India]".<sup>27</sup> Sharma seems to believe that the recording of the memories of the survivor generation would lead to the loss of these gestures of kindness and the memories of violence would lead to a disruption in the normalized, peaceful lives of people. Gyanendra Pandey is extremely critical of this notion of turning a blind eye towards an aspect which seems to be the defining feature of a large number of people who suffered during the Partition. According to Pandey, it seems as if

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<sup>25</sup> Pierre Nora. op. cit. p. 13.

<sup>26</sup>Gerd Bayer. "After Postmemory: Holocaust Cinema and the Third Generation." *Shofar* 4 (2010): 116-132. *RAMBI*. Web. 8 June 2013. p. 116.

<sup>27</sup> As quoted by Gyanendra Pandey. op. cit. p. 61.

colonialism's passive victim returns: the innocent masses who... have no will of their own, from whom anything may be prized out and in whose heads, apparently, anything may be planted; who have in addition only 'frenzy', 'insanity' and the provocation of short-sighted recorders of memory as possible motives for their own violent actions; who have to be given 'history'--by the state, by other 'large organisations' and by us; and who must be allowed to forget so that they can return to their normal, everyday lives.<sup>28</sup>

Thus rather than looking at the memory archive as a potential space of threat, the efficacy of this archive needs to be understood in order to better understand the ways in which "1947 is remembered and written about" which would lead to "the making of the event and the heritage called Partition"<sup>29</sup>.

The efficacy of the memory archive of the survivor generation lies in the fact that the archive can provide a sense of permanence in contrast to the effervescent quality of memory by performing the function of recording those memories. Even though memory is a mediated phenomenon and is an aspect of the past, the archive by recording memory can make it available and accessible to the present. Pierre Nora explains: "[Memory's] new vocation is to record; delegating to the archive the responsibility of remembering, it sheds its skin upon depositing them there, as a snake sheds its skin"<sup>30</sup>. Thus memory has become a "mode of re-presentation" and has started "belonging ever more to the present. After all, the act of remembering is always in and of the present, while its referent is that of the past and thus absent".<sup>31</sup> By recording the memory of the event of Partition and by engaging with those memories, the subsequent generations are trying to understand a past which might otherwise be forever lost to them. This understanding is necessary, particularly in a country like India, because events accompanied by Partition-like violence are still a part of our existence and a better understanding of the past can lead to a much more nuanced understanding of the present and a mature outlook towards the future. Huysen provides another reason for the current generation's interest in memory: "... in this prominence

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<sup>28</sup> Gyanendra Pandey. *op. cit.* p. 61-62.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* p. 66.

<sup>30</sup> Pierre Nora. *op. cit.* p. 13.

<sup>31</sup> Andreas Huysen. *op. cit.* p. 3-4.

of academic mnemonic history as well, memory and musealization together are called upon to provide a bulwark against obsolescence and disappearance, to counter our deep anxiety about the speed of change and the ever-shrinking horizons of time and space.<sup>32</sup>” Thus the formation of the memory archive of Partition is necessary for the current generations of India to understand and come to terms with the traumatic history and past of the nation and carry forward this legacy through their own modes of mediation and representation.

The question that needs to be asked now is in what manner can the memory archive help in achieving the above-mentioned aim? To answer this question, the effect of Partition on the subsequent generations needs to be focused on and understood, and in order to do so, the questions that need to be asked are: Do they remember the Partition? If they do, how do they remember it and if they don't, why don't they remember it? What are the various ways in which Partition is represented by them? How are their representations different from those of the survivor generation? Do their representations in any way bring any promise of a better understanding of the past? Do they represent the violent aspect of the Partition or do they focus on the long-term effects of that violence? Do their representations take into account the perspective of the perpetrator of violence, the victim and the witness or observer? What is the nature of the legacy of Partition that is created by them?

The subject of memory and the transmission of traumatic memories to the subsequent generations has been delved into deeply from various positions in the field of Holocaust studies so much so that Andreas Huyssen writes: “In the transnational movement of memory discourses, the Holocaust loses its quality as index of the specific historical event and begins to function as metaphor for other traumatic histories and memories”<sup>33</sup>. This aspect of how the subsequent generations after a traumatic event remember the event and how the event is represented by the later generations has become an important and interesting aspect to deal with in the current scenario. Holocaust studies can prove to be a fruitful starting point in the process of analysis of the effect of Partition on the subsequent generations. Though the Holocaust and the Partition of India are two very separate events, the concept of transference of memories is present in both

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid. p. 23.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. p. 14.

cases. In case of the Holocaust, there was a prominent victim-perpetrator scenario--the Nazis led by Adolf Hitler had persecuted the Jewish community. But in the case of Partition, this victim-perpetrator scenario is not so clearly distinguishable. In one situation while one was a victimizer, in another scenario that same person could have been the victim. The event, unlike the Holocaust, was not an openly state-sponsored event and the violence that took place was not unidirectional. Both the religious communities engaged in violence that led to the loss of human lives and property on both sides. Even instances of violence were found within the same religious community where the male family members sacrificed the lives of the women of the family in order to protect the honour of the family. Further, unlike the trials like the Nuremberg trials and the Eichmann trial in case of the Holocaust, after the Partition, there were no such legal trials to punish the perpetrators of violence as there was no singular enemy as such. For the Hindus, the Muslims were the enemy and for the Muslims, it was the Hindus. In certain regions, the Hindus were the minorities and were attacked by mobs of Muslims and in certain other regions, the Muslims were the minorities and were attacked by the Hindus. There was no single leader in all the attacks that took place during the riots and Partition violence was not an organized act of mass annihilation like it happened in the camps that were established during the Holocaust for the extermination of the Jewish people. As Kavita Panjabi says: "The partition was no holocaust experienced by one community at the hands of another, more powerful one--it was an event of reciprocal violence, of a deeply ironic 'equality' in which the violated was also the violator, the oppressor also the victim"<sup>34</sup>. Ananya Jahanara Kabir also succinctly points out: "...those who celebrated Independence in both India and Pakistan, were often the very same who had been complicit in, witnessed, or experienced the disintegration of sacred geographies and the destruction of cultural ecosystems..."<sup>35</sup> These distinctions between the experience of the Holocaust and the Partition need to be made before delving into an analysis of Partition memory with the assistance of theories pertaining to the Holocaust because these are fundamental differences which would determine the way in which certain theorizations though applicable to both cases would have exceptions associated with them.

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<sup>34</sup> Kavita Panjabi. 'A Unique Grace'. *Partition: The Long Shadow*. Ed. Urvashi Butalia. New Delhi: Zubaan and Penguin Books India, 2015. p. 52. Print.

<sup>35</sup> Ananya Jahanara Kabir. *Partition's Post-Amnesias: 1947, 1971 and Modern South Asia*. New Delhi: Women Unlimited, 2013. p. xi.

Further distinctions also need to be ascertained in case of the experiences of the perpetrators of violence, the victims of violence, witnesses or observers of the event of violence. Dominick LaCapra points out the importance of the same by saying: "... with respect to historical trauma and its representation, the distinction between victims, perpetrators, and bystanders is crucial"<sup>36</sup>. Though the Holocaust seems to provide quite a straight-forward view of the victim-perpetrator scenario, there are 'gray zone(s)' according to Primo Levi: "The gray zone serves to raise the question of the existence and extent of problematic--at times more or less dubiously hybridized--cases, but it does not imply the rashly generalized blurring or simple collapse of all the distinctions, including that between perpetrator and victim"<sup>37</sup>. In case of the Partition, the concept of the 'gray zone' can be much more fruitfully applicable because Partition saw the blurring of the lines between the victim and the perpetrator. Thus the notion of the survivor generation needs to be much more nuanced before trying to decipher the way in which the memories of the survivor generation affects the lives and experiences of the subsequent generations which in turn are represented by them in works of art or other such mediums. The experience of all the survivors cannot be homogenized and called the experiences of 'victims' of the event. Even while studying the archive of recorded memories, distinction needs to be made between the various forms of survivor memories. Tarun Saint warns against the phenomenon of collapsing all experiences into the category of experiences of the victims of traumatic events:

Instances of secondary trauma or perpetrator trauma cannot be equated with that of the victim, even though ambiguous cases of Primo Levi's 'gray zone' may exist. This is because the tendency to collapse all survivors into the category of traumatized victims may lead to distortions of the historical record and an inability to deal with trauma's afterlife. This argument needs to be further qualified with respect to the experience in the Subcontinent during the violence and its aftermath, when many victims became perpetrators, often after shedding their minority status, having moved from one region to

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<sup>36</sup> Dominick LaCapra. *Writing History, Writing Trauma*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2001. p. 79.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid. p. 79.



another. Indeed the trauma afflicting some survivors of the partition arose out of experiences as both victim and perpetrator.<sup>38</sup>

LaCapra elaborates on the notion of the ‘victim’ and writes:

‘Victim’ is not a psychological category. It is, in variable ways, a social, political, and ethical category. Victims of certain events will in all likelihood be traumatized by them, and not being traumatized would itself call for explanation. But not everyone traumatized by events is a victim. There is a possibility of perpetrator trauma which must itself be acknowledged and in some sense worked through if perpetrators are to distance themselves from an earlier implication in deadly ideologies and practices. Such trauma does not, however, entail the equation or identification of the perpetrator and the victim.<sup>39</sup>

Through LaCapra’s elaboration, the aspect that is clarified is that trauma can affect both victims and perpetrators but the two instances of experience and ‘working through’<sup>40</sup> of trauma are different and not everyone who experiences a traumatic event can be called a victim. LaCapra also explains about the significance of the figure of the bystander and according to him historians can adopt either the point of view of the bystander as that is one perspective which can claim to not be involved in the event at all or they can create a “delicate relationship between empathy and critical distance”<sup>41</sup> in the process of depiction of the events in history. It becomes clear then that the memory of a victim or a perpetrator or a bystander cannot be treated equally. Thus while accessing the memory archive of the survivor generation which is being created by the subsequent generations, the distinctions between the various categories of memories based on the nature of the experience of the event needs to be closely analyzed.

An additional difficulty that might suggest itself while employing the critical tools of the Holocaust in the analysis of the Partition is that there is a possibility of overlooking certain

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<sup>38</sup> Tarun Saint. *Witnessing Partition: Memory, History, Fiction*. New Delhi: Routeledge, 2010. Kindle Edition. p. Chapter2 3<sup>rd</sup> page.

<sup>39</sup> Dominick LaCapra. op. cit. p. 79.

<sup>40</sup> Dominick LaCapra Interview. Web. 2 July. 2015. <  
[http://www.yadvashem.org/odot\\_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%203648.pdf](http://www.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%203648.pdf)>

<sup>41</sup> Dominick LaCapra. op. cit. p. 147.

nuances which are specific to the Partition of India. Particular caution has to be exercised while engaging in the use of theoretical and critical tools of the Holocaust while discussing the issues related to the event of Partition. Andreas Huyssen writes in this context: “The Holocaust as a universal trope is a prerequisite for its decentering and its use as a powerful prism through which we may look at other instances of genocide.... While the comparison with the Holocaust may rhetorically energize some discourses of traumatic memory, it may also serve as a screen memory or simply block insight into specific local histories”.<sup>42</sup> Radhika Mohanram has also pointed out that “...the category of memory and their meanings vary in their national, cultural and historical specificity”<sup>43</sup>. But there is no scope for negating the fact that the scholarship that has developed surrounding the Holocaust can lead to fruitful discussions regarding other traumatic events like the Partition of India.

While keeping in mind this entire discourse of difference between the Holocaust and the Partition, the phenomenon of inter-generational transmission of memory can be discussed taking the help of a critical term coined by Marianne Hirsch in the context of the Holocaust-- ‘Postmemory’. Hirsch used this term for the first time in an article on Art Spiegelman’s *Maus* in the early 1990’s.<sup>44</sup> While the generations subsequent to the survivor generation are engaged in archival work, they are also engaged in representing the event through literary and artistic representations by accessing the event through the archive created by the memories of the survivor generation. The crucial point that needs to be remembered is that it is the generation which did not experience the Partition first-hand which is engaged in the retrieval and collection of the memories of the survivor generation. The level of engagement with the memory projects that have developed is proof enough that Partition is far from being a matter lost to oblivion. The point of analysis which has gained currency in recent times is the understanding of the way in which this current generation negotiates with the horrific, traumatic memories which they encounter. The way in which they gradually process those memories and those memories in turn

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<sup>42</sup> Andreas Huyssen. op. cit. p. 14.

<sup>43</sup> Radhika Mohanram. “Gendered Spectre: Trauma, cultural memory and the Indian partition”. *Cultural Memory* 25.6 (2011): 917-934. Web. 23 May 2017. p. 918.

<sup>44</sup> Marriane Hirsch. “Postmemory. Net”. Web. 5 July. 2015.< <http://www.postmemory.net/>> .

affect their lives is something that needs to be reckoned with and the concept of ‘Postmemory’ can help in the understanding of this phenomenon.

In Hirsch’s formulation, the survivor generation has been termed as the ‘first generation’ whereas the children and grandchildren of the survivors of Holocaust have been termed as the second and third generation respectively. The unique feature of the second and third generation is that they represent the event in their writings and artistic representations without any direct access to or experience of the event. The second generation still has the opportunity to meet and interact with the survivors of traumatic events and access the memories of the event through the memories of the survivors. But in case of the third generation, the opportunity to even meet the survivors in person is not present. Their narratives are thus much more mediated and further removed from the event. This anxiety of losing the memory of first-hand experiences of events can be felt palpably through the rise of this phenomenon of trying to bear witness to the event even through mediated forms of representation. Efraim Sicher writes in this regard:

The telling of the story is nevertheless essential for us to bear witness in the face of denial and complacency in the twenty-first century, when nobody will be alive to tell the story from first-hand experience. Indeed, the burden of personal and collective memory presses on the children of victims and perpetrators even more because of their lack of knowledge, because of their need to imagine the unimaginable and to fill the gap in national and family history.<sup>45</sup>

The category of ‘second generation’ thus has to be further nuanced before moving on to a detailed analysis of the features of the phenomenon called ‘Postmemory’. Limiting the second generation experience only to the children of survivors restricts the discussion of the phenomenon to a closed space of familial memory and its transmission through generations. But discussing the notion of how the collective or rather the public memory of a nation is formed and how the memory of a traumatic experience is remembered by or transmitted to the later generations with or without family linkages is of utmost importance. Ernst Van Alphen has

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<sup>45</sup> Efraim Sicher. *Breaking Crystal: Writing and Memory After Auschwitz*. Google Book Search. Web. 5 July 2015. p. 3.

focused on this notion of usage of the term ‘second generation’ in case of the Holocaust. He writes:

Since the 1980’s, the ‘second generation,’ or sometimes even the ‘third generation,’ has become an important notion in reflections about the remembrance and the legacy of the Holocaust. The expression refers first of all to the children, or grandchildren, of those who survived the Holocaust. But it is also used in a more general way, not implying a familial relation, and then it refers to the generation after at large.<sup>46</sup>

The concept of the ‘generation after’ is much more viable than constricting the notion of ‘Postmemory’ to the familial space and familial memory. It assists in understanding the legacy of an event and how a particular event shapes the thought process and life of the later generations. It also makes way towards an understanding of the position of the memory of the traumatic event in the collective consciousness of the people and to explore somehow if it makes any difference in their outlook towards life. Efraim Sicher presents the notion of the expanded view of the ‘second generation’ to include the experiences expressed by not only the direct descendants of the first generation but also the generation contemporary to them. Sicher writes:

Some might argue that only children of survivors have the right to speak for the victims; what then, one might ask, of adopted children, children of refugees, or the generation contemporaneous with children of survivors who may share many of their psychological, ideological, and theological concerns? ... I start out from the broadest possible view of the “second generation,” following George Steiner’s self-definition as a “kind of survivor,” and I incorporate all who write “after” in order to survey a wide--but not exhaustive--range of themes and issues in the context of both the particular problems of the generation of the children of survivors and the broader issue of writing identity after Auschwitz.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>Ernst van Alphen. “Second-generation Testimony, Transmission of Trauma, and Postmemory.” *Poetics Today* 2 (2006): 473-488. *RAMBI*. Web. 8 June 2013. p.473.

<sup>47</sup> Efraim Sicher. op. cit. p. 7.

Even Eva Hoffman brings in this distinction by talking about “the postgeneration as a whole and the *literal* second generation in particular”<sup>48</sup>. The ‘literal’ second generation are the direct descendants of the survivors “who grew up in survivor families” and the ‘postgeneration’ are “those less proximate members of their generation or relational network who share a legacy of trauma and thus the curiosity, the urgency, the frustrated *need* to know about a traumatic past”.<sup>49</sup>

Another distinction which is helpful while talking about the efficacy of the term ‘second generation’ is the difference between the experiences of the children of the victims, perpetrators, witnesses, and by-standers of the event of Holocaust. While using the term ‘second generation’, there is a tendency to assume that it includes only the children of the victims of the traumatic event who were persecuted and underwent both physical and mental trauma during the Holocaust. But the experiences of the children of the perpetrators, witnesses and by-standers also need to be taken into consideration for a wholesome understanding of the concept of ‘Postmemory’. The experiences of the members of each of these categories may differ in relation to the experiences of the first generation but if only the experiences of victims are taken into consideration then it would lead to a one-sided view of the concept. Whereas the children of the victim-survivors might carry the burden of pain and suffering of their parent’s generation, the children of the perpetrators carry the sense of guilt and wrong-doing for their parents’ actions. Even in case of witnesses and by-standers of the first generation, the witnessed event might have changed their point of view towards life in a significant manner and that might be reflected in the way they bring up their children and also in turn how the children react to the memory of the event of Holocaust. Critic Alan L. Berger initially used the term ‘second generation’ to only mean the direct descendants of the Holocaust when he wrote: “Like the second-children of Job, these second-generation witnesses attest to an event that they never lived through but that ineluctably shaped their lives. Further, like the transmission of earlier transformative events in Jewish history such as the story of the Exodus, and the destructions of the Temple, the telling of the Holocaust story must be passed *l’dor va’dor*, from generation to generation”.<sup>50</sup> But in his

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<sup>48</sup> As quoted by Marianne Hirsch in *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2012. p. 36.

<sup>49</sup> Marriane Hirsch. *Ibid.* p. 35.

<sup>50</sup> As quoted by Erin Heather McGlothlin. *Second Generation Holocaust Literature: Legacies of Survival and Perpetration*. Google Book Search. Web. 5 July 2015. p. 17.

later book written in collaboration with Naomi Berger he includes the experiences of the children of perpetrators as well within the concept of the 'second generation' and calls them 'another second generation'<sup>51</sup>.

The matter of the rigid distinction between the first and second generation is also a subject of debate because it is difficult to ascertain whom to include in the first generation and whom to include in the second generation. The commonsensical understanding is the survivors or people who lived during the span during which the traumatic event took place are the survivors and the people born thereafter whether they are children of the survivors or otherwise are the second generation. But what about the people who were young children during the Holocaust, where would they be situated in this scenario--will they be considered as a part of the first generation or the second or what about the people born towards the end of the tumultuous time period? The complication arises with the fact that the memories of these people would also be mediated like the memories of the children of the first generation or the generation after. A very young person's memory of the event will not be as vivid as the memory of an adult and a child born at the exact time of the end of the traumatic event also would have mediated memory as that of the second generation. The young children born during the Holocaust would engage in understanding the event with the help of the memories of the people elder to them and thus it is problematic to call them a part of the first generation. The perceptions of this generation of young survivors would not be entirely the memory of being a survivor but would be intermingled with the memories of the older survivor generation. Melvin Jules Bukiet in his editor's introduction to *Nothing Makes You Free: Writings by Descendants of Jewish Holocaust Survivors* writes: "Imagine a writer born on May 7, 1945, the day before World War II officially ended in Europe. Not that so many women were pregnant in the winter of 1944, but imagine one. Is that hypothetical child a survivor or a child of survivors? Strictly speaking, he or she would be both...."<sup>52</sup> Sigrid Weigel also explains this notion of overlap between the generations and how a rigid distinction between generations is almost impossible to achieve. Erin Heather McGlothlin

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<sup>51</sup> Alan L. Berger and Naomi Berger. *Second Generation Voices: Reflections by Children of Holocaust Survivors and Perpetrators*. Google Book Search. Web. 5 July 2015. p. 1.

<sup>52</sup> As quoted by Marita Grimwood in "Postmemorial Positions: Reading and Writing after the Holocaust in Anne Michaels's *Fugitive Pieces*". *Canadian Jewish Studies* 11 (2003): 111-130. Web. 5 July 2015. <[cjs.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/cjs/article/download/19981/1868](http://cjs.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/cjs/article/download/19981/1868)> . p. 115.

explains Weigel's point of view by saying: "... conventional deployments of the term assume a rigid distinction between the first generation, that of the direct participants, whether survivors or perpetrators, and the generation that follows, which has no direct experience of the event. Such a gross division of Holocaust experience into generations of full experience or complete non-experience ignores the interlinking ... of various age groups who were involved to a lesser degree (for example, as exiles who left Germany after the 1938 Kristallnacht pogroms or as members of the Hitler Youth and League of German Girls) but nevertheless were profoundly affected by their experiences."<sup>53</sup>

Thus the second generation comes across as a group which cannot be categorized as a homogenous group and the intricacies inherent within the group needs to be paid close attention to. Eva Hoffman elaborates on the nature of this diverse group in her book *After Such Knowledge: Memory, History and the Legacy of the Holocaust*:

Perhaps the character of this grouping can best be defined (to use a term borrowed from a certain idea of the nation) as an 'imagined community'--that is a community based not so much on geography or circumstance as on sets of meanings, symbols, and even literary fictions that it has in common and that enable its members to recognize and converse with each other with a sense of mutual belonging.<sup>54</sup>

In case of Partition, the 'second generation' needs to be defined keeping in mind the difficulties that occur while defining this particular group in the context of the Holocaust. Along with the complexities mentioned above, the Partition experience brings in a host of other intricacies along with it when it comes to defining the 'second generation'. As the victim-perpetrator scenario is much more blurred than that of the Holocaust, the question arises as to how we understand the experiences and representations of the children of people who were both victims and perpetrators at one point or the other. Do they feel a sense of guilt or do they carry a sense of pain and loss or do they feel both? How do they work through their own experience with the past of their parents?

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<sup>53</sup> Erin Heather McGlothlin. op. cit. p. 18.

<sup>54</sup> As quoted by Erin Heather McGlothlin. *Second Generation Holocaust Literature: Legacies of Survival and Perpetration*. Google Book Search. Web. 5 July 2015. p. 18.

The matter becomes more complex when the instances of honour killing are taken into consideration. Many women were murdered by their own family members in order to save their honour and by extension save the honour of the family. As the bodies of women were treated as sites of honour by both the Hindu and Muslim communities, it became a matter of safe guarding the honour of the family by avoiding any sort of attack on the womenfolk. At times when there was no way to save them, the best possible way, according to the family members, to prevent the tainting of the family name was to murder the women of the family. So how do the children of those women, if any of them at all survived, remember the experience of Partition? How do they come to terms with the fact that they did not lose their mothers, sisters or grandmothers at the hands of the ‘enemy’ that is, the other community but at the hands of their own fathers, brothers or grandfathers? The testimony of Bir Bahadur Singh which is available on Youtube<sup>55</sup> shows Bir Bahadur talking about his own father and uncles who had killed the women of their family along with the women of the village as the village was surrounded by Muslims and they feared the violation of the women at the hands of the Muslim men. He is seen breaking down into tears before narrating this particular incident. But then he goes on to emphasize on the courage and valour of the women as they accepted death over being ‘violated’ by the men of the other religion. In all this, Bir Bahadur sees his father and his uncles as victims and not perpetrators of the crime of murder. Even in the legal scenario, the perpetrators of the crime are given a chance to testify and narrate their version of the incident but the innumerable murders that had taken place during the Partition did not see the light of any trial and it is the testimony of such people like Bir Bahadur Singh which can be taken as the closest of being the testimony of the perpetrator of the crime.

Further there are instances of many women who were abducted by the people of the other religion and they stayed with their abductors either for the rest of their lives and created a family with them or they were brought back to their respective countries when the rehabilitation programme for the women started.<sup>56</sup> Many women who were thus brought back after they had

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<sup>55</sup> Sunnybondsingn84. “How Sikhs saved their women from Muslim Mobs during Partition of 1947”. *Youtube*, 26 Dec. 2008. Web. 5 July 2015. <[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2WQtUYv1\\_-s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2WQtUYv1_-s)>.

<sup>56</sup> The abducted women were sometimes forced to marry their abductors. Some women who had accepted their fate and did not want to go back to their families for fear of rejection were sometimes brought back forcefully as part of the Rehabilitation Programme.



lived with a man from the other community were rejected by their own family members and were abandoned by them. In certain cases even though they might have been accepted by their families, their life becomes an eternal struggle against people's attitude towards them as defiled women. Thus if a child was born in the scenario where the woman stays with her abductor, to which category does that child belong--is he or she the child of a survivor or the child of a perpetrator as one of the parents is a victim and the other is the perpetrator? Moreover in cases where children were born to women whose family had rejected them, how do these children understand or come to terms with the event which displaced their parent? There is a sense of lifelong alienation from the family which could either not protect their mother or which rejected their mother or did both. The way these children would look at the event of Partition and its legacy would be different from that of children of people who might have safely migrated from India to Pakistan or vice-versa. The children of migrants would delve into the event by listening to the gruesome experiences which their parents might have faced during migration. Thus along with all the complexities of defining the 'second generation' in case of the Holocaust, these additional conditions have to be considered while trying to explore the experience of the 'second generation' in case of Partition. The way in which these diverse groups within the second generation inherit the memory of the past has to be dealt with without homogenizing their representations and by identifying the differences in their perceptions based on their family lineage and history.

The various kinds of representation of the event in the second generation can be looked through the lens of 'Postmemory' as explicated by Marianne Hirsch. Though she formulates the concept based on Holocaust experiences, she understands that this phenomenon can be witnessed in case of other traumatic events as well:

... the Holocaust can no longer serve simply as a conceptual limit case in the discussion of historical trauma, memory, and forgetting... In fact, the process of intergenerational transmission has become an important explanatory vehicle and object of study in sites such as American slavery; the Vietnam War; the Dirty War in Argentina and other dictatorships in Latin America; South African apartheid; Soviet, East European, and Chinese communist terror; the Armenian, the Cambodian, and the Rwandan genocides:

the Japanese internment camps in the United States; the stolen generations in aboriginal Australia; the Indian partition; and others.<sup>57</sup>

It is not only Hirsch who has focused on this notion of transmission of memories but others like Marita Grimwood<sup>58</sup>, Gabriele Schwab<sup>59</sup>, Efraim Sicher<sup>60</sup>, Brett Ashley Kaplan<sup>61</sup>, Andrea Liss<sup>62</sup> have also delved into the concept of Postmemory and the way the transformation from memory to postmemory takes place. Hirsch points out the various terms that have been used to delve into this concept of how the memories of a particular event in a particular generation can have an effect on the consequent generations. Hirsch writes:

The particular relation to a parental past... has come to be seen as a “syndrome” of belatedness or “post-ness” and has been variously termed “absent memory” (Ellen Fine), “inherited memory,” “belated memory,” “prosthetic memory” (Celia Lury, Alison Landsberg), ... “vicarious witnessing” (Froma Zeitlin), “received history” (James Young), “haunting legacy” (Gabriele Schwab), and “postmemory”.<sup>63</sup>

Hirsch’s understanding of the term is based on her own “autobiographical readings” of works by second-generation writers and visual artists’ and it is an attempt on her part to understand the “qualities and symptoms” that make a particular generation “a *postgeneration*”.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Marianne Hirsch. *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2012. p. 19.

<sup>58</sup> Marita Grimwood. “Postmemorial Positions: Reading and Writing after the Holocaust in Anne Michaels’s *Fugitive Pieces*”. *Canadian Jewish Studies* 11 (2003): 111-130. Web. 5 July 2015. <[cjs.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/cjs/article/download/19981/1868](http://cjs.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/cjs/article/download/19981/1868)>.

<sup>59</sup> Gabriel Schwab. *Haunting Legacies: Violent Histories and Transgenerational Trauma*. Google Book Search. Web. 5 July 2015.

<sup>60</sup> Efraim Sicher. *Breaking Crystal: Writing and Memory After Auschwitz*. Google Book Search. Web. 5 July 2015.

<sup>61</sup> Kaplan, Brett Ashley. *Landscapes of Holocaust Postmemory*. New York: Routledge, 2011.

<sup>62</sup> Liss, Andrea. *Trespassing through Shadows: Memory, Photography and the Holocaust*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.* p. 3.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.* p. 4.

The second generation and by extension also the third generation who have no direct access to the event or who have not lived through the event also feel haunted by the event and somehow their lives seem to be defined by the experiences of the first generation. The event, be it the Holocaust or the Partition, is “the eternal *presence of an absence*”<sup>65</sup> in the lives of the members of the second generation. What needs to be studied is how the second generation gains access to a past they have not experienced. The path of access seems to be mediated through the stories and memories of the first generation and the second generation comes to terms with the painful, traumatic past by bringing it side by side with their personal experiences of the present. It is interesting to study the formation of a legacy of an event by the generations with no personal experience of the event.

Marianne Hirsch while defining ‘Postmemory’ writes:

“Postmemory” describes the relationship that the “generation after” bears to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those who came before--to experiences they “remember” only by means of the stories, images, and behaviours among which they grew up. But these experiences were transmitted to them so deeply and affectively as to seem to constitute memories in their own right. Postmemory’s connection to the past is thus actually mediated not by recall but by imaginative investment, projection, and creation. To grow up with overwhelming inherited memories, to be dominated by narratives that preceded one’s birth or one’s consciousness, is to risk having one’s life stories displaced, even evacuated, by our ancestors. It is to be shaped, however indirectly, by traumatic fragments of events that still defy narrative reconstruction and exceed comprehension. These events happened in the past, but their effects continue into the present. This is ... the structure of postmemory and the process of its generation.<sup>66</sup>

Postmemory thus talks about the overwhelming way in which the past becomes an integral part of the present. But it needs to be questioned whether the second generation can claim to have such a strong relationship to the past or rather what the use of such a connection is. Eva Hoffman writes in *After Such Knowledge: Memory, History and the Legacy of the Holocaust*:

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<sup>65</sup> Alan L. Berger and Naomi Berger. op. cit. p. 1.

<sup>66</sup> Marianne Hirsch. op. cit. p. 5.

The Holocaust, in my first, childhood reception, was a deeply internalized but strangely unknown past. It has become routine to speak of the “memory” of the Holocaust, and to adduce to this faculty a moral, even a spiritual value. But it is important to be precise: We who came after do not have memories of the Holocaust. Even from my most intimate proximity I could not form “memories” of the Shoah or take my parents’ memories as my own. Rather, I took in that first information as a sort of fairy tale deriving not so much from another world as from the center of the cosmos: an enigmatic but real fable.<sup>67</sup>

So however palpable the past might seem through close proximity with the first generation and their behaviour and stories, the second generation can never claim to form actual ‘memories’ of the event through them. Thus the formation of memory remains as the sole prerogative of the first generation; what the second generation creates about the event is ‘postmemory’, something which has to be different from memory. Hirsch clarifies this phenomenon by writing:

Certainly, we do not have literal “memories” of others’ experiences, and certainly, one person’s lived memories cannot be transformed into another’s. Postmemory is not identical to memory: it is “post”; but, at the same time ... it approximates memory in its affective force and its psychic effects. Eva Hoffman describes what has been passed down to her as a fairy tale: “The memories--not memories but emanation--of wartime experiences kept erupting in flashes of imagery; in abrupt but broken refrains.” These “not memories,” communicated in “flashes of imagery,” and these “broken refrains,” transmitted through “the language of the body,” are precisely the stuff of *postmemory* of trauma and of its return.<sup>68</sup>

Eva Hoffman and Hirsch’s ideas make one point apparent that “received memory is distinct from the recall of contemporary witnesses and participants”<sup>69</sup>. Then what needs to be understood and discussed is this distinct nature of postmemory which differentiates it from memory but then

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<sup>67</sup> Eva Hoffman. *After Such Knowledge: Memory, History and the Legacy of the Holocaust*. Google Book Search. Web. 5 July 2015. p. 6.

<sup>68</sup> Marianne Hirsch. op. cit. p. 31.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid. p. 3.

again maintains a connection with memory. Thus even if postmemory is distinct from memory, the two of them are not mutually exclusive.

This contradictory concept of being connected and yet being different from memory is what defines the nature of postmemory. Memory itself is a mediated form and even the members of the first generation, be they survivors, perpetrators, witnesses or by-standers, cannot claim to completely remember the event. The moment the event takes place, it recedes into an irretrievable past and once that event is verbalized by the participants in the event, the event itself is lost and what remains is a mere representation of the event. This representation of the event is mediated through the subjective concerns of the individuals, and with temporal distance the event recedes further into an irretrievable past from which what can be retrieved are various representations of the event but not the event itself. So when there is an attempt to retrieve a particular event from the past through the memory of the first generation, it needs to be understood that what we are gaining access to is already mediated. Michael Bernard-Donals writes in this regard:

Writing at the conclusion of a century that was to witness one of the most profound breaks in all of history... [i]t is a call to understand the ways in which [the] effort at retrieval--sometimes exceedingly selective, sometimes careless or mightily subjective--creates something other than memory, something new, and something perhaps tenuously related to what took place... the occurrence of events begins interminably to recede into an inaccessible past at the very moment of occurrence, while the event's passage into language--into any knowledge that we might formulate of the occurrence--makes of the occurrence something (narrative, testimony, history) *other* than the event... the representations that are produced, as a kind of "excess" of the event, ... haunt both the one who was there and the one who only catches a glimpse of the event secondhand.<sup>70</sup>

Thus the problem of representing an event or even the attempt to represent an event lies in the fact that the event tends to defy any sort of representation. E. van Alphen discusses the notion of

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<sup>70</sup> Michael Bernard-Donals. *Forgetful Memory: Representation and Remembrance in the Wake of the Holocaust*. Google Book Search. Web. 5 July 2015. p. 3.

the “unrepresentability of the Holocaust”<sup>71</sup> but is rather in favour of discussing the “features of the *forms of representation* that were available to Holocaust victims/ survivors to articulate and, hence ‘have’ their experiences”<sup>72</sup>. Michael Bernard-Donals explicates the passage of an event to experience and how there is an inherent paradox involved in expressing or representing a traumatic event--it needs to be uttered or said in order for it to exist in the realm of history or memory but then again by uttering it, the event is lost and what remains is a representation of the event. Bernard-Donals takes assistance of Levinas’s notion of “the saying” and “the said” and explains this paradox:

... faced with the enormity of the event we are compelled to act and to make that action knowable to and oriented toward an other through speech (what is said), and yet we realize that anything said or represented reduces that enormity to a language or a medium that can’t quite contain it. And yet the event itself is completely lost--both to history and to memory--unless it is said. Just as saying and said cannot exist without one another, neither can memory and forgetting so exist.<sup>73</sup>

Giorgio Agamben in his book *Remnants of Auschwitz* has strongly put forward his opinion that “the survivors bore witness to something it is impossible to bear witness to”<sup>74</sup>. The impossibility of representing a traumatic event through any form of representation is amply made clear through the above discussion. Thus the memories of the first generation expressed through testimony, literature and other forms of representation like photographs which are crucial modes of transmission of memories from the first to the second generation and gradually to the subsequent generations are in themselves various forms of representations or depictions of the event and not in any way unmediated forms of memory of the first generation. The point that needs to be focused on now is that if the second generation receives such a mediated and

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<sup>71</sup> E. Van Alphen. “Symptoms of Discursivity: Experience, Memory, and Trauma”. *Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present*. Eds. Mieke Bal, Jonathan Crewe and Leo Spitzer. Hanover: University Press of New England, 1999. 24-38. Google Book Search. Web. 5 July 2015. p. 26-27.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid. p. 27.

<sup>73</sup> Michael Bernard-Donals. op. cit. p. 4.

<sup>74</sup> Giorgio Agamben. *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*. Trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen. New York: Aone Books, 1999. p. 14.

incomplete form of memory from the first generation, how it impacts their representations of the event.

With the increase in time and distance from the event, the act of representation becomes an even more difficult process. The second generation faces this difficulty as they receive a memory which is twice-removed from the event and the distance between them and the event is overwhelming. Pascale Bos writes in this regard:

To be the first (and often only) recipient of these stories, stories that were characterized by absence and indirectness, meant that these children were in fact the twice the recipients of the story of an absence--first, because their parents had no real mastery over their traumatic memories, and second, because they as children born “after the fact” were physically absent from the Holocaust experience. To a child of a survivor [second generation], the Holocaust may thus be one’s familial story, but at the same time, one is still left to struggle to decipher the trauma at the core of the silence, to connect, to make what was absent present.<sup>75</sup>

Though here Bos talks specifically about the children of the survivors, the concept of the ‘silence’ inherent in first generation memory is something which effects postmemory of the entire second generation. But what the second generation artists and writers engage in through their representation of the event is a reengagement with the event and their aim in doing so is to attempt to “put oneself in the other’s position without taking the other’s place”<sup>76</sup>. As discussed earlier, the second generation does not claim to take over the position of the first generation but rather discuss the impact the first generation has on them through “imaginative investment, projection, and creation”<sup>77</sup>. Marianne Hirsch incorporates Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s term “allo-

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<sup>75</sup>Pascale Bos. “Positionality and Postmemory in Scholarship of the Holocaust.” *Women in German Yearbook* 19 (2003): 50-74. *JSTOR*. Web. 8 June 2013. p. 59.

<sup>76</sup> Dominick LaCapra as quoted by Marianne Hirsch in “Projected Memory: Holocaust Photographs in Personal and Public Fantasy” in *Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present*. op. cit. p. 16.

<sup>77</sup> Marianne Hirsch. op. cit. p. 5.

identification” or “identification with” as opposed to “auto-identification” or “identification as” to better explicate the concept of postmemory as seen in the second generation.<sup>78</sup>

The representations of the second generation can be seen as attempts to understand a traumatic past by utilizing the distance from the event as it offers a detached yet connected perspective. The gap between the event and the subsequent generations might seem like “a distance [which] cannot ultimately be bridged; the break between then and now, between the one who lived it and the one who did not, remains monumental and insurmountable...”<sup>79</sup>. The gap might not be filled but what is created by the second generation is an understanding of the event from a perspective which was not available to the first-hand participants of the event because of their close proximity to the event. The postmemorial generation is not engaged in a gap-filling project but is creating a reading of the traumatic event which in turn becomes a part of the cultural and collective memory of a nation. Geoffrey Hartman says:

... the children and now the grandchildren of the survivors, as well as those who have become witnesses by adoption... seek a new way to deal with a massively depressing event. They cannot testify with the same sense of historical participation, for it did not happen to *them*. This does not lessen, however, a moral and psychological burden. Despite missing memories, and though “suffering takes the place of inheritance” (Nadine Fresco), they look for a legacy, or a strong identification with what happened.<sup>80</sup>

The creation of a legacy is an important aspect of the project of postmemory and the postmemorial generation in a certain way through their representations defines how a nation is going to remember a certain painful and traumatic event of the past.

Marianne Hirsch further discusses the aim of second generation representations and writes:

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid. p. 85.

<sup>79</sup> Marriane Hirsch. “Projected Memory: Holocaust Photographs in Personal and Public Fantasy”. *Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present*. op. cit. p. 9.

<sup>80</sup> Geoffrey Hartman. *The Longest Shadow: In the Aftermath of the Holocaust*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996. p. 8.



Second-generation fiction, art, memoir, and testimony are shaped by the attempt to represent the long-term effects of living in close proximity to the pain, depression, and dislocation of persons who have witnessed and survived massive historical trauma. They are shaped by the child's confusion and responsibility, by a desire to repair, and by the consciousness that her own existence may well be a form of compensation for unspeakable loss. Loss of family, home, of a sense of belonging and safety in the world "bleed" from one generation to the next.<sup>81</sup>

In this case, Hirsch particularly talks about the children of the survivors and the way their lives are defined by the trauma that their parents had faced. Hirsch further mentions the attempt to create a distinctive familial postmemory which is created by the intermingling of familial memories and public images and stories of the concentration and extermination camps. Thus even familial postmemory is created by the 'adoption' of certain prominent aspects of the event which might have become a part of the public memory. So trying to privilege familial postmemory that is, the postmemory of the direct descendants of the first generation is something which defeats the purpose of postmemory. Hirsch makes it amply clear that

"postmemory is not an identity position but a generational structure of transmission embedded in multiple forms of mediation. Family life, even in its most intimate moments, is entrenched in a collective imaginary shaped by public, generational structures of fantasy and projection and by a shared archive of stories and images that inflect the broader transfer and availability of individual and family remembrance. Geoffrey Hartman's notion of 'witnesses by adoption' and Ross Chambers's term "foster writing" acknowledge breaks and fractures in biological transmission even as they preserve a familial frame."<sup>82</sup>

Thus an attempt to create an privileged 'identity position' based on familial connection limits the perspective of postmemory which can be better discussed from the point of view of the "generation after" which includes those with familial connections and also those without familial connections to the first generation.

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<sup>81</sup> Marianne Hirsch. *op. cit.* p. 34.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.* p. 35.

Pascale Bos in her essay ‘Positionality and Postmemory in the Scholarship of the Holocaust’ discusses the problems with this issue of positionality in terms of having or not having a familial relationship to the first generation of the Holocaust. Bos analyses the way in which at certain points the scholarship or interest of a person without familial connection is questioned as being not ethical and not authentic. Bos writes in this context:

Indeed, within Holocaust studies ..., if questions about the role of positional subjectivity are brought up at all, it happens in a fashion that tends to foreclose a meaningful discussion. This happens at times when a scholar is a Holocaust survivor, for instance, or if there is another kind of direct familial link to the Holocaust (for example, in case of children of survivors). In such cases, positionality comes to function merely as a simplistic identity position... that designates a personal link to the Holocaust that functions to foster a certain measure of authority and authenticity.<sup>83</sup>

Rather than looking at postmemory from an identity position, the fruitful way to comprehend the intricacies of this concept is to understand the way in which the second generation’s postmemory is created and this cannot be completely understood without taking into consideration members of the second generation who have no direct familial connection to the event. Geoffrey Hartman calls them “witnesses by adoption”<sup>84</sup> and Marianne Hirsch calls their postmemory “affiliative postmemory”<sup>85</sup> as the members of the second generation without familial linkages, specifically the artists and writers adopt this memory of the traumatic event not through familial proximity but through the cultural and collective memory which consists of certain prominent notions about the event.

Hirsch has also pointed out that even in cases where familial connection is present, the public images, cultural and collective memory make an impression on the formation of postmemory. Brett Ashley Kaplan’s definition of postmemory is helpful in this context: “Postmemory... more broadly refers to a kind of collective, cultural memory that reflects the aftereffects and

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<sup>83</sup> Pascale Bos. *op. cit.* p. 4-5.

<sup>84</sup> Geoffrey Hartman. *op. cit.* p. 8.

<sup>85</sup> Marianne, Hirsch . *op. cit.* p. 161.

afterimages of the multinational landscape of the Holocaust.”<sup>86</sup> The importance of not only familial memories, but the way in which cultural and collective memory also plays an essential role in the formation of postmemory, needs to be understood. But an important aspect that needs to be remembered is that we are not discussing the memory of any event but that of a traumatic event in the first generation. Trauma itself brings with it the notion of break and the also the notion of the unrepresentable. Thus while discussing the notion of the postmemory of a traumatic event like the Holocaust or the Partition of India, the nature of the cultural and collective memory needs to be discussed.

Maurice Halbwachs defines collective memory as “the result, or sum, or combination of individual recollections of many members of the same society”<sup>87</sup>. But Halbwachs does not include the concept of transference and transmission in his formulation of the notion of collective memory and Jan Assmann’s concept of ‘cultural memory’ is useful in this context.

Cultural memory is a form of collective memory, in the sense that it is shared by a number of people and that it conveys to these people a collective, that is, cultural identity. Halbwachs, however, the inventor of the term “collective memory,” was careful to keep his concept of collective memory apart from the realm of traditions, transmissions, and transferences which we propose to subsume under the term ‘cultural memory’.<sup>88</sup>

Jan Assmann distinguishes between communicative memory and cultural memory under the rubric of collective memory. According to Assmann, communicative memory is defined by its proximity to the everyday whereas cultural memory is characterized by its distance from the everyday.<sup>89</sup> Further Assmann mentions that cultural memory has certain ‘fixed points’ and “[t]hese fixed points are fateful events of the past, whose memory is maintained through cultural formation (texts, rites, monuments) and institutional communication (recitation, practice,

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<sup>86</sup> Brett Ashley Kaplan. *Landscapes of Holocaust Postmemory*. New York: Routledge, 2011. p. 24.

<sup>87</sup> Maurice Halbwachs. *On Collective Memory*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992. p. 44.

<sup>88</sup> Jan Assmann. ‘Communicative and Cultural Memory’. Web. 5 July 2015. < [http://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/propylaeumdok/1774/1/Assmann\\_Communicative\\_and\\_cultural\\_memory\\_2008.pdf](http://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/propylaeumdok/1774/1/Assmann_Communicative_and_cultural_memory_2008.pdf)>. p. 2.

<sup>89</sup> Jan Assmann. ‘Collective Memory and Cultural Identity’. Web. 5 July 2015. < <http://www.history.ucsb.edu/faculty/marcuse/classes/201/articles/95AssmannCollMemNGC.pdf>>. p. 4-5.

observance)” and these are called “figures of memory”<sup>90</sup>. But these cultural formations and institutional communication would be disrupted in case of traumatic events and as Marianne Hirsch points out “they would be compromised as well by the erasure of records, such as those perpetrated by totalitarian regimes. Under the Nazis, cultural archives were destroyed, records burned, possessions lost, histories suppressed and eradicated.”<sup>91</sup> But in case of the event of the Holocaust, through the building of memorials and museums and the observation of International Holocaust Remembrance Day, Holocaust Memorial Day, certain new ‘figures of memory’ are being formed to continue the formation of the legacy of memory of the Holocaust through the propagation of cultural memory. The creation of these new ‘figures of memory’ or ‘fixed points’ can be seen as the effort of the second and the third generation who continue to be invested in the creation of cultural memory of the Holocaust which would be further transferred to the coming generations. But the Partition of India brings with it a new set of problems with the absence of any memorial or day of remembrance of the event. In a country where there are no ‘figures of memory’ or ‘fixed points’ for the remembrance of the event, the difficulty regarding understanding the formation of cultural memory comes to the forefront. What is it that the postmemorial generation in case of the Partition is relying on to create and continue the legacy of memory of Partition? In case of the event of Partition, the cultural memory constitutes an idea of negation of the event, where innumerable numbers of people lost their lives, migrated, were displaced, by the celebratory mask of the fanfare of gaining independence from the British rulers. The postmemorial generation in case of the event of Partition takes up the task of looking beyond this mask of celebration and fanfare with which the independence of the country is celebrated each year. The occurrence of communal violence in the country at regular intervals and the relationship that the country till date shares with Pakistan forms a crucial backdrop to this exercise of looking beyond in which the postmemorial generation is engaged in.

The postmemorial generation’s work thus, in a certain way, creates a link between the past and the present events. As Marianne Hirsch writes in this regard:

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid. p. 5.

<sup>91</sup> Marianne Hirsch. op. cit. p. 33.

Postmemorial work ... strives to reactivate and re-embody more distant political and cultural memorial structures by reinvesting them with resonant individual and familial forms of mediation and aesthetic expression. In these ways, less directly affected participants can become engaged in the generation of postmemory that can persist even after all participants and even their familial descendants are gone.<sup>92</sup>

The 'individual' and 'familial' forms of mediation are generated through the passing on of memories in the forms of "images, stories, and documents"<sup>93</sup> along with certain objects which might act as sites of memory. These memories thus help the second generation to focus their attention on "the impact of the trauma on their parent's child-rearing practices."<sup>94</sup> The way in which the children become aware of the event in survivor households and the way it is represented in the works of the second generation points towards the way in which the dynamics of the parent-child relationship is explored in a detailed manner. In case of non-familial postmemory, the mediation occurs through their individual investment to the event by being influenced by the cultural memory of the nation. Taking into account the notion of non-familial postmemory, Marriane Hirsch talks about the importance of the U. S. Holocaust Memorial Museum: "The museum was created not primarily for survivors and deeply engaged children of survivors like me, but for an American public with little knowledge of the event. At its best, the museum needs to elicit in its visitors an imaginary identification--the desire to know and to feel, the curiosity and passion that shape the postmemory of survivor children"<sup>95</sup>. In case of India, a nation which is ravaged by many violent episodes, the Partition of 1947 was not the only time that the subcontinent faced the trauma of division, in 1971, during the Bangladesh War of Independence, the trauma was repeated. India felt the impact through the refugees who fled to the country.

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<sup>92</sup> Marianne Hirsch. op. cit. p. 33.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid. p. 108.

<sup>94</sup> Alan L. Berger "Unclaimed Experience: Trauma and Identity in Third Generation Writing about the Holocaust." *Shofar* 28. 3 (2010):149-158. *Academic Search Complete*. Web. 9 June 2013. p. 158.

<sup>95</sup> Marriane Hirsch. *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory*. Google Book Search. Web. 4 June 2017. p. 249.

The postmemorial generation ‘reinvests’ the ‘political and cultural memorial structures’ through mediation but the access to the ‘memorial structures’ is provided by the archive, the archive which has been pointed out earlier is already a mediated structure due to the nature of the event which is traumatic and due to the political regimes which overtly play a role in altering the it. The archive as has been described by Michel Foucault is “the system that governs the appearance of statements as unique events”<sup>96</sup> and also “the set of hegemonic rules that determine how a culture selects, orders, and preserves the past”<sup>97</sup>. But this selection and ordering of the past is disrupted by the traumatic nature of the events in discussion here. There might be a certain sense of manipulation in the selection of certain ‘statements’ to make them appear as ‘unique events’.

Jonathan Boulter writes: “The archive, as traditionally conceived, is a location of knowledge, a place where history itself is housed, where the past is accommodated. The archive is intimately conjoined with cultural memory, with its preservation, perhaps even with its supplementation”.<sup>98</sup> In case of the Partition, this preservation of cultural memory does not happen in its entirety, a painful amount of the past is edited in an attempt to create a glorious image of a nation with a new beginning. The archive is “shaped by social, political, and technological forces” and “[i]f the archive cannot or does not accommodate a particular kind of information or mode of scholarship, then it is effectively excluded from the historical record”.<sup>99</sup> The ‘official’ archive in case of the Partition has excluded from the historical record the riots, mass killings, abductions and the entire episode of human suffering that accompanied the division of the country. Thus in the absence of official documentation, the ‘official’ archive available to the second generation is an incomplete one and this has propagated the need towards a “consciously reparative move” through which “they assemble collections that function as correctives and additions, rather than counters, to the historical archive, attempting to undo the ruptures caused by war and

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<sup>96</sup> Michel Foucault. *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. London: Routledge, 1989. p. 145.

<sup>97</sup> As quoted by Marianne Hirsch. op. cit. p. 227.

<sup>98</sup> Jonathan Boulter. *Melancholy and the Archive: Trauma, Memory and History in the Contemporary Novel*. London and New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2011. p. 3.

<sup>99</sup> Marlene Manoff. “Theories of the Archive from Across the Disciplines”. *Libraries and the Academy*. 4.1 (2004): 9-25. *PROJECT MUSE*. Web. 24 April 2017. p. 12.

genocide”<sup>100</sup>. In case of the Partition, the first generation fiction writers attempted to highlight the human suffering through their writings but the creation of the memory archive undertaken by the subsequent generations is driven by the attempt to insert the individualized stories of human suffering into the archive. The postmemorial generation is thus accessing a mediated archive and is in turn engaged in an aggressive archival spree. “The archive, for Derrida, marks a space of anxiety, precisely, an anxiety about the possibility of loss: the archive exists only as an anticipation ... of the loss of history; as such it works proleptically to preserve what will inevitably be lost”.<sup>101</sup> In the second generation or the postmemorial generation, an incessant drive towards archiving is witnessed but through their archive formation is also defined by various forms of mediation. It might be argued that through various mediations and representations of the event, what the second generation creates is a far-removed image of the event but the way in which the event is remembered and will be remembered is defined by the works of the second generation.

The representation of the event by the second generation then is removed from the event both by temporal distance and lived experience. Though from a conventional perspective, the representation of the first generation is understood to be more ‘authentic’ as the first-hand experience is recorded. But this case of ‘inauthenticity’ does not take away the fact that the second generation experiences the effect of the traumatic event or that representations are necessary for an understanding of the effect of an event on the formation of later historical accounts. Andrea Liss says in this regard:

There is urgent concern about the impropriety of anyone speaking for the events beyond the voices of direct witnesses. Yet to adhere to this prohibition would renounce the telling of the events to yet another doubled realm of silence. The doubled realm of silence to which I refer is, first, the silence that surrounded the survivors and the trauma of events after Auschwitz, and second, the silence that the law of the voice of the legitimate witness would impose on the inauthentic voice of the post-Auschwitz generation.

According to this logic, any later commentary would only diminish the aura of the truth.

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<sup>100</sup> Marianne Hirsch. op. cit. p. 228.

<sup>101</sup> Jonathan Boulter. op. cit. p. 4.

This doubled realm of silence is thus also double-edged. If we followed this reasoning in relation to the representation of the Holocaust, any post-Auschwitz recounts would be considered invalid. Yet the inauthenticity of the post-events' speaker is inevitable, indeed necessary, for stories and memories to become public, to become part of the historical record.<sup>102</sup>

Privileging the first-hand experience with respect to authenticity might lead to the overlooking of the important aspect of the long-term effects of a traumatic event on the later generations. But even then, the criticism that the second generation or postmemorial works face is the idea of legitimacy of creating the legacy of an event which they personally did not encounter. It also leads to further questions about whether while attempting to understand the effect of the experiences and memories of the first generation, the second generation ends up appropriating those events as their own. Karen Goertz puts forward this question: "Can the second generation justifiably claim any personal connection to and post-memory of the Holocaust?"<sup>103</sup> Goertz goes on to refer to French philosopher and cultural critic Alain Finkielkraut who said that "any Jew born in the post-Holocaust era who makes such a claim is highly suspect"<sup>104</sup>. Goertz further quotes Finkielkraut: "Cowards in life, martyrs in dream, post-genocidal children love historical self-deception, confusing the sheltered world in which they live with the cataclysm their parents endured. . . . They have chosen to pass their time in novelistic space full of sound and fury that offers them the best role-- . . . spellbound, these young people live in borrowed identities. They have taken up residence in fiction".<sup>105</sup> Finkielkraut levels this extreme accusation keeping in mind only the direct descendants of the first generation and completely negates the experience of non-familial postmemory which in his opinion might have been another extreme form of dubious behaviour.

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<sup>102</sup> Andrea Liss. *Trespassing through Shadows: Memory, Photography and the Holocaust*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998. p. 85-86.

<sup>103</sup> Karein Goertz. "Transgenerational Representations of the Holocaust: From Memory to 'Post-Memory'." *World Literature Today* 72. 1 (1998): 33-38. *JSTOR*. Web. 8 June 2013. p. 33.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.* p. 33.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.* p. 33.



The postmemorial works thus need to strike a precarious sense of balance between identifying and analyzing the past but then again maintaining a distance from that past. As Marianne Hirsch writes while discussing works of art by the postmemorial artists: “The challenge for the postmemorial artist is precisely to find the balance that allows the spectator to enter the image and to imagine the disaster, but simultaneously disallows an overly appropriative identification that would make the distances disappear and thus create too available, too easy an access to this particular past”.<sup>106</sup> The past is a difficult past and that is acknowledged in the works of the second generation representations and the abolition of all distances between the past and the present might lead to a dilution of seriousness of the event and the importance of the experience that the first generation had during the event. Thus the second generation representations must be seen as sites of mediation between the past and the present, between the event and the representations of the event. Karen Goertz writes: “The second generation, with its degree of temporal separation from the event, feels that it has been a particular task: members of this generation are to be the museums that preserve and transmit their parents’ legacy for posterity...They are sites of mediation between the personally lived past and the inherited past that can now be reassembled and remembered only through history and the arts”.<sup>107</sup>

The ‘inherited past’ continues to be an aspect which leads members of the second generation to say: “The most important event in my life occurred before I was born” or “I was told by my father that it was a moral imperative that I stay Jewish, that I was not to assimilate because six million Jews had been murdered and countless generations before that had been persecuted simply because they were born Jewish. By the age of four I recognized myself as living on top of a pile of corpses”.<sup>108</sup> Thus even though they have not lived through the event, the event becomes a presence which cannot be negated by them and it almost becomes a responsibility for them to act as sites of mediation through which modes of future remembrances are created. Karen Goertz writes in this context: “For the postwar generation, the Holocaust is simultaneously tangible and abstract, physical and imaginary, “intrinsic and alien”. Members of this generation are

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<sup>106</sup>Marianne Hirsch. op. cit. p. 161.

<sup>107</sup> Karein Goertz. op. cit. p. 34-35.

<sup>108</sup> Dora Apel. *Memory Effects: The Holocaust and the Art of Secondary Witnessing*. Google Book Search. 5 July 2015. Web. p. 11.

“entangled with a past which is in their bones, yet which was never a part of their lived experiences at once”. Nadine Fresco evokes a powerful metaphor to describe this predicament: they are like “people who have had a hand amputated which they never had”. Although they feel the pain, it is a “phantom pain in which amnesia takes the place of memory ... One remembers only that one remembers nothing”.<sup>109</sup>

Apart from the problem of appropriation, Aaron Hass discusses the way in which the second generation’s knowledge about their parent’s past experience of the event is not complete and he

asserts that most of those born later have wide gaps in their knowledge of their parents’ experiences. They often create myths both about the Holocaust and about their parents’ Holocaust experiences based on their own fantasies, especially where parents have been silent about their experiences... many children of survivors feel that they know a lot about the Holocaust because of its aftereffects on their parents, but when questioned, reveal that they know little of the Third Reich or the genocidal program against the Jews and others. Thus the experiential and emotional understanding of the postwar generations must be approached cautiously.<sup>110</sup>

Hass points out the pitfalls of what Hirsch had mentioned about the basis of postmemorial work which is “imaginative investment, projection, and creation”<sup>111</sup>. But the works of the postmemorial generation is not based on acquiring complete knowledge about the experience of their parents but rather the effect their parents’ experiences have on their lives and in turn how the coming generations remember the effect of the event in the coming times. As Dora Apel writes in this context:

... the issue is not one of identification with victimhood; rather, it is a question of the continuity of a community of memory, the delay or absence of closure, the question of received assumptions, a working through of trauma that leads, if not to a totalized understanding, to a greater incorporation of the holes in understanding, and, to varying

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<sup>109</sup> Karen Goertz. *op. cit.* p. 35.

<sup>110</sup> Dora Apel. *op. cit.* p. 11.

<sup>111</sup> Marianne Hirsch. *op. cit.* p. 5.

degrees, an assertion of resistance, that is, a recognition of and refusal to be subsumed by the abyss.<sup>112</sup>

The transference and transmission of memory from one generation to the next which forms the basis of the discussion on 'Postmemory' is not the assumption of ownership of the memory of one generation. The concept brings into its fold the 'generation after' and also the works created by that 'generation after'. The works created may be in the form of fiction, photographs, creation of digital archives and other forms of representation of the event. The discussion of the concept in the context of the Holocaust provides quite a stable ground of understanding of the various nuances associated with it. Ranging from the questions of inauthenticity and appropriation to that of having inadequate knowledge of the subject, criticisms against the concept has been manifold. But the concept of 'Postmemory' is such that, standing in the twenty-first century, there is no scope of denying the importance of this concept. In case of the Holocaust, the notion of the transmission of traumatic memory and its nuances has been discussed from various perspectives and in a variety of ways. But in the case of the event of the Partition, the discussion has just begun and the discussion is taking up an important dimension which cannot be ignored. The publication of Vishwajyoti Ghosh's anthology of graphic narratives, *This Side, That Side: Restorying Partition* in the year 2013 is an important contribution by the postmemorial generation of the Partition of India. The legacy of the Partition continues to be present within the cultural and collective memory of the nation and this anthology is proof of that fact. Apart from this, the publication of an anthology of essays, edited by Urvashi Butalia, entitled *Partition: The Long Shadow* in the year 2015 shows the interest of the postmemorial generation towards the event of the Partition. All the writers in the anthology belong either to the second or third generation but not everyone has familial connections to the Partition. The title of the anthology immediately brings to mind Geoffrey Hartman's book *The Longest Shadow: In the Aftermath of the Holocaust* and shows the way in which postmemorial scholars are investing in the idea of creating a legacy of the Partition for the future generations. Tarun Saint in an essay called "Revisioning and 'Restorying' Partition: Modes of Testimony" mentions the writers with no direct memory of the event like Sorayya Khan, Amit Majmudar, Irfan Master and says that "a longer discussion would be required to do justice to this array of recent writings, some of which

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<sup>112</sup> Dora Apel. op. cit. p. 4.

do reach back to the past in distinctive and innovative ways”.<sup>113</sup> Shauna Singh Baldwin, Meena Arora Nayak, Reema Moudgil also belong to this group of writers who have no lived experience of the event. Some of these writers have familial connection to the Partition and some of them do not but all these writers have invested themselves towards reaching back to the event and their works define the way in which the subsequent generations will remember the Partition. The presence of these writers could be felt specifically after 1997 which is the year of the completion of fifty years of Indian independence and also the year which marked the beginning of various projects engaged in the collection of oral testimonies. The anxiety which is associated with the loss of the presence of the first generation saw the overwhelming need to record their memories. Thus in case of the Partition, testimonies become an important mode of transmission of memories to the subsequent generations and the way in which the above-mentioned writers, who can be called postmemorial writers, engage with such memories is a subject worth studying and analyzing.

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<sup>113</sup> Tarun Saint. ‘Revisioning and ‘Restorying’ Partition: Modes of Testimony’. *Partition: The Long Shadow*. Ed. Urvashi Butalia. New Delhi: Zubaan and Penguin Books India, 2015. p. 185.

## Chapter 2

### Modes of Transmission of Memory: From Memory to Postmemory

Partition fiction by the second and third generation writers present an artistic representation of the Partition without any firsthand knowledge or experience of the event. Since Partition is a watershed moment in the history of India, these continual literary engagements with it are significant. The writers have access to information generated by various sources and use their imagination to create the image of the event in their “belated” works. Partition fiction by the first generation writers has always had a role of presenting that aspect of the ‘event’ which is not available in historical accounts. The historical accounts and official grand narratives present to us the various political nuances of the event without focusing on the effect it had on innumerable people on both sides of the border. Accounts of violence, mutilation, abduction, rape and death are eradicated from the glorious narrative of independence which highlights a new beginning for the newly formed nations with freedom from the British rule. Anis Kidwai’s words present similar sentiments: “A day of freedom, yes, but a freedom slashed and streaked with blood. A day choked by smoke and fire”<sup>114</sup>.

The writers of the survivor generation or the first generation who experienced the trauma of the Partition wrote about the mayhem, violence and trauma of the Partition in their writings, which were generally absent in the official grand narrative of glorious independence of the nation from British rule. Partition fiction written by the second generation (those whose parents’ generation underwent the trauma of Partition) and third generation (those whose grandparents’ generation experienced the Partition) writers deal with not the memory but the postmemory of the event as they have not had any first-hand experience of the event. The ways in which “memories of Partition continue to circulate across generations within the subcontinent, and mediate and

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<sup>114</sup> Anis Kidwai. Tr. Ayesha Kidwai. *In Freedom’s Shade*. Gurgaon: Penguin Group, 2011. p. 4.

intersect with the everyday realities”<sup>115</sup> bring to focus the involvement of the second and third generation with the event. Their encounter with the event is through various accounts of the event and thus it is based not on lived experience but on the representation of that experience. ‘Postmemory’, which is a term coined in context of the ‘generation after’ of the Holocaust survivors, brings into focus the notion of intergenerational transmission of memory which is a recurrent point of discussion in recent times. Priya Kumar writes in the context of the Partition:

To argue...that new generations have successfully “left behind” the traumatic memories of Partition is to ignore the intergenerational transmission of memory within families and groups...it is crucial that subsequent generations come to a radically different understanding of this founding trauma rather than rely on sanctioned nationalist histories and familial and group memories.<sup>116</sup>

But to come to a new understanding of the event, the event needs to be available through certain channels to the ‘generation after’ of Partition. These channels are worth discussing in order to understand the image of Partition that is formed in the minds of the later generations. As Priya Kumar writes:

Since the mid-1980s...there has been a proliferation of retrospective historical, journalistic, autobiographical, ethnographic, and imaginative materials that attempt to address Partition from the present historical conjuncture. These belated efforts include commemorative issues in academic journals and popular magazines; English translations of Indian-language Partition narratives written in the two decades following independence; recently published or resurrected memoirs of social workers who worked with the newly constituted citizen-refugees of the two new nations (Anis Kidwai’s *In the Shadow of Freedom* and Kamlaben Patel’s *Torn from the Roots*); films like Deepa Mehta’s *Earth*, Pamela Rooks’s *Train to Pakistan*, Sabiha Sumar’s *Khamosh Pani*, along with more mainstream Hindi films like *Pinjar* and *Gaddar*; and some seminal feminist

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<sup>115</sup> Anjali Gera Roy & Nandi Bhatia. Ed. ‘Introduction’. *Partitioned Lives: Narratives of Home, Displacement and Resettlement*. New Delhi: Dorling Kindersley (India) Pvt. Ltd., 2008. p. xi.

<sup>116</sup> Priya Kumar. ‘Acts of Return: Literature and Post-Partition Memory’ in *Limiting Secularism: The Ethics of Co-existence in Indian Literature and Film*. Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2008. p. 94.

compilations of oral histories of survivors (Ritu Menon's and Kamla Bhasin's *Borders and Boundaries* and Urvashi Butalia's *The Other Side of Silence*).<sup>117</sup>

Anup Beniwal also writes on a similar note about the subsequent generations' memory formation about the event of Partition: "For them, these horrors might have formed a part of the family's/ community's folklore, but these were, nevertheless, imagined/ heard anecdotes, out there and hence not a part of the experienced"<sup>118</sup>.

Thus the postmemory of the event of Partition is formed through these various components as mentioned by Priya Kumar. Partition fiction by the survivor generation fulfilled the role of filling the void in the official narrative which negated any human suffering. The writers of the first generation might have interacted with the survivors of the event as they enjoyed temporal proximity to the event. But with the presence of survivor testimonies and memoirs in recorded form, the role of Partition fiction by the later generations comes into question. The possibility, therefore, is that Partition fictions by the second and third generation have become more conscious of their representation of the event. Moreover, the way in which communal tension still brews in our country; it is difficult to forget the communal basis of the division of the country. Every India-Pakistan cricket or hockey match even today is a reminder of the underlying tension between the two countries as they are still portrayed as enemies of one another. Pakistan still is the land of the other for India and the reverse also holds true.

The Post-memorial Partition fiction writers can access the 'event' of Partition, not only through historical accounts, photographs, familial recounting of the horrors of the event but also through the personal testimonies recorded in written and video format. As pointed out by Andreas Huyssen, in the context of the Holocaust:

Since the 1980s, the question is no longer *whether*, but rather how to represent the Holocaust in literature, film, and the visual arts. The earlier conviction about the essential unrepresentability of the Holocaust...has lost much of its persuasiveness for later

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<sup>117</sup> Priya Kumar. op. cit. p. 90.

<sup>118</sup> Anup Beniwal. *Representing Partition: History, Violence and Narration*. Delhi: Shakti Book House, 2005. p. 171.

generations who only know of the Holocaust through representations: photographs and films, documentaries, testimonies, historiography and fiction.<sup>119</sup>

Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin also write in the Preface of their book *Borders and Boundaries*: “How do we know Partition except through the many ways in which it is transmitted to us, in its many representations: political, social, historical, testimonial, literary, documentary, even communal. We know it through national and family mythologies, through collective and individual memory”<sup>120</sup>.

Among all the available resources which form the repository of representations of the event of Partition, testimonies hold a significant place of importance as they are the firsthand accounts of survivors and witnesses of the event. In 1997, with the completion of fifty years of independence, oral testimonies about the Partition were collected and published. Various projects aiming to gather oral testimonies from the dying generation of survivors came into being. The later generations both in case of Holocaust and Partition are engaging with the events through these mediated forms of memory and creating their own understanding of the events of which they have no personal experience but whose effect they can feel in their lives. In case of writers with family connection to the event, the familial memories in themselves become a space of the transmission of memories but in case of writers without familial connection to the event, this transmission happens through the means of collective and cultural memory formed by various representations and interpretations of the event through films, photographs, fiction etc. as mentioned by Andreas Huyssen<sup>121</sup>.

The testimonies that have been recorded provide a glimpse into the aspect of human suffering that took place during the Partition which is lacking in historical and official narratives. Along with the published testimonies like *The Other Side of Silence* by Urvashi Butalia and *Borders and Boundaries* by Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin, various oral testimony projects with the aim

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<sup>119</sup> As quoted by Sukesri Kamra in ‘Engaging Traumatic Histories: The 1947 Partition of India in Collective Memory’. Urvashi Butalia ed. *Partition: The Long Shadow*. New Delhi: Zubaan, 2015. p. 158.

<sup>120</sup> Ritu Menon & Kamla Bhasin. *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India’s Partition*. New Delhi: Kali for Women, 2007. p. xi.

<sup>121</sup> Andreas Huyssen. *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003. p. 122.



of recording both survivor and perpetrator testimonies have come into being like Andrew Whitehead's 'Partition Voices', 'Partition Remembered' project by the Birmingham City Council, The 1947 Partition Archive. In all these testimony projects, the memories of the survivor generation are gathered but all the testimonies cannot be equated as parameters regarding the respondents vary in these projects.

In case of the works of Butalia, and Menon and Bhasin, the focus of their works is on providing a voice to the suppressed voices of the women (specifically in Menon and Bhasin), children and people from the margin who suffered during the Partition. The women have always been looked upon as bearers of honour and respectability not only of the family that they belong to but also of the entire community or religion. The members of both the Hindu and Muslim communities thought that hurting and mutilating the women of the other community would ensure ruining the respectability of that community. Thus the women were abducted, raped, mutilated and their body parts branded with religious slogans. The women of both the communities became victims of violence and their bodies became the site of the battle for honour. What is worse is that the women were killed by their own male family members or they committed suicide in order to save their honour. The family members go on to valorize the death of the women of their family and justify their 'murder' by saying that they did so in order to save the honour of the women as well as the honour of the family. Since the honour of the family rested on the shoulders or rather the 'body' of the women, they had to remain pure and that could be done if it could be ensured that they were dead before they were abducted or raped. The women who chose to kill themselves were even hailed as martyrs and they gained a certain status in society in terms of courage and honour and the families from which women were abducted or lost were somewhat poor in terms of the currency of honour. Some among them were married to their abductors and some even rejected by their own family members. The Rehabilitation Programme which was conducted by the governments of both the countries focused on returning the women to their respective families but in many cases the families refused to recognize them as they believed that they had become impure because of their close proximity with the 'other'. The plight of these women are mentioned nowhere in the official or historical narratives as there has been a constant attempt to eradicate any contradictory claims to the glorious nature of the independence of the country. But the absence from official narratives does not make the suffering of these women

any less painful. The works of Butalia, Menon and Bhasin focus on restoring the voices of these women to the realm of Partition historiography.

But some critics are sceptical of such projects. Priya Kumar quotes Ana Douglass and Thomas Vogler:

...the current “trend” for representing collective traumatic events through the compilation of individual personal testimonies has become a “flourishing industry” that rests on the problematic assumption that somehow the totality of an event can be grasped through the massive accumulation of survivor testimonies.<sup>122</sup>

Another instance that is presented by Priya Kumar is a conversation entitled ‘Remembering Partition’ where political scientist Javeed Alam and historian Suresh Sharma present their opinion that

...the new oral-historical projects around Partition, which seek to expand the domain of traditional history by excavating the memories of the victims of Partition violence, raise some contentious issues about the “ethics of remembrance”. Alam insists that because Partition, unlike the Holocaust, does not allow for a clear distinction between perpetrator and victim (this was not the violence of a fascist state, but a violence of a people killing each other at a moment of a “loss of sanity”), it does not require the kind of institutional memorialization that the Holocaust warranted. Taking as his premise writer Krishna Sobti’s statement that “the Partition is too difficult to forget, but dangerous to remember”, Alam argues that these recent memory projects--50 years after the event--are “morally indefensible” since historians are coercing victims to relive their painful and traumatic pasts in order to fill the gaps in the historical record without taking into account the cost inflicted anew upon the victims.<sup>123</sup>

In spite of these criticisms, the importance of testimonies in providing a voice to the survivors of Partition cannot be denied. In the context of Holocaust, James Young writes about the importance of including the voices of survivors in the process of history making without which

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<sup>122</sup> Priya Kumar. op. cit. p. 95.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid. p. 92.

history tends to lose one of the important aspects which can make it into a more credible narrative of the past. By ignoring the value of testimonies, “historians may be ignoring the value of the works’ subjectivity for further understanding of the historical facts themselves”<sup>124</sup>. In case of Partition, it is not only the testimony of the victims which find voice in the testimonies but also the perpetrators who are allowed to present their point of view. Also recorded testimonies of certain survivors who were very young during the Partition and who might have been victims or even bystanders in the Partition violence. Thus the testimonies of the children also hold significance as in certain cases children view things differently from adults and, even as bystanders, “as non-participant observers, either during the events or in the fifty years since-- [they] suffer something like a trauma, a breach in normal thinking about human and civilized nature”<sup>125</sup>. Thus testimonies provide various points of views of the singular event of Partition and each point of view creates a certain impression of the event in the mind of the later generations. The question of whether or not these testimonies are authentic and whether they present the truth about the event is something that is still on contested grounds. “[Testimonies] are actually repressions, ...neither introspection not anything resembling introspection, but rather the careful weaving together of external facts in order to veil the inner truth”<sup>126</sup>. The nature of testimonies needs to be examined in order to come to an understanding about the kind of ‘truth’ that testimonies reveal. The version presented in the official or historical accounts cannot be regarded as the only truth about the Partition. The testimonies are first-hand accounts and the experience of the survivors along with historical facts can create a more complete picture of the event for the later generations rather than only relying on the historical and official facts. As Geoffrey Hartman writes: “Transmission--the passage from personal to cultural memory--is crucial... To “transmit the dreadful experience” we need all our memory-institutions: history-writing as well as testimony, testimony as well as art”<sup>127</sup>. Cultural memory affects the way in which the subsequent generations form their impression about the event. James Young questions

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<sup>124</sup> James E. Young. “Between History and Memory: The Uncanny Voices of Historian and Survivor.” *History and Memory* 9. ½ (1997): 47-58. *JSTOR*. Web. 25 February 2016. p. 55.

<sup>125</sup> Saul Friedlander as quoted by Geoffrey H. Hartman. ‘Darkness Visible’ in *The Longest Shadow: In the Aftermath of the Holocaust*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996. p. 39.

<sup>126</sup> Appelfield as quoted by Geoffrey H. Hartman. *Ibid.* pp. 154-155.

<sup>127</sup> Geoffrey H. Hartman. *Ibid.* p. 155.

the role of memory in the formation of history following Patrick Hutton. Young writes: “‘How will the past be remembered as it moves from living memory to history?’ Will it always be regarded as so overly laden with pathos as to make it unreliable as documentary evidence? Or is there a place for the understanding of the witness, as subjective and skewed as it may be, for our larger historical understanding of events?’”<sup>128</sup> In case of Partition, it is much more crucial to take the testimonies into account as there has been a conscious attempt on the part of the authorities to not form any kind of documentation of the violence and riots that took place during the Partition. Millions of people lost their lives while trying to migrate from India to Pakistan or vice-versa. But nowhere in the country is found a single official memorial to commemorate the death of those millions. It is the testimonies which bring the ‘truth’ of human suffering that accompanied the Partition to the forefront.

As Shoshana Felman says: “To testify is always, metaphorically, to take the witness's stand, or to take the position of the witness insofar as the narrative account of the witness is at once engaged in an appeal and bound by an oath. To testify is thus not merely to narrate but to commit oneself, and to commit the narrative, to others: to take responsibility--in speech--for history or for the truth of an occurrence, for something which, by definition, goes beyond the personal...”<sup>129</sup>.

Testimony is a legal term where a witness provides testimony in the court in the presence of the judge and sometimes the jury who bear witness to the process of witnessing. In the scenario of the courtroom, various factors can alter or have an effect on the testimony that the witness will present and thus the figure of the witness is of great significance. In the legal scenario, the whole spirit of the procedure is to discern the truth from the witness which would then help the judgment of the case which is on trial in the courtroom. Testimony can also be associated to the field of trauma keeping in mind the backdrop of traumatic events in the twentieth century. These traumatic events like the Holocaust and the Partition of India led to the destruction of human life and also the trauma of displacement from their spaces of belonging. The survivors of these events bear the burden of memories of the trauma that they have had to endure and some even

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<sup>128</sup> James E. Young. “Toward a Received History of the Holocaust.” *History and Theory* 36. 4 (1997): 21-43. *JSTOR*. Web. 25 February 2016. p. 23.

<sup>129</sup> Shoshana Felman. “In an Era of Testimony: Claude Lanzmann's Shoah”. *Yale French Studies* 79 (1991): 39-81. *JSTOR*. Web. 25 February 2016. p. 39.

suffer from survivor's guilt. Bearing testimony to the event in front of people willing to listen to the testimony might be seen as an attempt to unburden themselves of the terrible memories of the event. "[T]estimony [. . .] bring[s] one into an immediate and compelling contact with those who have been degraded, suffocated, victimized. The text is the voice of one who would witness for the sake of an other who remains voiceless even as he or she is witnessed"<sup>130</sup>.

However, this perception about testimony needs to be questioned in order to reach a nuanced understanding of the kind of knowledge that is presented in testimonies about the Partition. The 'truth' in question is a traumatic event which altered the lives of many individuals and families. The testimonies of the survivors of Partition express traumatic memories about the events that took place. The question that needs to be asked is that in the moment of the occurrence of trauma, how well is the occurrence registered in the mind of the survivor. As most of the survivor testimonies are recorded many years after the event takes place (in case of Partition, the recorded testimonies appear fifty years after the event), it is but normal to assume that certain memories would have been lost in the long years that have passed in between. As Cathy Caruth has written that "the victim of [trauma] [is] never fully conscious during the [event] itself"<sup>131</sup> and the event is thus not registered in its entirety on the mind of the survivor of trauma. Caruth further writes: "The pathology consists, rather, solely in the *structure of its experience* or reception: the event is not assimilated or experienced fully at the time, but only belatedly, in its repeated *possession* of the one who experiences it. To be traumatized is precisely to be possessed by an image or event"<sup>132</sup>. What is thus available in the form of testimony is a mediated version of the event that takes place. The event, in itself, disappears in the moment that it takes place and when the survivor, be it the victim or the perpetrator, narrates the event after years of its happening, what is presented is a representation of the event from the point of view of the survivor. What are presented in the testimonies are certain aspects of the event which goes

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<sup>130</sup> James Hatley as quoted by Anne Cubilie and Carl Good in "Introduction: The Future of testimony". *Discourse* 25. 1&2 (2003): 4-18. *PROJECT MUSE*. Web. 25 February 2016. p. 4.

<sup>131</sup> As quoted by Michael F. Bernard-Donals. "Beyond the Question of Authenticity: Witness and Testimony in the *Fragments Controversy*". *Modern Language Association* 116,5 (2001): 1302-1315. *JSTOR*. Web. 2 June 2016. p. 1302.

<sup>132</sup> Cathy Caruth. Ed. *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins Literary Press, 1995. pp. 4-5.

beyond historical and official representations. “Testimonial narratives do not disclose history; instead they disclose--where the narrative most clearly shows its seams--the effect of events on witnesses”<sup>133</sup>. The process of witnessing is thus a complex process where the effect of the event is presented more than that of the event itself.

In Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin’s book *Borders and Boundaries* whose dedication reads as “To all those women who survived Partition and lived to tell the tale”, testimonies of women who survived the Partition in various circumstances have been presented. The testimonies of the women that have been recorded demonstrate the way in which the women express the way in which Partition changed their lives. They talk less of the event itself and more about how their lives were before the Partition and how the event affected their way of living. The life before Partition is presented with a tone of nostalgia in most cases and the life after Partition is described in terms of sadness and pain of displacement. The testimony of Gyan Devi and Durga Rani illustrate the fact about the way in which testimonies reflect more the effect of the event rather than the event itself. Lawrence Langer, in the context of the Holocaust, in his work *Holocaust Testimonies* which was written based on the watching of the testimonies in the Fortunoff archive, writes about “the two ‘selves’ involved in all of the narratives of survival and life after the Shoah--the one which, in Cynthia Ozick’s terms, comprises the lives ‘before’ and ‘after’... vie for prominence in the narratives”<sup>134</sup>.

Gyan Devi talks about the memories of her childhood home when she was ten or eleven years old and how there was no animosity between the Hindus and the Muslims in her village: “In our village how many were Hindus and how many Muslims, that I don’t know, but there was no difference between Hindus and Muslims. We had very good relations... When we left the village the Bhattis really helped us. Bhattis and we were like one family--our houses were also nearby”<sup>135</sup>. This is a recurrent trope found in the testimonies recorded by the survivor generation where they highlight the amiable relation between the two communal groups, Hindus and Muslims before the communal tension ensued during the Partition. The life after Partition that is,

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<sup>133</sup> Michael Bernard-Donals. Ibid. p. 1308.

<sup>134</sup> As mentioned by Michael Bernard-Donals and Richard Glejzer. “Between Witness and Testimony: Survivor Narratives and the Shoah”. *John Hopkins University Press* 27 (2000): 1-20. *JSTOR*. Web. 2 June 2016. p. 4.

<sup>135</sup> Kamla Bhasin and Ritu Menon. op. cit. p. 136.

the effect that Partition had on her life is described as a life of ‘real hardship’ where there was “not enough to eat, not enough clothes to wear...”<sup>136</sup>. Similarly in her testimony, Durga Rani also talks about the way in which her husband was a prosperous man before he was killed during the Partition riots and how her Muslim neighbours had helped them by throwing burqas on them and escorting them back to their village when the riots ensued in Multan, which was a Hindu-minority region. In Anam Zakaria’s collection of testimonies, Muhammad Rauf maintains a bit of silence when asked about the Partition days and when he speaks he does so about his childhood in Amritsar. “His eyes were misty as he recalled his early days ... These were memories that he was happy to share. This was before all the tension started, before he had been separated from his home”<sup>137</sup>. Rauf is someone who had an intense urge to travel to his birthplace which was a place of happy memories before the Partition. Partition uprooted the people from their places of belonging and this created a sense of void which was very difficult for them to articulate.

Thus the witnesses while testifying become a part of a process through which it is never completely possible to express themselves. As the event in itself becomes unavailable immediately after it takes place, the expression of the nature of that event through language is an equally difficult process. Though language is considered to be a means of expression, it sometimes causes a hindrance to communication as well. Shoshana Felman writes in this regard:

What the testimony does not offer is, however, a completed statement, a totalizable account of those events. In the testimony, language is in process and in trial, it does not possess itself as a conclusion, as the constation of a verdict or the self-transparency of knowledge. Testimony is, in other words, a discursive *practice*, as opposed to a pure *theory*. To *testify*—to *vow to tell*, to *promise* and *produce* one’s own speech as material evidence for truth—is to accomplish a *speech act*, rather than to simply formulate a statement.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Ibid. p. 139.

<sup>137</sup> Anam Zakaria. *The Footprints of Partition: Narratives of Four Generations of Pakistanis and Indians*. India: Harper Collins, 2015. p. 35.

<sup>138</sup> Shoshana Felman. ‘Education and Crisis, or the Vicissitudes of Teaching’. Cathy Caruth Ed. *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins Literary Press, 1995. pp. 16-17.

The witness becomes twice removed from the event itself as the ‘event’ in itself is not available to the witness and what the witness presents as testimony is but a subjective interpretation of the event. When the testimony is recorded many years after the event has taken place, the event undergoes the process of interpretation numerous times in the mind of the witness. Therefore, Cathy Caruth has pointed out the relationship between the ‘event’ and the testimony based on the event is a troubled relationship as the event is not available immediately after it takes place. “At the heart of any memory is forgetting, the loss of the original event and that loss’s destructive force on any subsequent testimony... Witnessing is a moment of forgetting, a moment of seeing without knowing that indelibly marks the source of history as an abyss. It is a moment of the disaster; and that moment, the moment of forgetting, demands that memory be inscribed...”<sup>139</sup>.

There is always a gap which is present, between the original event and testimony that is, between the event and its representation, which cannot be bridged. Elie Wiesel says: “... having lived through this experience, one could not keep silent no matter how difficult, if not impossible, it was to speak....For, despite all my attempts to articulate the unspeakable, ‘it’ is still not right”<sup>140</sup>. The event is thus only available in its absences and there will always be this feeling of inadequacy towards the process of witnessing. There will always be a feeling in the witness, as felt by Elie Wiesel that somewhere there is a lacuna between what had happened and what could be expressed. “...it becomes clear that the distance between what has been witnessed and what can be committed to testimony--what was seen and what can be said--is often wide, but always palpable”<sup>141</sup>. This gap or lacuna that is present between the event and testimony or rather the event’s representation in testimony suggests a break and it is in this break that trauma resides. Trauma is that which is ‘unspeakable’ in nature but yet which demands speech in order to maintain the sanity of people who underwent the traumatic experiences. Dori Laub has written: “Yet it is essential for this narrative that *could not be articulated*, to be *told*, to be *transmitted*, to

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<sup>139</sup> Michael Bernard-Donals. op. cit. p. 13.

<sup>140</sup> Elie Wiesel. Tr. Marion Wiesel. *Night*. London: Penguin Books, 2006. p. x.

<sup>141</sup> As quoted by Michael Bernard-Donals and Richard Glejzer. op. cit. p. 2.



be *heard*”<sup>142</sup>. What needs to be read and focused on in the testimonies are these gaps and breaks in the narratives of the survivors, which will provide the subsequent generations with a better understanding of the painful and traumatic experiences of the previous generation. The moment of break is “a point between witness and testimony that can be seen as a moment of trauma.... This moment, this break, is neither site of historical facticity, nor a kernel of ‘truth’ nor the recovery, for the witness, of the moment by way of memory”<sup>143</sup>. Hence, there is a “legacy of incomprehensibility at the heart of catastrophic experience”<sup>144</sup>.

But the utility of testimonies lie in the fact that the survivors or witnesses feel a sense of responsibility towards the process of witnessing. The witnesses feel that their testimonies would inform the subsequent generations of pain and suffering that they had undergone and warn the future generations about the terrible happenings of the past. In case of survivors, they also feel a sense of responsibility towards the people who did not survive the trauma. The survivors almost feel a sense of guilt to have lived through and survived an event which many were not so lucky to survive. It is almost as if through the testimonies, the survivors provide a voice to the innumerable number of voiceless dead who could not be present to narrate their experiences. In the context of Holocaust, as Primo Levi writes in his book *Survival in Auschwitz: If This Is A Man* where he describes his experiences in the concentration camp at Auschwitz: “...we must not become beasts; that even in this place one can survive, and therefore one must want to survive, to tell the story, to bear witness; and that to survive we must force ourselves to save at least the skeleton, the scaffolding, the form of civilization”<sup>145</sup>. The hunger for survival is fuelled by the fact that the future generations must know about the hardships of the survivor generation and thus there is an attempt to transmit the memories to the subsequent generations. The burden of memories is relieved by the first generation onto the shoulders of the next who must learn

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<sup>142</sup> Dori Laub. ‘An Event Without a Witness: Truth, Testimony and Survival’. Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub. *Testimony: Crisis of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*. New York and London: Routledge, 1992. p. 85.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid. p. 3.

<sup>144</sup> Cathy Caruth. *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins Literary Press, 1996. p. 58.

<sup>145</sup> Primo Levi. Tr. Stuart Woolf. *Survival in Auschwitz: If This Is A Man*. New York: The Orion Press, 1959. p. 39.

from the past and create a better community in the future. Elie Wiesel in his book *Night* also writes:

Was it to leave behind a legacy of words, of memories, to help prevent history from repeating itself? Or was it simply to preserve a record of the ordeal I endured as an adolescent, at an age when one's knowledge of death and evil should be limited to what one discovers in literature?...I only know that without this testimony, my life as a writer--or my life, period--would not have become what it is: that of a witness who believes he has a moral obligation to try to prevent the enemy from enjoying one last victory by allowing his crimes to be erased from human memory<sup>146</sup>.

However, there is another argument that it may be better to let the traumatic memories be forgotten in order to have a new beginning without holding on to the horrors of the past and it questions the efficacy of remembering a past which can be rather painful and horrific. The questions that were posed by the women to Menon and Bhasin when they were gathering the testimonies reveal similar sentiments: "What is the use of asking all this now? It's too late--you can't change anything"<sup>147</sup>. But Anis Kidwai provides the answer in the concluding words of her memoir *In Freedom's Shade* when she says:

We old people! Our lives, good or bad, are past. We have already witnessed the fruits that our deeds have borne. Our old, defeated minds now move towards the final rest....And before these new hands lift this burden, this book must reach them. So that before they lower their crafts into the river, they are able to divine the direction of the wind and understand where the rocks and the whirlpools lie. So that their craft does not flounder midstream, like ours did, and be destroyed.<sup>148</sup>

Thus it becomes clear that the aim of recording testimonies is to communicate the pain and violence to the subsequent generations who can use this knowledge to form an understanding of their own about the event and forge their own identities viz-a-viz the event. It is not only the

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<sup>146</sup> Elie Wiesel. op. cit. p. vii-viii.

<sup>147</sup> Ritu Menon & Kamla Bhasin. op. cit. p. 15.

<sup>148</sup> Anam Zakaria. *The Footprints of Partition*. Noida: Harper Collins Publishers, 2015. pp. 312-313.

individuals with family connection to the traumatic event but also the community as a whole which needs to know and understand the event as it becomes a part of the collective or cultural memory. In the case of Partition, the attempt has been to erase the event from the collective conscious of the general population by not creating any memorialization of the event. The testimonies thus become crucial in presenting an image of the event in this scenario. The issue that needs to be discussed is how the testimonies are received by the people for whom they are intended. It is obviously very clear that the testimonies always have a certain audience in mind. Testimonies are meant to be either heard in case of oral testimonies or read in case of written ones. What is of utmost importance is to understand the way in which the readers or audience are related to the process of witnessing and testifying. The way in which the event goes through layers of interpretation from the moment of its happening to the way it gets represented in the postmemorial representations of the subsequent generation is something which is worth examining. The event in itself goes through one level of interpretation when the process of witnessing takes place and then again when the testimony is read or listened to by a reader or an audience, it goes through another level of interpretation.

In the case of oral testimonies which are majorly collected as part of oral testimony projects, the testimonies are usually recorded in a particular setup in the presence of an interviewer and eventually the testimonies are archived. The witness testifies about his or her subjective experience of the event which is of importance as “narratives of first-person experience are the stuff of psychotherapy and valued for their power to counter totalizing collective historical narratives. A particular kind of truth (distinct from the truths found in other forms of historical data) is thought to reside in the subjective experience of each person”<sup>149</sup>. Thus the truth presented in the testimony is presented with the hope that other individuals would listen to that truth and try to gather some understanding about an event which they did not have to suffer. Elie Wiesel expresses his doubt about the reception of his testimony in his work *Night* when he writes in the preface:

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<sup>149</sup> Kelly McKinney. “‘Breaking the Conspiracy of Silence’: Testimony, Traumatic Memory, and Psychotherapy with Survivors of Political Violence’. *Wiley* 35,3 (2007): 265-299. *JSTOR*. Web. 2 June 2016. p. 270.

Deep down, the witness knew then, as he does now, that his testimony would not be received. After all, it deals with an event which sprang from the darkest zone of man. Only those who experienced Auschwitz know what it was. Others will never know.

But would they at least understand?

Could men and women who consider it normal to assist the weak, to heal the sick, to protect small children, and to respect the wisdom of their elders understand what happened there? Would they be able to comprehend how, within that cursed universe, the masters tortured the weak and massacred the children, the sick, and the old?<sup>150</sup>

As both Holocaust and Partition are limit events where the general rules of humanity do not apply, there is always a doubt whether normal people who have not lived through such atrocities would understand the events that the witnesses testify to. But the witnesses refuse to give up and want the others to know what fellow human beings are capable of. In the case of Holocaust, it was still easier to point fingers at a particular group of people (Nazis) who were the enemy as there was a distinct demarcation between the perpetrators and the victims. But in case of Partition, such demarcation is deemed impossible as the perpetrator could have been a victim and the victim also could have been a perpetrator. The incidents that took place during the Partition are sometimes beyond belief as fathers killed their own daughters, and women jumped into wells and committed suicide filling up the entire well in the process. In one of the testimonies, another picture of unthinkable atrocity is presented:

We saw a girl killed, cut up and thrown away. They took off her ear-rings, threw her away. Further on, they were dragging a young girl and she, poor thing, fearing for her life, jumped into the canal nearby, she just jumped in. This is what we saw. There was one girl, the daughter of some sheikhs--they had two children a girl and a boy, the boy was outside so the girl was like a son to them, she used to say she was a boy, everyone is used to call her kaka. Some goondas got after her shouting we're going to get hold of

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<sup>150</sup> Elie Wiesel. *op. cit.* p. ix-x.

kaka, we want kaka, let's see who this kaka is. She jumped off the roof to save her honour, she didn't want to be violated.<sup>151</sup>

But in spite of the horrific nature of events, the witness testifies to the events in order to lighten his or her burden and also in the hope that listeners will listen and try to understand the ravages of the traumatic event. In case of oral video testimonies, the interviewer is the immediate listener who is present at the moment of recording the testimonies. But in case of written testimonies, the testimony would be successful once it is read by others in the larger community. Elie Wiesel, in case of the Holocaust, does not want to let go of the culprits without revealing their truth and Anis Kidwai, in case of the Partition, without the presence of any tangible enemy group, wants the future generation to be warned about the mistakes made by the first generation. Geoffrey H. Hartman writes: "...testimonies evoke a trans-generational recipient through the survivor's willingness to record and the ad-hoc community's readiness to listen. The testimony project is based on the hope of finding a witness for the witness"<sup>152</sup>.

In this process of witnessing, the readers or listeners become participants in the process of witnessing. Though they have not undergone the event in physical terms, the readers or listeners become second-hand witnesses as they also need to be responsible individuals who would use their own understanding to create their impression about the event. This does not in any way mean that the experience that a survivor has undergone can be completely understood by the listeners or readers. As the listeners and readers enjoy temporal distance from the event, it is possible for them to analyze the testimonies in the best possible manner and attempt to deduce a coherent image of the event. Michael Nutkiewicz writes:

Eventually more than one person will listen to, or read, the interviewee's story. Moreover, listeners "act" upon the testimony in a manner that the interviewee ... may not expect....Some people will treat the story as literature and utilize the tools of literary analysis to examine the narrative; others will listen to the story for its message; still others will use the story--or part of it--to make a point. What modern oral testimony has

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<sup>151</sup> Sukeshi Kamra. *Bearing Witness: partition, independence, end of the raj*. New Delhi: Roli Books, 2003. pp. 170-171.

<sup>152</sup> Geoffrey H. Hartman. op. cit. p. 156.

in common with older forms of transmission is that it is performed with the expectation of an audience in mind: it is communal and didactic. And in the case of survivors of genocide, it is also partially therapeutic.<sup>153</sup>

The therapeutic nature of testimonies brings into account the role of the interviewer especially in the case of oral testimonies. In case of therapeutic ‘testimony method’ where the victims of trauma express themselves, there is a concept called ‘countertransference’ which is defined as “... feelings that a therapist has toward her client... feelings [which] are not just ‘compassion’ but ‘feelings that are unhelpful and harmful to the client’”<sup>154</sup>. Also, “Trauma is contagious. In the role of witness to disaster or atrocity, the therapist at times is emotionally overwhelmed. She experiences, to a lesser degree, the same terror, rage and despair as the patient”<sup>155</sup>. Thus though it is imperative for the interviewer to maintain objectivity, it is sometimes impossible to maintain that objectivity. Though this concept is about therapeutic counselling and the related process of the client testifying to the therapist, the interviewer who gathers oral testimonies might also feel a sense of connectedness to the witness or testifier. Anam Zakaria who has collected narratives of four generations of Pakistanis and Indians in her book *The Footprints of Partition* writes: “I do know that every word they have shared has become an integral part of me. I am no longer the person I was before I travelled with them through their past and present”<sup>156</sup>. This is reminiscent of what Dori Laub says: “As one comes to know the survivor, one really comes to know oneself”<sup>157</sup>. This involvement of the listener might lead to the clouding of objectivity but also might make the interviewer make certain decisions based on a perception constructed about the witness. The perception might lead to certain questions being asked while others are suppressed. This suppression of specific questions might not lead to the witness testifying completely which is something to be avoided in case of recording oral testimonies. Though testimonies are fraught

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<sup>153</sup> Michael Nutkiewicz. “Shame, Guilt, And Anguish in Holocaust Survivor Testimony”. *The Oral History Review* 30.1 (2003): 1-22. *JSTOR*. Web. 2 June 2016. p. 17.

<sup>154</sup> Kelly McKinney. op. cit. p. 273.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid. p. 276.

<sup>156</sup> Anam Zakaria. op. cit. p. ix.

<sup>157</sup> Dori Laub. ‘Bearing Witness or the Vicissitude of Listening’. Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub. *Testimony: Crisis of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*. New York and London: Routledge, 1992. p. 72.

with silences, distortions, trauma, pain and loss, the listener or interviewer's role might make the testimony an even more mediated form of expression.

Certain issues may be raised about the role of the person who bears witness to the testimony and also to put it differently, the function of the interviewer or listener becomes very important to consider as the listener is "the blank screen on which the event comes to be inscribed for the first time"<sup>158</sup>. Thus in this process of recording the testimony, "[b]y extension, the listener to trauma comes to be a participant and a co-owner of the traumatic event: through his very listening, he comes to partially experience trauma in himself. The relation of the victim to the event of the trauma, therefore, impacts on the relation of the listener to it..."<sup>159</sup>. The role of the interviewer thus becomes very important because he or she will be the one who will record the testimonies and become a "witness to the trauma witness and a witness to himself"<sup>160</sup>.

Moreover, the point that also needs to be taken into account is that there is an attempt to record this testimony in written, audio or video form. Hence when these testimonies would be read or heard or viewed, another relationship would be formed between the witness and the readers or the audience of the testimony. The readers or audience are at a remove from the actual recording of the testimony and have to rely on the recorded version that is available to them. Thus it is the responsibility of the listener or the interviewer to ethically present the traumatic memories of the witness. Whether or not they can share their burden by testifying is altogether a different issue as there may be many events that might not be easy to share with anyone or the testifiers might have moulded their memories into something which would be less hurtful for them to remember. Dori Laub has pointed out that the listener-interviewer has a very crucial role of piecing together the narrative of testimony presented by the witness. It almost becomes a paradox where the listener-interviewer has to be present and active but once again remain unobtrusive in the process of deliverance of the testimony by the witness.<sup>161</sup> Memory plays an integral part in the process of

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<sup>158</sup> Ibid. p. 57.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid. pp. 57-58.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid. p. 58.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid. p. 71.

testimony and thus testimony might not be a complete articulation of the event. The crucial nexus between the interviewer-listener and the witness is articulated by Dori Laub as:

To a certain extent, the interviewer-listener takes on the responsibility for bearing witness that previously the narrator felt he bore alone, and therefore could not carry out. It is the encounter and the coming together between the survivor and the listener, which makes possible something like a repossession of the act of witnessing. This joint responsibility is the source of the reemerging truth.<sup>162</sup>

Given that trauma is most intricately bound to the nature of events that we are talking about, it is but inevitable that the psychologists and psychiatrists would have a role to play. A clinical process of therapy known as the ‘testimony method’ is used in the clinical therapy of trauma victims who have suffered political violence and trauma. By conducting various sessions with the victims, the ‘trauma story’ comes to the forefront. These stories are then transcribed or recorded in form of audio or video tapes and given to the testifier-victim and are then “disseminated into the wider social and political arena” with a “degree of coordination toward producing a specific narrative form and a written document”<sup>163</sup>. And thus “trauma appears less as a clinical category than as a political argument” and “the witness has become a key figure of our time, whether as the survivor testifying to what he has lived through or as the third party telling what he has seen or heard”<sup>164</sup>. Clinical psychotherapy is prevalent in the Western countries and still has not become a part of testimony collection with regard to Partition and testimony collection remains within the realm of scholarly or academic work. But the theoretical formulations about trauma and testimony that have developed based on clinical psychotherapy can provide valuable insight into the nature of testimonies.

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<sup>162</sup> Dori Laub. ‘An Event Without a Witness: Truth, Testimony and Survival’. Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub. *Testimony: Crisis of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*. New York and London: Routledge, 1992. p. 85.

<sup>163</sup> Kelly McKinney. op. cit. p. 266.

<sup>164</sup> Didier Fassin. “The Humanitarian Politics of Testimony: Subjectification through Trauma in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict”. *Cultural Anthropology* 23, 3 (2008): 531-558. Web. 25 May. 2016. p. 555. <<http://roundtable.kein.org/files/roundtable/Fassin,%20D.%20-%20witness.pdf>>



Giorgio Agamben has talked about two words for testimony in Latin: *testis* and *superstes*. “The first word, *testis* from which our word “testimony” derives, etymologically signifies the person who, in a trial or lawsuit between two rival parties, is in the position of a third party. The second word, *superstes*, designates a person who has lived through something, who has experienced an event from beginning to end and can therefore bear witness to it”<sup>165</sup>. This distinction is useful while discussing Partition testimonies that are present in the book *The Other Side of Silence: The Voices from the Partition of India* by Butalia. The testimony of Damayanti Sehgal, the ‘*superstes*’, has been presented in detail along with Anis Kidwai’s memoirs by Butalia which depict the atrocities on women during Partition and Kidwai’s involvement in the recovery operation of women. Butalia focuses on the condition of women during Partition through the testimony of Damayanti Sahgal. Anis Kidwai herself was not harmed during the Partition riots though she lost her husband. This makes her a ‘*testis*’ in this scenario.

The figure of Damayanti Sahgal presents the qualities of a ‘*superstes*’ as she had suffered during the Partition riots. Sahgal presents her testimony to Butalia when she is eighty years old in 1989 and the significant passage of time between the witnessed event and the testimony needs to be taken into consideration. Various episodes might have been remembered by Sahgal in a different way than it had happened earlier. Sahgal narrates the difficult times that she had faced during the Partition riots and also narrates stories about other women who worked with her in the recovery operations. Sahgal’s testimony must be read keeping in mind what we have already established-- that complete articulation about an event is not possible in testimony. The interview took place in Butalia’s house in the presence of Sahgal’s sister Kamla Buldoon Dhingra and niece Lina Dhingra. Butalia and her co-interviewer Sudesh Vaid formed certain closeness with Sahgal over the months when the interview was recorded. The presence of the family members in the interview setup is what makes it different from clinical psychotherapy in the Western world where only the witness and interviewer are present.

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<sup>165</sup> Giorgio Agamben. *The Remnants of Auschwitz. : The Witness and the Archive*. Trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen. New York: Aone Books, 1999. p. 17.

Sahgal remembers about the several days when she had travelled alone without any money and food. She also remembers the inhumanity of the people around who refused to help her. Contrarily Sahgal also talks of two men who had provided her help on the road and also a lucky encounter with a good-natured man who took her to his home where she finds an old student of hers. She talks about instances of violence which she had witnessed around her but does not speak about any such incident as happening with her. She only talks about the hardships that she had faced on the road due to lack of money. But a significant bit of broken conversation takes place between Sahgal and her sister Kamla. Sahgal vehemently wants to stress on the point that nothing 'wrong' had happened to her. Sahgal's sister asks her the reason as to why Sahgal had never talked about to her any of the things that she was talking to about to Butalia and Vaid. Her sister Kamla even accepts the fact that they had never asked how she had got away. To this, Sahgal replies: "I came alone"<sup>166</sup>. When Kamla interrupts by saying "No, I mean we thought...", Sahgal immediately says: "Never, never..."<sup>167</sup>. Sahgal does not want to sow any seed of suspicion in the mind of her family members about any wrong that might have happened to her during the Partition riots. The readers are left to wonder whether Sahgal would have given a different testimony if her family members were not present around her. Suvir Kaul has written: "Researchers in the field have encountered a number of people resistant to sharing their memories, particularly since they have not spoken about these experiences even to younger people in their own families"<sup>168</sup>. Veena Das also presents the account of a woman named Manjit who was abducted during the Partition and later rescued by the army. Manjit's account also demonstrates the same hesitation that Sahgal shows while talking about her experiences. Manjit talks about the general violence of the time but Veena Das writes: "While Manjit herself never spoke to me (or, by all accounts, to anyone) of what happened to her between the time that she was abducted and recovered by the army, I feel that the widely circulated general stories of the brutalities done to women during Partition created a certain field of force within which her later

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<sup>166</sup> Urvashi Butalia. *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1998. p. 120.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid. p. 120.

<sup>168</sup> Suvir Kaul. *The Partitions of Memory: The Afterlife of the Division of India*. Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2011. p. 6.

narrative moved”<sup>169</sup>. However, predominantly there is a discourse of silence which surrounds the violence that took place against women during the Partition.

Within this discourse of silence, the relationship formed between interviewer-listener and the witness may affect the position of objectivity from which the testimony should be recorded. Butalia writes in this regard: “One of the things that troubled me enormously when I began was precisely the lack of what is known as objectivity in my work. There was no way I could deny a personal involvement; no way I could pretend that there wasn’t an emotional entanglement; no way I could wipe out my politics”<sup>170</sup> and thus “[t]his is a personal history that does not pretend to be objective”<sup>171</sup>. But then the question that arises is that if the interviewer is so emotionally involved in the recording of testimonies, then how would she be “unobtrusively present”<sup>172</sup> through the recording of the testimony. However Dori Laub also stresses on the “bonding, the intimate and total presence of an *other*”<sup>173</sup> which is the figure of the interviewer-listener.

Butalia comments about the structure of her interviews that have been included in the book:

In presenting the interviews to the reader, I have taken the liberty of narrativizing them-- that is, I have removed the questions posed by the interviewers, and have let the text run as one continuous narrative. Although no chronological alterations have been made... This shaping of the interviews to turn them into more ‘readable’ texts has been done quite consciously. I do not believe that the transcript of any interview can ever be an unmediated text. In transferring words to text, so much is lost: the particular inflection, the hesitation over certain thoughts and phrases, even certain feelings, the body language, which often tells a different story from the words, and indeed the conscious shaping of

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<sup>169</sup> Veena Das. ‘Violence and the Work of Time’. Anthony P. Cohen. Ed. *Signifying Identities: Anthropological Perspectives on Boundaries and Contested Values*. London: Routledge, 2000. p. 68.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid. p. 20.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid. p. 21.

<sup>172</sup> Dori Laub. ‘Bearing Witness or the Vicissitude of Listening’. Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub. *Testimony: Crisis of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*. New York and London: Routledge, 1992. p. 71.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid. p. 70.

the interview by the interviewer who is usually in a situation of power vis-à-vis the person being interviewed.<sup>174</sup>

Similar to Butalia, Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin also says:

Once begun, the “interviews” became like conversations, our questions more like interjections that sometimes received a direct response, but more often, an extended reminiscence that might refer to the question tangentially. Much further into the telling we might suddenly find it being addressed in another context, opening up yet another vista. Where we encountered genuine reluctance or an unwillingness to disclose, we simply did not press the issue.<sup>175</sup>

Menon and Bhasin try to make themselves invisible in the process of conducting the interviews as according to them they wanted the women to speak for themselves and “[t]he aim of the enterprise is to ‘make women a focus of enquiry, a subject of the story, an agent of the narrative’; in other words, to construct women as a historical subject and through this construction, ‘disabuse us of the notion that the history of women is the same as the history of men, that significant turning points in history have the same impact for one sex as for the other’”<sup>176</sup>.

Butalia has expressed the desire to make the testimonies more ‘readable’. Butalia had “no fixed questionnaire”<sup>177</sup> and the pattern followed in various interviews differed from one another. Butalia did not want to deter the flow of the interviews by asking specific questions. But Butalia is seen posing questions to herself about the nature of testimonies that she encountered: “Were these deliberate erasures or could it be that I had asked the wrong questions?”<sup>178</sup> Butalia’s questions needed to vary as she had interacted not only with women but also with men. The way in which women testified about their experiences was bound to be different from the testimony of men who projected women as the bearers of honour.

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<sup>174</sup> Urvashi Butalia. op. cit. p. 15.

<sup>175</sup> Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin. op. cit. p. 19.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid. p. 9.

<sup>177</sup> Urvashi Butalia. op. cit. p. 23.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid. p. 133.

Butalia was completely aware of the fact that the “history of Partition was a history of deep violation--physical and mental--for women”<sup>179</sup> and that she had to listen to “their speech, their silences, the half-said things, the nuances”<sup>180</sup>. The silences inherent in the testimonies collected by Butalia should be taken into consideration. Michael Nutkiewicz comments about the notion of the presence of a public and a private space in oral testimony which has been ignored by earlier scholars in regard to the testimonies of Holocaust. Generally rape, torture or any kind of sexual assault “occur in secret and in the very space (the family, the bed-room) that is usually considered secure and nurturing. The common ‘stick up’ happens in the back alley away from as many eyes as possible. Even torture inflicted by repressive governments usually takes place in prisons or special chambers that are inaccessible to all but the tormentors”. But in case of the Holocaust, the Jewish people were assaulted in the public space by the Germans and thus it was the assault to the Jewish community as a whole.<sup>181</sup> The rape and sexual assault of the women during Partition also took place in public spaces as an act of tainting the honour of the other community. Thus the private and the public do not remain separate and the women fall prey to the nationalistic discourse of women as the bearers of honour of a family and by extension the community in question. Thus the complicated discourse in which the assault of women falls makes the distinction between the public and the private difficult because at times women were killed by their own family members. The family space which is looked upon as a private place cannot provide protection to the women during the Partition.

Butalia adds a narrative style to the testimonies collected in the book by making the narratives readable. Butalia’s work involves dealing with people’s memory which is always mediated and according to her “so much depends on who remembers, when, with whom, indeed to whom, and how”<sup>182</sup>. And she is of the opinion that these remembrances cannot be taken to be ‘facts of history’, but they can be taken to interpretations of the same by a certain individual<sup>183</sup>.

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<sup>179</sup> Ibid. p. 131.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid. p. 126.

<sup>181</sup> Michael Nutkiewicz. op. cit. p. 2-3.

<sup>182</sup> Urvashi Butalia. op. cit. p. 10.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid. p. 10.

Interpretation in the process of a witness giving testimony brings to focus the narrative quality of testimony. In this context, it is important to take into account the comment of Jacques Derrida in the chapter called 'Fiction and testimony' in the book *The instant of my death*: "... there is no testimony that structurally does not imply in itself the possibility of fiction, simulacra, dissimulation, lie, and perjury--that is to say, the possibility of literature... If this possibility that it seems to prohibit were effectively excluded, if testimony thereby became proof, information, certainty or archive, it would lose its function as testimony. In order to remain testimony, it must therefore allow itself to be haunted"<sup>184</sup>. Testimonies can hence be read as narratives and especially testimonies collected by Butalia as she had made them 'readable'. Similar to Butalia, Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin also discuss the method in which they decided to present the testimonies of women:

Our own attempt has been to present the women's stories in their own words and at some length, in dialogue with ourselves, and severally, with other voices in a privileged position; the women are always at the centre.... In the end we decided to use a combination of commentary and analysis, narrative and testimony, to enable us to counterpoint documented history with personal testimony; to present different versions constructed from a variety of source material...<sup>185</sup>.

In the context of testimonies, Butalia knew that there was no way of knowing the extent of truth that people expressed. She raises some pertinent questions: "How can we know that, four to five decades after the event, the stories are not simply rehearsed performances; or that they are told differently for different people, perhaps tailored to suit what the person thinks the interviewer wishes to hear? How do we reach beyond the stories into the silences they hide; how can we assume that speech, the breaking of silence, is in itself a good thing?"<sup>186</sup> Giorgio Agamben's view that "testimony is of value essentially by virtue of what is missing from it"<sup>187</sup> seems to

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<sup>184</sup> Maurice Blanchot and Jacques Derrida. *The instant of my death*. Trans. Elizabeth Rottenberg. Google Book Search. Web. 2 June 2016. p. 29-30.

<sup>185</sup> Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin. op. cit. p. 16-17.

<sup>186</sup> Urvashi Butalia. op. cit. p. 12.

<sup>187</sup> Giorgio Agamben as quoted by Didier Fassin. op. cit. p.536.

capture the spirit of testimony. Hence Butalia's awareness of the silences and gaps that are present in testimony can be said to capture the essence of testimony. At certain points in the book, Butalia elucidates the testimonies and incorporates diary entries, official documents and records to present what is "unavailable to the witness and certainly invisible to representation"<sup>188</sup>. Butalia writes, "I do not wish here to carry out a literal exercise of first seeing how people remember the history of Partition, and then attempting to penetrate their narrative for its underlying facts to arrive at an approximation of some kind of 'truth'. Instead, I wish to look at the memories for themselves--even if they are shifting, changing and unreliable."<sup>189</sup> But at certain points, she makes exception to this statement of hers and looks for some underlying truth in the testimony of the women she had interviewed. Butalia pays attention to the silence surrounding the sexual assault and rape of women and writes: "I thought, perhaps I had missed out something, perhaps people *had* talked about this. So I went back over my interviews. And, suddenly, there it was, in the odd silence, the ambiguous phrase"<sup>190</sup>.

Butalia attempts to locate these 'cracks' and gaps in the narratives and she even directs her attention beyond the silence of the testimonies. Her role does not remain limited to being the one who collects the testimonies; she also becomes the one to analyze these testimonies: "There were their stories, as they told them, and there was what I understood from these stories"<sup>191</sup>. Butalia seems to pay attention to the narrative aspect of the testimonies and ends up analyzing them according to her understanding. This aspect of the insertion of Butalia's subjective understanding of testimonies may make the task of the readers of the testimonies difficult. The readers might not be able to reach the actual testimony beyond the analysis of Butalia. The readers may thus be reading only what Butalia reveals in the book. The reader needs to read Butalia's book keeping in mind the personal and subjective involvement of Butalia in this project.

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<sup>188</sup> Michael F. Bernard-Donals. Rev. of *The Belated Testimony: Literature, Testimony and the Question of Holocaust Survival*, by Michael G. Levine, *Testimony after catastrophe: narrating the traumas of political violence*, by Stevan Weine. *Comparative Literature Studies* 44, 3 (2007): 340-345. *PROJECT MUSE*. Web. 2 June. 2016. p. 341.

<sup>189</sup> Urvashi Butalia. op. cit. p. 13.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid. p. 133.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid. p. 18.

Butalia plays the part of an oral historian and “does not merely transcribe speech but uncovers and engages the various dialogues within the testimony”<sup>192</sup>. But there are problems inherent in taking the position of an oral historian too. The way in which the people who are interviewed are treated by the listener-interviewer is also of concern here. The notion of exploitation should necessarily not creep into the discourse of testimony. A limiting line should exist so that it does not lead to a situation where “the human subject you are researching become simply a provider of information, the ‘informant’, devoid of feelings of her own, but important for your work”<sup>193</sup>. Thus Butalia decides to talk “only [to] those women who wanted to talk about it”<sup>194</sup>. This is an ethical decision that Butalia takes which adds a humanitarian angle to her work. The point to be noted is that the listener-interviewer should be sympathetic towards the witness and try to “be a guide and an explorer, a companion in a journey onto an uncharted land, a journey that survivor cannot traverse or return from alone”<sup>195</sup>.

The process of conducting the interviews in case of Butalia as well as Menon and Bhasin, along with the way in which they are later transcribed in the written word becomes an important point of enquiry. In case of video testimonies, the body language, facial expression of the interviewees are visible which provides an understanding of the things left unsaid in the testimony itself. “Thus the significance of the gaps, the inability to speak, the hesitations, in the ... testimonies: they are points at which the act of witnessing makes itself fully apparent to the witness himself, but which can only be glimpsed through those gaps, by the interviewer or reader”<sup>196</sup>. In case of the interviews in the written format, the question of authenticity is something which is a contested area. On the one hand, testimony itself is a mediated process where the testifying individual’s testimony may differ from that of the event because of various contributing factors like age, time gap, nature of participation etc. Whereas testimony’s essence may be in what is

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<sup>192</sup> Michael Nutkiewicz. op. cit. p. 3.

<sup>193</sup> Urvashi Butalia. op. cit. p. 131.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid. p. 131.

<sup>195</sup> Dori Laub. ‘Bearing Witness or the Vicissitude of Listening’. Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub. *Testimony: Crisis of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*. New York and London: Routledge, 1992. p. 59.

<sup>196</sup> Michael Bernard-Donals and Richard Glejzer. op. cit. p. 10.



left unsaid, the intervention again at the level of the interviewer adds another level of mediation. Menon and Bhasin are aware of this and they write:

...there are related problems of accuracy and fidelity to the letter and spirit of the narrative; of interpretation, evaluation, selection and representation; the troubling issue of “authorship” and the fact that, in the end, it is the researcher who controls the material, however participatory the research may have been. The responsibility for the distortions or limitations of our studies rests squarely with feminist oral historians as does the dilemma of how much to tell. When confidentiality is enjoined, are we justified in presenting a life story in the interests of advancing historical understanding, especially when that story is deeply personal or traumatic?<sup>197</sup>

As Geoffrey H. Hartman also writes:

Does the story create the listener or does the listener enable the story? To ask this question is to understand that testimony’s *prise de parole*, its conditions of production, involve an active audience. However many times the interviewer may have heard similar accounts, they are received as though for the first time. This is possible because, while the facts are known, while historians have laboured--are still labouring--to establish every detail, each of these histories is animated by something in addition to historical knowledge: there is a quest to recover or reconstruct a recipient, an “affective community”.<sup>198</sup>

Thus the question that arises is that after passing through the sieve of judgment of the interviewer or the listener, how much of the ‘actual’ testimony reaches the readers. The interviewer might present certain details and might suppress others based on the effect the testimony has on the interviewer and the mode of narration followed by Butalia, Menon and Bhasin show that they have chosen a mode of incorporating their own analysis with the presentation of the interviews. Moreover, there is the issue of interpretation of the testimony by the readers themselves as there is a possibility of the readers getting influenced by this sort of intervention on the part of the

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<sup>197</sup> Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin. op. cit. p. 15.

<sup>198</sup> Geoffrey H. Hartman. op. cit. p. 153.

interviewer. The testimonies in question are traumatic in nature and “[t]rauma is contagious. In the role of witness to disaster or atrocity, the therapist at times is emotionally overwhelmed. She experiences, to a lesser degree, the same terror, rage, and despair as the patient.”<sup>199</sup> The interviewer bears witness to the witnessing of the testifier and “[b]earing witness to the trauma is an act of sacrifice because the trauma’s effect will then be embodied by the therapist. However this sacrifice elevates the clinical encounter to a new moral and political plane; in empathically experiencing the client’s suffering, clinicians renounce their individuality to become a conduit of history, a necessary condition of transforming the patient’s testimony from one of personal trauma to one voicing a call for historical truth”.<sup>200</sup> The process of recording testimony places responsibilities on the shoulders of both the survivor-witness and the interviewer. The survivor bears witness to the event and in turn the interviewer bears witness to the process of witnessing. “Private trauma and personal memory are thus connected with public and collective memory, simply in the act of telling and receiving, if there is mutual awareness among the bearers of witness that the trauma occurred within a historical and collective context. This exchange enables the client to reclaim his own position as witness to the truth of what happened and achieve membership within a collective of testifying “survivors” whose identity is anchored in a discourse of remembrance”<sup>201</sup>.

Testimony is, hence, such a medium which has many conflicts within itself--there is the “struggle to forget and remain silent, and the need to tell and to memorialize”<sup>202</sup>. This is evident in the questions that the people asked Butalia when she went to them to talk about their memories of Partition: “[W]hat do you think this will achieve, who do you think will listen to your tapes, will this really make a difference to anything, to our lives, the lives of others”<sup>203</sup> but when they decided to talk, “they would do so cathartically, making you, as listener, the bearer of

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<sup>199</sup> Kelly McKinney. op. cit. p. 276.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid. p. 277.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid. p. 277.

<sup>202</sup> Michael Nutkiewicz. op. cit. p. 3.

<sup>203</sup> Urvashi Butalia. p. 24.

their burden”<sup>204</sup>. Not only the interviewer but also the readers in some way become bearers of that burden and it is this therapeutic function of testimony which says that the sharing of the traumatic memories would help the victims or survivors to forget or at least lessen the burden of those memories.

The subsequent generation’s testimony found in *The Footprints of Partition* by Anam Zakaria speaks of their deep sense of connectedness to their parents’ past. Their lives feel connected to that of their parents’ past and their present lives are defined by the lives of their parents. This similar sense of connectedness is also found in the ‘generation after’ of the Holocaust. *Living after the Holocaust: Reflections by Children of Survivors in America* by Lucy Y. Steinitz and David Szony and *Children of the Holocaust: Conversations with Sons and Daughters of Survivors* by Helen Epstein establish the fact how the presence of the Holocaust which the parents and parent figures lived through is still found and felt in the lives of the subsequent generations. The second generation felt a “sense of duty to bear witness for their parents....the Holocaust continues to take its toll on the survivors and their children. The most important event in the lives of the second generation happened before their birth, and Jewish identity after the *Shoah* is indelibly marked by that event”<sup>205</sup>.

Helen Epstein writes about this ‘Holocaust legacy’ as a knowledge that that had been present in

in an iron box buried so deep inside me that I was never sure just what it was. I knew I carried slippery, combustible things more secret than sex and more dangerous than any shadow or ghost. Ghosts had shape and name. What lay inside my iron box had none. Whatever lived inside me was so potent that words crumbled before they could describe.<sup>206</sup>

This sense of the presence of an experience which was not personally experienced and difficult to explain is what the ‘Holocaust legacy’ is constituted of. The event of the Holocaust thus does not completely regress into the past but is transmitted to form certain different sorts of memory

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<sup>204</sup> Ibid. p. 25.

<sup>205</sup> Alan L. Berger. “The Holocaust, Second-Generation Witness, and the Voluntary Covenant in American Judaism”. *University of California Press* 5,1 (1995): 23-47. Web. *JSTOR*. 2 June 2016. p. 23.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid. p. 23-24.

in the second and third generations. “One woman described a friend who imagined that she had been in Auschwitz, like her mother. For eight years she read books on the Holocaust: ‘Every time she thinks she’s had enough and can’t bear to read one more word on the subject, she finds another book and starts reading again....’.... Carrying these identifications in bodies and unconscious thoughts, a number of individuals spoke of rashes or nervous tics and recurrent dreams about the Holocaust”<sup>207</sup>. This is not to say that in any way that the experience of the second generation can be equated with that of the survivor generation but the experience of the second generation cannot be ignored completely. What they feel is a sense of connectedness which makes the event stay alive in their lives and their memories. The images that the second generation forms through the transmission of memories from the first generation are distinct in their own way. In case of the Holocaust, these distinctive images include

observing their parents and hearing survivor tales, photos of murdered relatives, lighting yahrzeit (memorial) candles, compulsive reading about the Holocaust, pilgrimages to sites of death camps and to Israel, and the profound need to tell their own children--the third generation--about the Shoah.<sup>208</sup>

In the case of Partition, in the second generation testimonies, this sense of connectedness is present in ways where the children of survivors attempt to understand their parents’ past through the trauma that they had undergone during the Partition. The children feel a sense of obligation to know that past as otherwise certain aspects of their parents’ life remain unclear to them. Anam Zakaria’s book presents the testimony of Naseer Ashiq, the son Saraf Din who talks about his father who was adopted by a Sikh family and during Partition how his father was separated from them. His father was not able to meet them for years and would cry long into the night. Several years after the Partition, his father met his Sikh family in a *mela* just on the zero line at the border at a common shrine for the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. Naseer Ashiq, at that time, did not realize the importance of the people his father was so happy to meet but as Anam Zakaria writes: “However, today he longs to meet them. He tells me it would be a way to remember his

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<sup>207</sup> Arlene Stein. “Feminism, Therapeutic Culture, and the Holocaust in the United States: The Second-Generation Phenomenon”. *Jewish Social Studies* 16. 1 (2009): 27-53. Web. *JSTOR*. 2 June 2016. p. 42-43.

<sup>208</sup> Alan L. Berger. op.cit. p. 3.

father, a way to connect with him after his death.”<sup>209</sup> Naseer Ashiq was only a few months old during the Partition but still feels connected to India because his father’s roots belonged there. Zakaria also talks about a man whom she met in Multan

who had travelled all the way from India to find his mother’s ancestral home. He told me that his mother had died crying for the home she had left behind in Pakistan at Partition. When she died, he decided to fulfill her wish on her behalf... For him and Ashiq, the ‘other’ side perhaps did not hold much personal significance. The ‘other’ was understood through their parents, and in this case through their love and losses. The children wanted to give their parents peace in the afterlife which they were unable to achieve during their lifetime. But beyond that, they had their own lives, their own struggles.<sup>210</sup>

Another instance is that of a Mrs. Intikhab Alam who says: “Even though I was born after Partition in Pakistan, most of my childhood and even adulthood was spent listening to my parents’ stories from there”<sup>211</sup>.

The formation about the perception of the ‘other’ in the generation after of the Partition is also a recurrent trope in second generation Partition testimony. Mrs. Alam says that she had formed a stereotypical notion about the Hindus and Sikhs as evil and horrible people and Zakaria reveals that even she herself had such ideas before she interacted with them in person which changed her perception of the ‘other’. Anam Zakaria had also heard stories from her own grandmother about her childhood friends, Rajeshvari and Uma, about how her sister was saved by a Sikh family and Zakaria mentions that these were stories that no one in her family had ever heard before.<sup>212</sup> The longing to return to the roots is also something that rings true in the testimony of Mrs. Alam who says: “I was born after Partition, here in Pakistan. But I had heard so much that by the time I went there, I already had a clear image of Hoshiarpur and my mother’s home....when I went to

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<sup>209</sup> Anam Zakaria. *op. cit.* p. 25.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.* p. 26.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.* p. 117.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.* p. 7.

India--I think this was in 1982--I went to see my place of origin. I didn't just want to listen to the stories anymore; I wanted to see it with my own eyes, and it felt really good"<sup>213</sup>.

Apart from Anam Zakaria's work, Nonica Datta's book *Violence, Martyrdom and Partition: A Daughter's Testimony* also presents the testimony of a woman called Subhashini who remembers her father's death and through that defining moment in her life presents her response to the Partition. Nonica Datta writes in the Preface of the book:

In [Subhashini's] testimony, Partition is enmeshed with other narratives. It is one among many stories. What she remembers most vividly is '42 (1942), the year of her father's martyrdom. Not 1947. Partition is recalled in many ways. Partition and violence, according to her, were providentially willed--her father's murder was avenged in 1947. She celebrates Partition and mourns it too. The binary categorization of victim and victimizer gets blurred in her narrative. Her testimony transgresses the neat distinctions of victims, aggressors, witnesses and survivors.<sup>214</sup>

Subhashini's father was murdered by what they thought were 'Mussalman Rangars' and thus according to her Partition was a just revenge on them. In this testimony, the daughter feels a sense of connectedness to the father who died before the Partition but the Partition in her mind becomes the moment of justice for her father. In this case, the Partition as an event is present in the mind of Subhashini not as event which she herself underwent but as an event in terms of her father's memory. The image of Partition is present in a different aspect in the testimony of Subhashini and "[a]s a witness to Partition, moreover, she felt a sense of relief, as she was freed from the fear of a 'Mussalman attack'<sup>215</sup>. Though technically, she belongs to the survivor generation, the way in which she defines the event of Partition in terms of the memory of her father brings in an interesting way of looking at the process of remembrance itself. This is a unique aspect of Partition to be transmitted to the later generation whereby, the event is not looked upon with a sense of trauma or horror but with a sense of justice and revenge. Then from

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<sup>213</sup> Ibid. p. 118.

<sup>214</sup> Nonica Datta. *Violence, Martyrdom and Partition: A Daughter's Testimony*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2012. p. 10.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid. p. 5.

what subject position is Subhashini responding to the Partition, is it from the point of view of a traumatized survivor or from the point of view of an aggressor. In her figure, these categories get blurred as she went through and survived Partition violence but “Partition and its horrific violence were for her God’s work, a visitation of God’s fury”<sup>216</sup>. The survivors of Partition violence generally did not harbor such sentiments about the violence inflicted upon them, rather they blamed the ‘other’ for the harm done to them. Subhashini also blames the Muslims but not for what she had to experience but what they did to her father. Partition is viewed and analyzed in various ways by various individuals and this shapes the way in which the image of the event is transmitted to the next generation.

The transmission of memories can happen through other mediums as well which document the events like the medium of photography which presents the visual aspect of the event to the second and third generation. Along with presenting the evidence of atrocities, the photographs of people before the event present a view of lives before the horrifying event.

Photography has become the site of analysis and debate for fields as diverse as memory and ‘post-memory’ studies, trauma studies, Holocaust studies...all of which use photographs to enact a reckoning with history that takes the measure of the residual effects of the past in the present, as well as in the future. Here the photograph acts not only as a historical document or source, but also as a reflexive medium that exposes the stakes of historical study by revealing the constructed nature of what constitutes historical evidence. The question of memory becomes particularly salient here, for the historical status of photography is deeply imbricated in its social, psychic, and material life as an object of memory.<sup>217</sup>

As testimony is an object of memory which through individual recall presents a particular facet of an event which might not be available in historical accounts, photography also has the potential to present a view which is not constituted in official and historical narratives. In the case of the Holocaust, atrocity photographs showing skeletal human beings, often without

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<sup>216</sup> Ibid. p. 5.

<sup>217</sup> Jennifer Tucker and Tina Campt. “Entwined Practices: Engagements with Photography in Historical Inquiry”. *History and Theory* 48,4 (2009): 1-8. Web. *JSTOR*. 2 June 2016. p. 3.

clothes, or corpses in piles are found which provide one the direct impression of violent trauma on people. Along with such photographs, often photographs of family members who went missing or were murdered are also found. These photographs create a sense of introspection in the viewers and photographs related to the Holocaust find place in various museums and memorials. But in the case of Partition, due to the absence of any such official museums and memorials, such photographs are not widely accessible. The opening of a Partition museum in Amritsar by an NGO in 2016 has provided a starting point for sharing photographs and various other objects and memories related to the Partition. The photographs available on online archives depict the mass migration of people, the bodies of starving people, the corpses of people killed in riots being eaten by vultures and other such inhuman moments which once again bring to the forefront the horrific suffering that the people underwent<sup>218</sup>. These photographs help postmemorial writers to visualize the past and depict them if necessary in their writings.

In a book edited by Urvashi Butalia called *Partition: The Long Shadow*, Prajna Paramita Parasher in an essay called ‘A Long Walk Out of Partition’ analyzes the sketches of S. L. Parasher who was “an artist, writer and teacher”<sup>219</sup> and who had lived through the Partition violence. The author of the essay is his daughter who discovers the sketches among piles of old letters and papers. His sketches present various aspects of human suffering during the Partition showing the pain and affliction in huddled groups of people or the facial sketch of a single man or woman. Parasher writes about her father: “Each of these images is a tiny cantonment, sealed like a locket. Here they are now, safe in their antiseptic frames. When they were sketched, it was far different. Overwrought by so much misery, my father said he often couldn’t sleep and would roam the camp, drawing on whatever paper could be found. What he captured rises out of the emptied past, triumphant. While he was in some part a recorder, he was a memoirist as well”<sup>220</sup>. Thus through these sketches, the artist’s experience of the Partition is transmitted to the second generation who then by engaging with the sketches tries to reach an understanding about the suffering her father experienced and tried to express through the sketching.

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<sup>218</sup> Akarsh Mehrotra. “26 Extremely Rare Photos from 1947 that show the Horror of Partition”. *Scoopwhoop*. 4 April 2015. Web. 2 June 2016. <<https://www.scoopwhoop.com/inothernews/partition-photos-1947/>>.

<sup>219</sup> Urvashi Butalia. Ed. *Partition: The Long Shadow*. New Delhi: Zubaan, 2015. p. 200.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.* p. 225.



The arena of visual representation of the event also includes the genre of films which also interprets the various facets of the event and is a mode of depicting a particular impression of the event in the minds of the second and third generation. Films like *Earth*, *Pinjar*, *Gadar*, *Khamosh Pani* depict Partition from various aspects but as Sukeshi Kamra writes in ‘Engaging Traumatic Histories: The 1947 Partition of India in Collective Memory’ that ‘period pieces’ are all about the ‘reinterpretation of’ the past and not an ‘accessing of’ it<sup>221</sup>. Every time a reinterpretation of the past comes long, the ‘generation after’ of the Partition is reminded of the event that is a defining moment in the history of the country, a moment which marks the beginning of the nation’s journey. The visual element of films helps the members of the subsequent generations to grasp the horrors of the time of Partition. The diasporic filmmaker Deepa Mehta, who has directed the film *Earth*, is a second generation member who has accessed the event of Partition through family memories: “The partition of India was like a Holocaust for us and I grew up hearing many stories about this terrible event. Naturally I was attracted to this subject”<sup>222</sup>. This statement by Mehta makes it clear that it is crucial to remember that films are also subjective interpretations of the writers and the filmmakers who have accessed the event at second hand and thus the event travels through various layers of interpretation and reinterpretation.

Apart from films, there are fictional representations of the Partition written by the first generation survivors which also provide the second and third generation members a glimpse into the horrific times of Partition. They have an element of temporal closeness associated with them. Fictional works, like Khushwant Singh’s *Train to Pakistan* (1956), Manohar Malgonkar’s *A Bend in the Ganges* (1964), Rahi Masoom Reza’s *A Village Divided* (1966), Bhisham Sahni’s *Tamas* (1973), Chaman Nahal’s *Azadi* (1975) and Saadat Hasan Manto’s short stories and many others, present representations of the violence and trauma of the Partition. While there are historical and official records of the event of Partition which talk of it as a political event which marks the independence of two newly formed nations, these various other modes of representation provide the second and third generation with an impression of the event with which they can form their own notions, ideas and representations of the Partition.

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<sup>221</sup> Ibid. p. 160.

<sup>222</sup> Deepa Mehta. “If people want to separate they should understand what it would really mean”. Interview by Richard Phillips. *World Socialist Web Site*. 6 August 1999. Web. 1 June 2017.

Thus transmission of memories through the various modes is a deeply mediated process and the question that arises is what kind of impression of the event of the Partition is formed by the second and third generation. And subsequently what kind of artistic representations are formed based on memories which are not theirs and which are mediated memories of the event. Can the subsequent generations then ever know the Partition in its entirety or is it more important for them to build a newer understanding which would help them to forge meaningful relationships and create a stable identity viz-a-viz the event. In case of the second and third generation writers with family history of the Partition, the sense of connection is well-established as they grow up listening to stories of the event which shapes their perception about the event. Apart from that, even in case of writers without family connection, the sense of connection is formed because of the palpable presence of the effects of Partition which is felt strongly around the country. It is crucial to engage with the various modes of transmission of the memories of Partition in order to understand the nature of the artistic responses to the event by the second and third generation as the artistic responses are formed based on the 'postmemory' of the event which in turn is formed by the various modes that have been discussed.

## Chapter 3

### Representation of the Event: Partition in Second and Third Generation Fiction

*'Itihas mein sirf naam aur tarikh sahi hoti hai, baaqi nahin'*.<sup>223</sup>

--Gulab Pandit, social worker

Ravikant says in his essay 'Partition: Strategies of Oblivion, Ways of Remembering':

Till recently, we as a nation, in fact have been sleepwalking through these decades until an odd film or a novel, or the actuality of a riot awakens us to momentarily remember and refer back to the nightmare of the Partition. The nation has grown up, ritually counting and celebrating birthdays--its own and of the great souls that won it the freedom--while systematically consigning the Partition to oblivion.<sup>224</sup>

The history of India presents the independence of the country as a glorious event by suppressing the plight of the thousands of men, women and children in the Partition riots. And among these suppressed voices, it is the women who are the worst sufferers as they were the ones who were silenced in the name of family as well as national honour. Partition has never been an event which has been highlighted in the nationalist discourses which believe only in focusing on the aspect of freedom from British rule. First generation writers writing about the event of Partition present immediate responses to the violence and disruption of normal life. But in the year 1998, the testimonies of the survivors of Partition, mainly those of the women, children and the marginalized were published by Urvashi Butalia in her work *The Other Side of Silence: Voices*

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<sup>223</sup> 'In history books, only the names and dates are correct, not the rest'. As quoted by Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin in *Borders and Boundaries: Women in the Partition of India*. New Delhi: Kali for Women and Women Unlimited, 1998. p. 8.

<sup>224</sup> Ravikant. 'Partition: Strategies of Oblivion, Ways of Remembering'. *Translating Partition*. Ed. Ravikant and Saint, Tarun K. New Delhi: Katha, 2001. p. 160.

*from the Partition of India* and those specifically of women were published by Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin in their book *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition*. So the authors of Partition fiction after the year 1998 had the testimonies of the survivors of Partition recorded in written form at their disposal where the survivors of the catastrophic event had talked about their painful plight in their own voices.

Partition fiction writers belonging to the second and third generation have based their works on the information available to them in the form of testimonies, first generation fiction, films, and photographs and finally what they have presented in their fictional works is the result of their research and their creativity. But what is important to note is that these Partition fictions represent varied points of view towards the event and provide a picture of the Partition based on the experiences that people underwent rather than just dealing with it as a historical and political fact with details about the political underpinnings of the event.

The representation of Partition in literary works has not come to a halt after the publication of the testimonies where the victims have spoken in their own voice. Earlier the impression about the function of Partition fiction was that it filled the gaps in the official grand narrative of independence which erased the inhuman suffering of the people during the Partition riots. But the way in which Partition is being represented in the works by second and third generation writers brings into question the efficacy of such a notion. The issue here is then whether the testimonies also fail in a certain way to completely 'reveal' the event or is it at all possible to completely know and understand the event that the writers of the subsequent generation are also trying to reach back to through their writings. It is crucial to understand the subsequent generation's aim in creating literary representations about the event which took place before their birth and about which they have no personal experience. Vinod K. Chopra has written: "One of the reasons why the Partition is time and again remembered is also that creative minds wish to revisit it to learn about the past and derive some lessons from that for the present..."<sup>225</sup>.

In the previous chapter, the analysis about the nature of testimonies depicts the way in which testimonies are also not a completely reliable mode of revealing the 'truth' about the event.

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<sup>225</sup> Vinod K. Chopra. *Partition Stories: Mapping Community and Gender*. New Delhi: Anamika Publishers & Distributors (P) Ltd., 2009. p. 199.

Testimonies have within them silences, gaps and lacunae which do not make them into reliable sources of knowing about and understanding the event. While talking about women's testimonies, Jill Didur echoes this opinion: "...even when 'abducted' women are interviewed and represented as 'speaking for themselves', it is impossible to escape the process of exclusion, forgetting, translation, and interpretation that informs their statements"<sup>226</sup>. In this scenario, the role that the testimonies can be said to perform is the way in which it adds to the knowledge base of the event of Partition. In addition to historical, political and sociological accounts of the event, testimonies draw attention to the way in which the traumatic events of the Partition hold their sway in the lives of the people who underwent the traumatic times of the riots during Partition where fellow human beings had lost their sense of humanity. It can be seen as one of the crucial modes of transmission of the memory of the Partition to the subsequent generations and writers of the second and third generation acknowledge this fact profusely. Thus the fiction being written by the 'generation after' needs to be analyzed in order to comprehend if any newer understanding of the event surfaces in their writings. What is of importance is to note the way in which Partition is represented in these writings and the representation that is formed for the members of the subsequent generations about the event. Do they merely fill the gaps in the official narrative about the Partition or do they form unique ways of accessing the event which creates new groups of witnesses who bear witness to the event which had shaped the lives of their parents or grandparents and which is still present in the subconscious communal underpinnings of the people?

Alan Berger writes in the context of second generation literature of the Holocaust: "This literature sensitizes the reader to the fact that with the passage of time, the Holocaust will be remembered in images which, while different from those employed by the witnessing generation, continue to reveal the outrage, the pain, and the hope which comprise post-Auschwitz Jewish authenticity"<sup>227</sup>. Similarly the painful aspect of the Partition does not get blotted in the writings of the 'generation after'. They become more conscious of the subject of representation as they themselves did not undergo the experience and the people who underwent the event have spoken

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<sup>226</sup> Jill Didur. *Unsettling Partition: Literature, Gender, Memory*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006. p. 135.

<sup>227</sup> Alan L. Berger. 'Bearing Witness: Second Generation Literature of the "Shoah"'. *Modern Judaism* 10. 1 (1990): 43-63. *JSTOR*. Web. 2 June 2016. p. 57.

about it themselves. Since the event is not a lived experience of the authors, they are dependent on other sources for their knowledge about the event and they become more cautious about the representation. But this should not deter anyone from imaginatively accessing the event in a bid to present the event from a newer perspective. The defining factor about ‘generation after’ Partition fiction is that it tries to redefine the role of Partition fiction as only a gap-filling project and tries to establish its role in trying to situate Partition as event which has created a new way of formation of identity among people of both countries, India and Pakistan. The identity politics based on Partition has come to define the relationship between the nations which were formed during the Partition and also the people of both the nations. This notion of identity politics is also present in case of a limit event like the Holocaust: “No Jew can be fully Jewish today, without being part of the Holocaust. All Jews are survivors. They have all been inside the whirlwind of the Holocaust, even those born afterwards, even those who heard its echoes in distant lands”<sup>228</sup>. In the case of the Indian subcontinent, the presences of communal disturbances in the country along with strong communal sentiments all have their root in the Partition of 1947. The impact of the event on the people of both countries cannot be denied as they either underwent the trauma of the event or were born in families which had experienced the event or simply felt the impact of the event through the presence of it in the cultural memory of the countries.

The writings by the second and third generation, focus on the way in which the second and third generation try to comprehend the defining factors through which they have forged their identity, the identity of those around them and formed relationships with those ‘others’ by deconstructing the defining event. Thus they attempt to view the event through various lenses rather than only creating a singular impression about the event by focusing on the overall violence and trauma surrounding the event. These writers present the core of the event with its accompanying pain, trauma, and violence but also read the core through a conscious and cultivated lens of research and knowledge gained from various sources. These sources have been discussed in the previous chapter and the constraints of the sources have also been analyzed to establish the fact that the representation by the subsequent generations is highly mediated. This mediation is mostly because of the temporal distance between the authors and the event and it can be argued that this distance might have provided them with a sense of objectivity about the event which helps them

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<sup>228</sup> Elie Wiesel as quoted by Alan L. Berger. Ibid. p. 45.

in understanding the long term effects of the event. Alan L. Berger writes in the context of the Holocaust: "... after the Holocaust there are circles of witnesses; some are closer than others to the Event, but all are capable of being transformed into witnesses by hearing the survivors' tales. In the words of Ellen Fine '...to listen to a witness is to become one'"<sup>229</sup>.

Each new perspective enriches the knowledge base about the event which in turn helps in breaking the silence, if any, about the event. The way in which each writer expresses the event points to the author's intent and interest in the event and a deeper analysis would reveal the way in which the particular author attempts to gain access to the event. The combined analysis of the paths of transmission of the memory of the event along with the way of expression and the final expression of the event will provide a fruitful understanding of the significance of the literary representations of the Partition by second and third generation writers. Rather than only focusing on whether it is possible to ever know an event in its entirety, it is much more productive to study the modes of representation employed by the writers for the purpose of knowing the event. Viewing the event with varied lenses provides myriad ways of viewing the same event and each expression is in itself a new understanding from a new perspective. Iris Milner writes in the context of second generation Holocaust literature: "The very influx of literary works does indeed provide a stage and a voice for the untold stories, and works to maintain the memory of the Holocaust in public consciousness"<sup>230</sup>.

The novels which depict the event of Partition also perform the function of maintaining the memory of Partition in the public consciousness. This does not only constitute keeping the painful memories alive in the consciousness of the people but it constitutes knowing the reasons for the ever present communal tension and suspicion of the 'other' which has come to define both the nations and the people of the nations. It further constitutes the attempt to understand the ways in which the same event can be viewed from different perspectives. The novels which have been published after the publication of the testimonies in 1998 and by authors who have not experienced the Partition first hand are Shauna Singh Baldwin's *What the Body Remembers* (1999), Amit Majmudar's *Partitions* (2011), and Irfan Master's *A Beautiful Lie* (2011). Each of

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<sup>229</sup> Alan L. Berger. *Ibid.* p. 45.

<sup>230</sup> Iris Milner. 'A Testimony to "The War After": Remembrance and its Discontent in Second Generation Literature'. *Israel Studies* 8. 3 (2003): 194-213. *JSTOR*. Web. 2 June 2016. p. 196.

these novels present the event from different perspectives--Baldwin presents the effect of Partition on women, Majmudar presents its effect on various groups and thus depicts the multifarious influence of the event on various groups, providing a note of plurality in the otherwise one-dimensional presentation of the event; Master presents the event from the point of view of children who always have a unique way of viewing the event. Baldwin's novel is a saga spanning a long time period from before the Partition to after, that is from 1895 to 1965; Majmudar presents the effect of Partition on various groups of people in the mode of shifting narratives from one perspective to the other, and finally Master presents a coming of age tale where the event of Partition is looked at from the perspective of the protagonist Bilal and his three friends. Bilal's mature response to situations, surroundings and people is shaped by his iron will of saving his dying father from the truth about the division of his beloved country.

As the authors of these novels were writing after the publication of the testimonies, they had no other choice than to take into account the testimonies before writing their novels. Thus in the presence of testimonies in recorded form, the role of these novels is to look at the event beyond the silences present even in the testimonies and to present diverse perspectives from which the event can be viewed. One instance of such silence in testimonies is mentioned by Butalia when she says: "...there was virtually no way in which I could speak to women who had been raped and/or abducted. Not only had they very effectively been rendered invisible, but many of them wanted to stay that way, their stories held closely to them. It was as if the memory of the rape, the experience of abduction, was in some way shameful and had therefore to be relegated to the realm of amnesia"<sup>231</sup>.

Further, Butalia is also aware of the problems of working with memory as through her interviews she has dealt with the way people have remembered the Partition. She knows that memory is never 'pure' or 'unmediated' and moreover a considerable amount of time (almost four decades) had lapsed between the event and the moment when the survivors were being interviewed. For example, one of the survivors who was interviewed was Damyanti Sahgal and when she was interviewed in 1989 she was eighty years old. Thus the nature of the memories in testimonies becomes more problematic due to the fact that the memories that the survivors were supposed to

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<sup>231</sup> Urvashi Butalia. *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1998. pp. 354-355.



remember after so many years during the course of the interviews were violent and traumatic and, for that very reason, these memories could have been altered or ‘saved’ in the mind of the survivor in a different manner due to the considerable lapse in time. Butalia raises these questions herself when she says: “Could I, for example, rely on the truth of the stories I was hearing? How much could one trust memory after all these years?”<sup>232</sup> But even while keeping in mind these questions about the testimonies, these are memories of the people who had themselves undergone the disastrous event of Partition.

Both the novelists Baldwin and Majmudar have acknowledged their indebtedness to the work of Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence*, and even Master talks about his indebtedness to the oral histories as he says in an interview: “I read lot of books about the period, but the main research was done when I traveled around India talking to people about Partition. These oral histories were so poignant and really fed into the tone of the story”<sup>233</sup>. It has to be kept in mind that these are authors who have chosen to write about an event which preceded their birth. So keeping in mind the nature of memories that have been transferred to them through the testimonies, what needs to be analyzed is the way they have mingled those ‘transferred memories’ with their creativity to produce their novels.

So if the term ‘postmemory’ has to be applied to the writers of Partition fiction, and in particular to the authors--Baldwin, Majmudar and Master--many other specifications have to be included to the definition of the term. In the case of Baldwin, a third generation Canadian of Indian origin living in Milwaukee, the family connection to the event can be established as she herself says in an interview: “The kernel of the story was my family history”<sup>234</sup>. She has also acknowledged her grandmother Raminder Sarup Singh for sharing her memories of the event with her, but Baldwin has bestowed more importance to research as she says: “Writing a novel set in present-day Pakistan or writing about Indian immigrants to North America is an exploration that engages and educates me, but does not express direct experience. As a reader, I appreciate a writer who uses

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<sup>232</sup> Ibid. p. 47.

<sup>233</sup> Irfan Master. “Irfan Master”. Interview by Farhana Shaikh. *The Asian Writer*. 14 March 2011. Web. 2 June 2016.

<sup>234</sup> Shauna Singh Baldwin. Email interview by Deepa Srinivasan. *Media Voice*. August 2010. Web. 2 June 2016. <[http://www.shaunasinghbaldwin.com/2010-08\\_SSB-Media\\_Voice\\_interview.pdf](http://www.shaunasinghbaldwin.com/2010-08_SSB-Media_Voice_interview.pdf)>. p. 1.

writing, research, and imagination to launch herself beyond direct experience,...”<sup>235</sup>. Further she has also acknowledged that she had interviewed many survivors on both sides of the border which mainly included women and thus has not only relied on the recorded testimonies in the work of Butalia and in an interview she says:

The problem any academic or artist has in describing Partition, is that the stories of 17 million displaced people came to one side of the Indo-Pak border while the setting was left on the other. Only cross border collaborations and third-country nationals can effect research in both India and Pakistan. I travelled with my husband in Pakistan to research the setting, with interview appointments set up by generous cyberfriends in Pakistan. Everywhere I was conscious that all trace of more than 4 million Sikhs who once lived there is gone, a result of the events of 1947 that would today be described by the dubious term ‘ethnic cleansing’. A mere 1000 Sikhs live in Pakistan today (per the Pakistani newspaper *Dawn*). Conversely, in Pakistan I found that those who were kindest in showing us around, and who certainly had no reason to be kind to a Sikh writer asking personal questions, were Muslim refugees displaced by Sikhs and Hindus during the Partition, driven over the border and who still, after more than 50 years, find themselves living as second-class citizens in Pakistan today.<sup>236</sup>

Baldwin has thus intermingled family history, field research, information from history books and also from published testimonies with her creativity to form her work of fiction.

In the case of the author Majmudar, the family connection to Partition is not present as he himself says: “My family stayed unharmed during Partition, my parents were not born then, and my relatives tell no stories about that time, so whatever I know about it, I read in books”<sup>237</sup>. Majmudar, a diagnostic radiologist living in Columbus, Ohio narrates his family history and says that his parents were born in Junagadh and though the Muslim nawab of Junagadh chose to join the nation of Pakistan at the time independence, Junagadh was annexed by the Indian army. He

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<sup>235</sup> Shauna Singh Baldwin. Interview. Reproduced on the Sawnet site with permission. 2 June 2016. <<http://www.sawnet.org/books/writing/SSBBordersInterview.html>>.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid.

<sup>237</sup> Amit Majmudar. *Partitions*. Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2011. p. 213.

further says that his family name ‘Majmudar’ was one which was bestowed upon his family by the Muslim nawab as a sign of favour as one of his forefathers taught the young princes. He concludes by saying: “I point this out because I like how it gives my ancestry a duality--a Hindu family whose very name was chosen by a Muslim benefactor, and whose home can be thought of as either Indian or Pakistani, or both”<sup>238</sup>. Majmudar’s is a non-familial postmemory and focuses on the fact that even a person without family connection can feel connected to the event.

The author Irfan Master who was born in Leicester to parents of different national origins--one of whom was from India and the other from Pakistan--also speaks about his conversation with his grandfather who had lived through the Partition as an inspiration for delving into the subject of Partition. Master focuses on his family background as an important element in pushing him towards creating a literary representation of the event. When asked in an interview about his original impulse to write about the Partition, he says:

My family background I guess, my mother comes from Pakistan and my father’s from India which renders them culturally different. I was very curious about what this cultural difference really meant when I was a teenager and found it especially odd because they [Pakistan and India] used to be one country. I researched the Indian partition and discovered it was a brutal time in their shared history. It was the sundering of an ancient culture with a line drawn through a map which divided it into two.<sup>239</sup>

Master talks about combining research along with the knowledge of family memory in inspiring him to create a rendition of the event of Partition.

In Master’s case, from very early on in his life, he realized that his parents were ‘culturally different’ and this consciousness led him to question the basis of this difference. Master’s father’s family had decided to stay back in Gujarat but his maternal grandfather had migrated with his family to Pakistan. It is interesting to note that Master grows up in a Muslim household which constituted of two ‘culturally different’ Muslim parents. Thus from his maternal grandfather, Master gets to know about the experience of migrating to and settling in a new

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<sup>238</sup> Ibid. p. 214.

<sup>239</sup> Irfan Master. “Irfan Master”. *National Literacy Trust*. Web. 12 July 2016.

country meant for Muslims. He inherits the knowledge about Muslims who had migrated to Pakistan and also about Muslims who decided to stay back in India.

Through his work, it is Master's aim to make the event of Partition accessible to everyone because he feels that there is a lack of knowledge about the event among the younger population. Master posits his work as one which has the ability to provide knowledge about the Partition and in a way makes hint at the inadequacies of historical and official representation to provide a wholesome understanding about the event. He says in an interview:

... I began to think about writing something about partition specifically aimed at educating younger people. I started asking younger people what they knew about partition and discovered that some hadn't even heard of it. Those that did had a very vague knowledge base. I also discovered that partition wasn't talked about among the adult community....I wanted [the book] to be simple and effective in terms of language and style. I didn't want it to be densely packed with lots of historical information and I didn't want it to be politically obtuse either. I wanted it to be a story about people on the ground. I wanted this to be accessible to everyone from teenagers to 70 year-olds who lived through partition...<sup>240</sup>

Thus the term 'postmemory' when used in case of Majmudar, can mean the transmission of traumatic memories through testimonies, historical documents or interviews conducted by the author himself without the presence of any strong familial connection to those memories. In case of Baldwin and Master, who are both third generation writers, the memories of their grandparents hold an important position in the creation of their literary representations. Norma Rosen while talking about second generation writings about the Holocaust talks about a concept called "The Second Life of Holocaust Imagery" where she discusses how non-Jews may be sensitized and brought into Jewish experience. She incorporates the power of expression of both Jewish and non-Jewish witnesses where she says: "But entering into a state of being that for whatever reasons makes porous those membranes through which empathy passes, or deep memory with its particular 'thereness', so that we can move, as far as it is given to us to do so,

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<sup>240</sup> Ibid.

into the pain and hence the meaning of the Holocaust--that, too, is a kind of memorial”<sup>241</sup>. This concept is applicable in the case of Majmudar who does not have any family connection to the event. In spite of having or not having family connection to the event, all the three authors claim to have been influenced by the event and also claim to understand the importance of the event. What needs to be understood is the extent to which they have been influenced and what kind of representation of the event do they present through their writing. This is echoed in the introduction of the book *After Testimony: The Ethics and Aesthetics of Holocaust Narratives for the Future*: “How will writers and filmmakers who may have no personal connection to the event engage with that history: what kinds of stories will they tell, and will they succeed in their effort to keep the public memory of the event from being lost?”<sup>242</sup> As Norma Rosen talks about the formation of a continuing Holocaust memorial through the works of art or literary works, the works of the ‘generation after’ of Partition become more important as there are no such official memorials to commemorate the victims of Partition in India or Pakistan.<sup>243</sup> In case of Holocaust, there are at least memorials and museums which commemorate the lives which were lost during the event and in addition to those, the works by the ‘generation after’ keep the image of the Holocaust alive in current contexts.

But one point that needs to be taken into consideration is that though Baldwin had the opportunity to meet and talk to people on both sides of the border before the publication of her book in 1999, Majmudar does not mention any such research regarding his book. This can be due to the fact that even when Butalia was collecting testimonies, she points out that the survivors were in their seventies and eighties and so another decade later when Majmudar was writing his book, the survivors who were adults during the event might not even have been alive. Irfan Master also mentions talking to people about the Partition while travelling through India which helped to form the tone of the book.

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<sup>241</sup> Norma Rosen as quoted by Alan L. Berger. op. cit. p. 5.

<sup>242</sup> Jacob Lothe, Suleiman Susan Rubin and James Phelan. Eds. ‘Introduction’. *After Testimony: The Ethics and Aesthetics of Holocaust Narratives for the Future*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2012. p. 1.

<sup>243</sup> In October 2016, the world’s first Partition Museum has been setup in the Town Hall in Amritsar by the Arts and Cultural Heritage Trust (TAACHT), a not-for-profit NGO. But crucially, there are no official museums or memorials till date.

It is interesting to note that all the three writers are diasporic writers which make their distance from the event and their claim for legitimacy even more complicated. The authors' distance from their country of origin might be one of the possible reasons for their interest in the past of the country which defines the country even today. Their engagement with the event which marks and defines the beginning of India as a nation, that is, the traumatic event of Partition, points towards their attempt of trying to connect themselves to their country. Sandra So Hee Chi Kim writes: "Diaspora must be understood as a phenomenon that emerges when displaced subjects who experience the loss of an 'origin' (whether literal or symbolic) perpetuate identifications associated with those places of origin in subsequent generations through the mechanisms of postmemory"<sup>244</sup>. This understanding of the notion of diaspora can be helpful in realizing these third generation authors interest in the subject matter of Partition. The diasporic identity of the authors makes them indulge in this process of connecting themselves with their country of origin.

Baldwin and Majmudar have spent certain amount of time in India but during the time of writing the novels, they were settled abroad. But Master has spent all his life in England where he was born. These writers comprise the third generation who either have family connection or do not have any such connection to the event. Baldwin and Master mention their grandparents talking about the Partition to them but they do not mention their parents talking about the effect of the event on them. If Baldwin's grandmother had lived through the Partition, her parents must have also lived through the Partition keeping in mind her year of birth which is 1962 but the author does not mention her parents talking about the event to her. In case of Master, his parents might have been young during the Partition but in spite of their age, their role in the formation of an impression in the mind of the authors is not mentioned anywhere.

Moreover in the oral testimony projects, there are many testimonies by survivors who were very young during the Partition thus making this absence of the parents' witnessing influence worth mentioning. This reluctance of the parents to talk about their experience to their children is also found in Holocaust where in some cases

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<sup>244</sup> So Hee Chi Kim Sandra, "Redefining Diaspora through a Phenomenology of Postmemory," *Diaspora* 16. 3 (2007): 337-352. Web. 5 July 2015. p. 337.

... World War II was often a taboo subject in the homes of children of survivors. Parents tended not to talk about it, and their children rarely, if ever, asked, as they did not want to cause them more anguish. ‘When I was born,’ said Dina Weinstein, ‘my parents decided never to mention the Holocaust.... They were going to forget all the pain, the past, and start anew, have faith again, I guess’.<sup>245</sup>

Arlene Stein also writes in this regard: “For children of Holocaust survivors, parents play a more ambivalent role in the quest for transformation: they hold the status of ‘real’ victims and are seen as deserving of empathy, and yet their silence, which was designed to protect themselves and their children, is declared to be the immediate problem that demands redress”<sup>246</sup>. Thus this aspect of parents not wanting to talk about the painful memories of the past is a phenomenon which Master mentions as one of the reasons why he chose to write about the Partition. In an interview, the interviewer Farhana Shaikh asked the following question to Master:

Partition is something that affected everybody and yet it seems to be one of those things your parents just don’t bother to tell you about. How important do you think your story will be to teach a generation of children about what happened and more importantly how it affected ordinary people?<sup>247</sup>

Master replied:

Another of the reasons I wanted to write this story was because the Indian and Pakistani communities never really speak of Partition. It was a terrible time and those that lived through the worst of it understandably are reluctant to revisit it. But, it did happen, and it affected millions of ordinary people, the effects of which we still feel today. My hope is that teachers read the book and use it as a resource so that a whole generation has the opportunity to become aware of the significance of Partition.<sup>248</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> Arlene Stein. ‘Feminism, Therapeutic Culture, and the Holocaust in the United States: The Second-Generation Phenomenon’. *Jewish Social Studies* 16. 1 (2009) : 27-53. *JSTOR*. Web. 2 June 2016. p. 31.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.* p. 41.

<sup>247</sup> Irfan Master. “Irfan Master”. Interview by Farhana Shaikh. *The Asian Writer*. 14 March 2011. Web. 2 June 2016.

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*

Accordingly, keeping in mind this background of the authors and the factors that have shaped their novels, the novels can be approached and analyzed to understand whether the presence of testimonies and accounts of survivors have helped the creativity of the novelists or have rather curbed them. These novels present the event of the Partition itself by accessing it through various sources and by creating a postmemorial image of the event. Interestingly the novels of Baldwin, Master and Majmudar are their debut novels and while on the one hand Baldwin and Master have portrayed the whole journey towards the birth of the nation of Pakistan, Majmudar has based his story at a point when Pakistan has already become a reality. It is also significant to understand whether there is any difference between the works of Baldwin and Master who have a certain family connection to the event and that of Majmudar who does not have any such connection. The question of whether the writers who have not experienced the event first hand trivialize the event or whether they form newer understanding of the event is worth discussing.

Baldwin in her novel *What the Body Remembers* has covered the time period from 1895 to 1965 in an attempt to give a picture of the country both before and after the Partition. By providing a picture of the life before Partition, Baldwin has tried to direct the reader's attention towards the utter havoc and disturbance that Partition brought with it. This element of contrasting life before and after Partition is also something that is found in the testimonies of survivors where they speak about their life before the Partition with nostalgia and longing and thus draw attention towards the way in which Partition destroys the sense of normalcy in the lives of the people. The story of Baldwin's novel revolves around two Sikh women characters, Roop and Satya, in a polygamous marriage with Sardarji, the Indian bureaucrat and land owner.

The novel is cradled between a Prologue and an Epilogue, both of which depict the birth and rebirth of Satya, Sardarji's first wife. Baldwin shows the birth of Satya in Undivided India in 1895 in the Prologue and the rebirth of Satya in New Delhi, Divided India in 1965 in the Epilogue. In both instances, Baldwin through Satya expresses the status of women in India and the disappointment that is evident in the people around when a girl child is born. The passage of seventy years does not show any change in the response of people towards women and Satya is somewhat disappointed with this prospect. Satya's words as a child frame the narrative of the novel and puts forward Baldwin's intentions behind writing the novel.



From the beginning, the readers understand that the novel will be from the perspective of women. Satya says in the Prologue: “Against all odds, against every pandit’s promise, despite a whole life of worship and expiation, I have slid down the snake’s tail and for all the money temple offerings I lavished on pandits the last time round, here I am again... born a woman”<sup>249</sup>. This attitude towards women can be seen throughout the novel where women are portrayed as ones whose lives are under the control of the men. While unmarried, the father dictates his rules, after marriage, the husband imposes his rules and overall various societal and communal expectations and rules bind the lives of women in the novel. Lucia-Mihaela Grosu-Rădulescu writes: “...the female characters in the novel are highly objectified, their bodies becoming instruments for men to use either for their own or for the community’s interest”<sup>250</sup>. Satya and Roop, along with the other women characters in the novel bear the burden of being good women who give no trouble to the men and on whom the honour of the community rests. In the Epilogue, Satya says: “All the visits I made to sants and all the offerings I gave at gurudwaras were not enough...Again am I born a woman...I have come so far, I have borne so much pain and emptiness! But men have not yet changed”<sup>251</sup>. The novel provides a space for Baldwin to engage with the way women are perceived and treated by men. As the novel is set during colonial rule, the national discourse of India as Bharat Mata also gets juxtaposed with the treatment of the women characters of the novel. “These interior monologues become handy instruments in Baldwin’s hands—a circular literary device (whereby the epilogue is also a prologue and vice versa) representing the birth of the same soul destined to relive the same fear and pain, implicitly suggestive of the cyclical nature of woman’s pain, and hence its permanence”<sup>252</sup>. Baldwin critiques the way in which the bodies of women are used to inscribe

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<sup>249</sup> Shauna Singh Baldwin. *What the Body Remembers*. New Delhi: Rupa Publications India Private Ltd, 2011. p. 1.

<sup>250</sup> Lucia-Mihaela Grosu-Rădulescu. “Objectification of Women and Violence in *What the Body Remembers*”. *Rupkatha Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities* 8.1 (2016): 86-96. Web. 17 April 2017. p. 86.

<sup>251</sup> Shauna Singh Baldwin. op. cit. pp. 607-608.

<sup>252</sup> Maninder Kapoor and Seema Singh. “*What the [Female] Body Remembers: A Feminist Study of Shauna Singh Baldwin’s Narration of the Partition*”. *The IUP Journal of English Studies* 11.2 (2016): 36-49. Web. 17 April 2017. p. 39.

nationalist discourses and also focuses on how “literature prompts us to scrutinize the gendered citizen-subject’s compromised position in relation to state and community agendas”<sup>253</sup>.

The novel begins with the first encounter between Satya, Sardarji’s first wife who has failed to bear children and Roop, the young second wife, whom Sardarji has married for the sole purpose of begetting heirs. But then the novel goes back to the childhood of Roop and shows her as an adventurous and stubborn child who believes that she was born with good kismet and would only marry a rich man in the future. Gradually Roop is turned into the ‘good-good-sweet-sweet’<sup>254</sup> woman before her marriage at the age of sixteen to a man twenty-five years her senior by the influence of the other women characters around her like Gujri, Revathi Bua and her own elder sister Madani. Roop’s understanding of the world around her is also shaped by her father’s dominating presence in her life which results in numerous restrictions based on patriarchal notions of ideal feminine behaviour. She learns that women are always in need of male protection as women’s body lures men towards them and women cannot protect themselves. Roop’s life is guided by the fear of “what people will say”<sup>255</sup> and during her life before marriage; she only had access to those things which are approved by her father. Roop is allowed to study only till the tenth standard, read only Punjabi novels about courageous Sikh men who rescue and save the honour of Sikh women abducted by Muslim men, eat only vegetarian food. She is not allowed to venture outside her father Bachan Singh’s haveli. The portrayal of Roop’s mother Mama’s life is equally stifling as she spends her entire life in purdah because she had absorbed “Bachan Singh’s fears”<sup>256</sup>--his fear of other men tainting his honour. Roop’s mother, in spite of a weak body, attempts to fulfill her husband’s wish for another son and dies during childbirth. Radhika Mohanram writes: “The text focuses closely on women’s lives and pinpoints their unremitting labour, the routine tasks, the boredom, the powerlessness, the strain and stress around reproduction, and above all, the anxiety over their status in their relationship to men”<sup>257</sup>.

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<sup>253</sup> Jill Didur. op. cit. p. 14.

<sup>254</sup> Shauna Singh Baldwin. op. cit. p. 131.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid. p. 131.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid. p. 135.

<sup>257</sup> Radhika Mohanram. “Gendered Spectre: Trauma, cultural memory and the Indian partition”. *Cultural Memory* 25.6 (2011): 917-934. Web. 23 May 2017. p. 929.

In the novel *Baldwin*, through the character of Satya, presents the only woman who does not lower her eyes in front of men and carries herself with confidence even though she cannot do anything when her husband marries a second time only because of her inability to bear children. After Satya's death, Roop is guided by Satya's confidence when she encounters Muslim men on her way to Delhi after Partition is declared. "As the novel progresses, Roop gains self-confidence, consciously modeling herself on Satya's assertiveness and self-command"<sup>258</sup>. It is Satya who voices her hope about a future where women would be valued as individuals and not only looked upon through the lens of honour and modes of carrying on the lineage of a family and community: "Surely there will come a time when just being can bring izzat in return...when a woman will not be owned, when love will be enough payment for marriage, children or no children, just because her shakti takes shape and walks the world again"<sup>259</sup>.

Baldwin creates a woman-centric narrative to critique the nationalistic allegory of India as Bharat Mata and in turn inscribing the body of women with accounts of respect and honour. Dr. Anjali Tripathy traces this construction of women back to the times of *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata* and the *Puranas* where she writes:

Indian culture is deeply informed with the myths that motherhood is best realized when dedicated to the cause of the nation as *veeraprasabini* (begetter of heroes); wifehood is accomplished when used as the source of strength of the heroic husband, or sacrificed in honour of the deceased husband as *sati*; womanhood is best realized as *shakti* and *birangona* in the fields of battle to vindicate, paradoxically, the patriarchal causes and such ideals are thought to be patriarchal woman's inevitable destiny and happiness can come only through it.<sup>260</sup>

Jasbir Jain also writes about a similar notion about the perception of the nation as a goddess and how it affects the perception about women and their body:

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<sup>258</sup> Manav Ratti. *The Postsecular Imagination: Postcolonialism, Religion, and Literature*. New York & London: Routledge, 2013. p. 136.

<sup>259</sup> Shauna Singh Baldwin. op. cit. p. 403.

<sup>260</sup> Anjali Tripathy. "History is a Woman's Body: A Study of Some Partition Narratives". *Odisha Review* (2014): 80-84. Web. 17 April 2017. pp. 80-81.

Vande Mataram and the image of India as the mother goddess has often been projected through school enactments, printed maps and cutout figures and has penetrated the subconscious of the nation. It has also shaped the image of womanhood, an image based on purity and fidelity, on a morality highly regulated by patriarchal power.<sup>261</sup>

The author represents the way in which women's bodies had become the sites of struggle for patriarchal honour during Partition. Sukrita Paul Kumar has commented: "It is well-known how control over women's sexuality is perpetuated through male protection of the community's honour, which is, of course, inscribed on the bodies of women".<sup>262</sup> Baldwin critiques this notion by making the body take the centre stage. Baldwin's women characters present alternative ways of using their body to represent their tale of pain, anger, frustration and suffering in a patriarchal world. Lyda Eleftheriou writes: "The body thus becomes the canvas onto which past events can be permanently inscribed. The characters in this way become texts of a different kind, witnesses that speak a different language and use a different kind of script to bear testimony to the truth. In particular, we witness female characters using the body to create alternative narratives of trauma"<sup>263</sup>. Roop's Nani, her grandmother inscribes the pain of her daughter's death on her body; Roop has a tattoo engraved on her arm as if trying to permanently mark herself with the pain of her mother's death. Her mother's death suddenly pushes her into adulthood which is also signalled by her body. When Roop watches her mother's body being taken away from the haveli for the final time: "The taste of blood fills her mouth; her last baby tooth has come away from her gum"<sup>264</sup>. Further as Lyda Eleftheriou writes: "[Baldwin] uses the body, which, as the interface between individual and community, enables the sharing and transferring of trauma as well as the negotiation of the relationship between traumatic experience (first-hand or second-hand, individual or collective) and the trauma of the other"<sup>265</sup>. Thus the phenomenon of

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<sup>261</sup> Jasbir Jain. "Daughters of Mother India in Search of a Nation: Women's Narratives about the Nation". *Economic and Political Weekly* 41.17 (2006): 1654-1660. JSTOR. Web. 4 June 2017. p. 1654.

<sup>262</sup> Sukrita Paul Kumar. 'Re-membering Woman: Partition, Gender and Reorientations'. *Narrating Partition: Texts, Interpretations, Ideas*. New Delhi: Indialog Publications Pvt. Ltd., 2004. p. 99.

<sup>263</sup> Lyda Eleftheriou. "Bodies Like Rivers: Seeking for a Space for Body Memory in the Discourse of Trauma". *European Journal of English Studies* 19.3 (2015): 315-330. Web. 17 April 2017. p. 326.

<sup>264</sup> Shauna Singh Baldwin. op. cit. p. 47.

<sup>265</sup> Lyda Eleftheriou. op. cit. p. 327.

transmission of memories through the body can also be seen in the way Roop feels an instant connection to Satya after Satya's death. It is as if the body of Satya perishes to transfer her fears and memories to Roop.

...Satya will live on in Roop, the way every older woman who uses a younger one is reincarnated in a betrayed young woman's body. Sister and sister they will truly be, the way they could never be while Satya was alive. Roop will be Satya's vessel, bearing Satya's anger, pride and ambition forward from this minute. She will contain her, woman within woman, hold her within. Like the Gurus, they might be one spirit, different bodies.<sup>266</sup>

J. Edward Mallot elaborates on this notion of the body as elucidated in Baldwin's novel: "For Baldwin, the body of one often becomes emblematic of the bodies of many, allowing a single victim's story to make claims for a much broader group. The text ultimately asserts that what a body remembers may hold important clues for understanding the intersections between physical and psychological selves, as well as important cues for how history and narrative might be reconsidered"<sup>267</sup>. Hence, Baldwin's foregrounding of the women's body in opposition to the discourse of honour and valour draws attention to her goal of demonstrating "how patriarchal communal narratives produce a cognitive blindness with regard to embodied violence against women, a violence that the novel itself seeks to restore to view"<sup>268</sup>.

Further the body is presented as the bearer of memories and perceptions which can be passed from one generation to the other. As postmemory talks about the transmission of memories from one generation to the other, Baldwin portrays the body as the site through which such transmissions can occur. As the news of Partition starts becoming a reality, the tensions between communities grow and each becomes suspicious of the other. Sardarji becomes sceptical about the Muslims even though he had a close Muslim friend, Rai Alam Khan: "Does Rai Alam Khan

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<sup>266</sup> Shauna Singh Baldwin. op. cit. p. 423.

<sup>267</sup> Edward J. Mallot. "Body Politics and the Body Politic". *Interventions* 8.2 (2006): 165-177. Web. 19 April 2017. p. 166.

<sup>268</sup> Deepti Misri. "The Violence of Memory: Renarrating *Partition Violence* in Shauna Singh Baldwin's *What the Body Remembers*". *Meridians* 11.1 (2011): 1-25. *JSTOR*. Web. 27 March 2017. p. 4.

think the Sikhs can survive under the Muslims again--the same who slaughtered and martyred their Gurus? Sardarji's body remembers life-preserving fear, passed down centuries in lori rhymes his mother sang him, in paintings displayed in the Golden Temple Museum in Amritsar, a poem and in story..."<sup>269</sup>. In another instance: "What Rai Alam Khan's body remembers is a hundred years old, it comes from tales of domination by Sikhs. What his own body remembers comes from gory paintings of Gurus boiled and dismembered by order of Mughal emperors, the antique violence of Rai Alam Khan's forebears. These events, which are indelible, shape their karmic memory"<sup>270</sup>.

The names of the two characters Roop and Satya are complete pointers towards the way they are presented in the novel. While Roop on the one hand means beauty and is presented as one with "Pothwari skin, smooth as a new apricot", "wide, heavily lashed brown eyes" and "red lips"<sup>271</sup>, Satya which means truth is presented as one who always speaks her mind and does so even in front of Sardarji, her husband. Thus the jealousies ensue between the two characters and each captures Sardarji's attention with their specific qualities. In a review of the novel, Anurima Banerji says: "In *What the Body Remembers*, the struggles between the man and his two wives, cast in opposition to each other—Truth and the Body—serve as a metaphor for the splitting of India by the British: Sardarji, the patriarchal conqueror who divides and rules Roop and Satya, is a manifestation of the imperial conqueror, who divides and rules the Hindu, Muslim and Sikh *quams* (nationalities), eventually creating India and Pakistan."<sup>272</sup> And further Banerji is of the opinion that the novel "frames marriage as an allegory of national consciousness in pre-independence India, threading together private memory with collective myth, the fate of a nation and the small world of its inhabitants"<sup>273</sup>.

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<sup>269</sup> Shauna Singh Baldwin. op. cit. p. 439.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid. p. 441.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid. p. 5.

<sup>272</sup> Anurima Banerji. "What the Body Remembers: Social Neglect and Public Action". Review of *What the Body Remembers*, by Shauna Singh Baldwin. *Manushi*. Web. 2 June 2016. <<http://www.manushi.in/docs/478.%20Book%20Review%20-%20What%20the%20Body%20Remembers.pdf>>. p. 2.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid. p. 1.

Though such analysis of the novel can be made, it would be unfair not to look into the intricacies of the other characters and events that Baldwin has portrayed in her novel. Baldwin herself is of the opinion that this novel is one of the first novels to talk about the Sikh experience from the point of view of Sikh characters. Thus one important issue that the novel discusses is the position of the Sikh community at the time of Partition. While the politics of Partition was being played out based on Hindu and Muslim rivalry, the people belonging to other communities were stuck in a middle ground. For example, the Sikh community as portrayed in this novel was targeted by the Muslims who might have been their friend and neighbour for long years and they themselves felt the need to practice their religion more strongly in the presence of such strong religious sentiments of the other communities around them. So Roop's father Bachan Singh prohibits Revathi Bua from worshipping the Lakshmi idols and going to the Hindu temple of their village Pari Darwaza and asks Gujri not to practice untouchability as the Gurus had preached against it. The way in which Sardarji tries to put forward his point when he asks: "Yes, but how will minorities like the Sikhs be protected?... And the Akali Party has been insisting on a Sikhistan since its resolution last year. No one takes them seriously"<sup>274</sup>, and is ignored by Rai Alam Khan, the Muslim, Meher Chander, the Hindu and Mr. Farquharson, the Englishman, starkly points out the fact that no one was bothered about the fate of the Sikhs.

Therefore, in the chaos of the politics between one's identity as a Hindu or a Muslim, the character of Sardarji also points out towards the confused nature of the Indian citizen at the verge of the birth of the new nation and it is made clear when Sardarji says: "Though I'll have to find out what an Indian *is* and how to become one"<sup>275</sup>. It is important to take into account that Sardarji was one of the people who would hold important offices even in independent India as he was a holder of a British degree in Engineering and had done considerably good and progressive work even in the British era. Though the character of Sardarji is dictated by the British colonial presence of Cunningham within him, the colonial presence is silenced once the colonial presence is withdrawn from the country with the coming of independence accompanied by Partition. Once the date of independence is announced, Sardarji realizes that "he must gather all the Sikh aspects

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<sup>274</sup> Shauna Singh Baldwin. op. cit. p. 467.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid, p. 466.

of his being into one file, mark it top priority, then let it ride above the rest”<sup>276</sup> and at that moment he realizes that Cunningham had left him forever and it was “only his ten per cent--the untranslated, untranslatable residue of his being”<sup>277</sup> that was there to guide him along his path of becoming an Indian.

The last part of the novel which takes into account the events of 1947 present heart wrenching details of Partition violence and trauma along with the plight of the characters of the novel and this can be due to the fact that the author is more aware of such occurrences due to the information provided by the testimonies that are available to her. Baldwin presents the gruesome picture of the aftermath of Partition riots: “*Vultures, feeding on the bodies from a Hindu or a Sikh village. Hai Ram!* (italics in original) Bodies, purple-black and bloated, show in patches where the satiated vultures cannot eat any more. Clawed feet tear and rip, featherless heads delve into flesh, strong beaks peck away eyes”<sup>278</sup>. Another instance of this can be seen when Baldwin writes about August 21, 1947, just six days after the independence of India. She writes:

There are stories, versions upon versions of the same stories from before the border was declared, from after the border was drawn.

‘They threw a dead cow into the temple, they raped my daughters before my eyes.’

‘They threw a pig into our mosque.’

‘I made martyrs of seventeen women and children in my family before their izzat could be taken.’

‘I made martyrs of fifty.’<sup>279</sup>

So the information about honour killing that the testimonies provided to Baldwin is directly included into her fictional work. Apart from this, Baldwin also includes the description of the over-crowded train in which Sardarji travels to Delhi as “the train covered, like a long beehive,

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<sup>276</sup> Ibid, p. 496.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid, p. 500.

<sup>278</sup> Ibid, p. 547.

<sup>279</sup> Ibid, p. 559.



with refugees”<sup>280</sup>. This image of trains during the Partition is familiar to the second and third generation through its depiction in photographs and films. Prabhjot Parmar writes: “It is difficult for those familiar with Partition history not to think of the images of people uprooted, scrambling to get onto loaded trains, as seen in several documentaries and films on Partition”<sup>281</sup>.

At the end of the novel, the way in which Roop’s father Bachan Singh and her brother Jeevan remember the silenced episode of the fate of Roop’s sister-in-law Kusum is a kind of transmission of memory to a person who was not present when the event took place. Jeevan tells Roop about his discovery of Kusum’s dismembered body when he had gone back to Pari Darwaza to recover her and that memory is transferred on to Roop and Roop says: “*But I must remember...I must remember Kusum’s body.* (italics in the original) Roop will remember Kusum’s body, re-membered”<sup>282</sup>. The way in which Jeevan analyzes and views Kusum’s dismembered body is in terms of the discourse of woman’s body as the site of patriarchal honour, violence and mutilation of a woman’s body as the violation of patriarchal honour. This discourse overlooks the pain and suffering of the woman and only looks upon it as a “matter of izzat”<sup>283</sup> which propels Jeevan to burn the Muslim houses of Pari Darwaza in an act of revenge. Jeevan muses while describing Kusum’s dismembered body: “Her hand was like this-- unclenched. Her feet were like this--not poised to run. Her legs cut neatly at the thigh... Why were her legs not bloody? To cut a woman apart without first raping--a waste, surely. Rape is one man’s message to another: ‘I took your pawn. Your move.’”<sup>284</sup> Jeevan only views his wife’s death and dismemberment as a message sent to him by the rival community of which he becomes assured when he sees that Kusum’s womb had been ripped out. Jeevan fails to move beyond the patriarchal notion of the woman’s body and fails to even comprehend the pain and fear his wife might have felt during the last hours of her life. Jeevan sees as “*men see, like horses, blind to*

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<sup>280</sup> Ibid. p. 525.

<sup>281</sup> Prabhjot Parmar. “‘Moving Forward though still Facing Back’: Partition and the South Asian Diaspora in Canada”. *Partitioned Lives: Narratives of Home, Displacement and Resettlement*. Ed. Anjali Gera Roy & Nandi Bhatia. New Delhi: Dorling Kindersley (India) Pvt. Ltd., 2008. p. 201.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid, p. 581.

<sup>283</sup> Ibid. p. 580.

<sup>284</sup> Ibid. p. 576.

*what lies directly before their eyes*”<sup>285</sup>. (italics in the original) Thus Kusum is martyred and she “becomes a passive victim of history without claiming recognition”<sup>286</sup>.

But when Roop recovers the complete truth from her father who says that it was he who had severed Kusum’s head from her body to save her honour from the Muslims, Roop feels inadequate to tell this story and transfer the memory and thus she prays: “*Vaheguru, send Kusum back to this family in her next life! Let her tell her story herself, remember this death herself, for I am not worthy to tell it!*”<sup>287</sup>(italics in the original). Similar to Jeevan, Bachan Singh also talks about Kusum as the courageous woman who welcomed death rather than being dishonoured by the Muslims. The honour killing of Kusum is represented in the novel through the telling of two male characters and in turn interpreted by Roop who listens to their testimony. Thus Roop becomes a witness to patriarchal remembering where Baldwin can be seen to be consciously drawing from the testimonies of the perpetrators of honour killing from the work of Butalia. Roop is seen to be questioning this patriarchal remembering and Baldwin inserts “italicized text to provide Roop’s alternate perspective, setting it in relief to the dominant male narrations of Jeevan and her father”<sup>288</sup>. Roop receives the transferred memories of Jeevan and Bachan Singh and her “shoulders hunched beneath the weight of [the] story”<sup>289</sup>. She realizes that “...she will have to tell Jeevan’s sons one day: that their mother went to her death just as she was offered it”<sup>290</sup>. This transfer of memories highlights Baldwin’s interest in “how women’s experiences are reimagined”<sup>291</sup>.

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<sup>285</sup> Ibid. p. 588.

<sup>286</sup> Anjali Tripathy. “Shauna Singh Baldwin’s *What the Body Remembers*: Re-membering Her-Story of the Subaltern”. *Sambalpur Studies in Literatures and Cultures* 1 (2011): 36-40. Web. 17 April 2017. p. 39.

<sup>287</sup> Shauna Singh Baldwin. op. cit. p. 588.

<sup>288</sup> Deepti Misri. op. cit. p. 9.

<sup>289</sup> Ibid. p. 588.

<sup>290</sup> Ibid. p. 588.

<sup>291</sup> Richard Lee. “The Rebirth Inherited Memories”. *MHRA Working Papers in the Humanities* 4(2009): 18-24. Web. 27 April 2017. p. 24.

Baldwin has juxtaposed the narration of testimonies of the two men with Roop's point of view. This underscores the problems in the issue of completely relying on patriarchal testimonies about honour killings of women. Roop realizes that she can never completely know what happened to Kusum, Gujri or Revathi Bua because all that is available to her is her father's narration of the women's fate. Interestingly, Bachan Singh talks about the way in which all three women showed extreme courage in the face of danger and death. According to him, Kusum 'understood' her fate, Revathi Bua agreed to convert to Islam to save the family by keeping her "head held high"<sup>292</sup> and even Gujri selflessly asked him to leave her on the Grand Trunk Road when she could not walk anymore. However, the representation of Bachan Singh is questioned by Roop and she understands: "...Papaji is the teller of Revati Bhua's tale and he tells it as he wishes it repeated"<sup>293</sup>.

The narration of the tale of dismemberment of Kusum's body is an act of re-membering her body through memory. Through Roop, Baldwin provides the scope of remembering Kusum away from the gendered narratives of upholding of honour. Roop understands the loopholes in her father's narration which brings to focus the difference between an event and the representation of an event. But this telling of the women's narrative and in turn Roop's listening to it, changes her perceptions about her own self where she feels lucky to be alive. Bodh Prakash raises a few questions about women characters in Partition fiction:

Are they primarily perceived as victims of a violent patriarchal order in which they exercise no volition, that is, are they completely denied any agency? Or, can one perceive them as quietly asserting humanitarian values in the inhuman environment, accepting the burden of womanhood from a new and perhaps enlightened consciousness, and emerging from the traumatic experience with a greater degree of self-awareness?<sup>294</sup>

Baldwin's portrayal of the women characters, especially that of Roop, around whose remembrances the novel revolves, depict a process of evolution that the character undergoes.

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<sup>292</sup> Shauna Singh Baldwin. op. cit. p. 589.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid. p. 589.

<sup>294</sup> Bodh Prakash. 'The Woman Protagonist in Partition Literature'. *Translating Partition*. Ed. Ravikant and Saint, Tarun K. New Delhi: Katha, 2001. p. 195.

Roop starts off as the victim of a violent patriarchal order but then gradually evolves herself into someone who has gained self-knowledge. As depicted in the novel, this process of gaining self-knowledge takes place after the death of Satya when she inherits Satya's qualities which guide her throughout the rest of her life.

Hence Baldwin's novel presents different types of remembering of events before and after the catastrophic event of Partition. Roop keeps remembering her maternal home Pari Darwaza where she would never be able to go again but the character named Sardar Kushal Singh, the brother-in-law of Sardarji forgets everything except the "terrible things"<sup>295</sup> the Muslims did and thus when Roop says that "Sardar Kushal Singh is the lucky one of all of us. He has been able to stop remembering"<sup>296</sup>, she points out the important fact that remembering the good times was rather more painful when those good times can never be recovered.

The title of the novel encompasses all these various kinds of remembering and as Baldwin has explained in an interview, the title is multilayered. At the surface level, Roop which means body, form or shape is the one who remembers throughout the novel and thus the novel embodies "what she remembers, is meant to remember, is expected to remember" and further Baldwin explains that Roop by "[r]emembering Kusum and all the women like her who were sacrificed during Partition would make history more whole." The next level of remembering is what Baldwin refers to as "...the metaphor of the 30s and 40s in undivided India was the body - the country as body, woman as womb for the tribe. And the story (of Partition and loss of the country's "children") is what the whole country remembers as part of its creation story, its birth pangs."<sup>297</sup> Kusum's dismembered body becomes the symbol of the dismemberment or the Partition of India: "[India] *is like a woman raped so many times that she has lost count of the trespassers across her body*"<sup>298</sup> (italics in original). Thus through this novel, Baldwin seems to continue in the same lines as Butalia-- that is of filling in the gaps and silences present in the

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<sup>295</sup> Shauna Singh Baldwin. op. cit. p. 594.

<sup>296</sup> Ibid, 598.

<sup>297</sup> Shauna Singh Baldwin. Interview by Ben Patchsea. 2 February 2011. Web. 2 June 2016. <<http://www.shaunasinghbaldwin.com/Interview-BenPatchsea-WhatTheBodyRemembers.html>>.

<sup>298</sup> Shauna Singh Baldwin. op. cit. p. 547.

history of Partition about the fate of women. Finally the language that Baldwin uses in this novel is quite striking as she scatters her work with Punjabi and Urdu words like “kismat”<sup>299</sup>, “quam” and many others and does not even provide any glossary. She explains that the words are understandable in context or she has defined them in many cases in the course of the text and that she was writing about such locations and concepts that words corresponding to those were not present in the English vocabulary. One example where she has used both English and Hindi words is where she has mentioned the names of food like “spinach saag”, “sweet milk-boiled savayan noodles”, “makki rotis”<sup>300</sup> (interesting that roti becomes English) and in case of other words like “rishta”<sup>301</sup> and “jo hokum”<sup>302</sup>, she has included the meaning in the very same sentence as “marriage relationship” and “whatever you command me” respectively. She even includes in a very detailed manner the use of wrong pronunciation of certain words by the characters who belong to the rural background like Roop and who have not had the exposure to English education. So words like “jealousy” is spelt as “jelsy”<sup>303</sup>, “type-writer” as “taip-writer”<sup>304</sup> and so on. However, she says that she is not concerned with complete authenticity as, if that was the case, she would not have written the novel in English at all. But then she presents her work as not only for the white, middle-class readers but for “a hybrid, global audience” and “for all of us who can read”<sup>305</sup>. So even while wanting to make her narrative authentic, she herself vehemently denies doing so and thus puts forwards her underlying authorial politics.

In contrast to Baldwin’s work, Majmudar’s novel *Partitions* is written completely in polished English without any peppering of words from any other language. The fact that Majmudar is an award-winning poet becomes apparent time and again through the poetic descriptions that are provided by him. For example, the way in which he describes the border is significant as he says:

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<sup>299</sup> Ibid. p. 77.

<sup>300</sup> Ibid, p. 153.

<sup>301</sup> Ibid, p. 143.

<sup>302</sup> Ibid, p. 127.

<sup>303</sup> Ibid, p.127.

<sup>304</sup> Ibid, p. 191.

<sup>305</sup> <<http://www.shaunasinghbaldwin.com/wtbressayo99.pdf>>. 2 June. 2016.

“It is too early in the border’s life cycle: it hasn’t budded checkpoints and manned booths yet, hasn’t sprouted its barbed-wire thorns”<sup>306</sup>. Though Pakistan had become a reality when the action of the novel begins, Masud, the Muslim character in the novel refers to Pakistan as the “conjured country”<sup>307</sup> and this points out the fact that though Pakistan might have become a reality in terms of maps, history and politics, it had still not become ‘real’ in the minds of the displaced population.

As the title of the novel suggests, Majmudar’s novel deals with many stories of Partition and hence the plural, Partitions. The novel weaves together the plight of Hindu twin brothers Shankar and Kesav, a Sikh girl named Simran and a benevolent Muslim doctor named Ibrahim Masud. Majmudar depicts the way in which Partition had equally affected people from all communities. The novel begins with a Prologue where a sadhu is shown to have been reborn as a man uprooted from his home in the Partition riots. The analogy of a river is used by Majmudar where the sadhu is about to take a bath and pray but it dries up when he takes rebirth amidst the chaos of Partition. It signifies the way in which life had dried up during the tumultuous time of the division of the country. The river, instead of the life giving force that it is, is imagined as the trains which had become an integral part in the mass migrations that took place between the two countries. “The trains are snippets of river, in motion even as they stand here in the station, drowning, taking on people as if taking on water....A river sweeps the trains, and everyone in them and on them, down and under”<sup>308</sup>. The trains carried people both inside, outside and top of the compartments and were even attacked by rival communities killing everyone on board. Majmudar starts his novel with the image of the overcrowded trains which have become part of the collective and cultural memory of people from photographs available in archives.

Majmudar’s novel is located in undivided Punjab where all the major players of the novel reside. The other geographical location that is presented in the novel is that of Delhi and that also through the twin brothers Shankar and Keshav who are merely young boys and who imagine the city as one with “broad paved streets and cars and safety” as “they have not even seen a picture

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<sup>306</sup> Amit Majmudar. *op. cit.* p. 143.

<sup>307</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>308</sup> *Ibid.* p. 1.

of it. All they have seen is their mother referring to Delhi as hope and end point”<sup>309</sup>. Unlike in Baldwin’s novel where Delhi is described as ‘indifferent’<sup>310</sup> and the post-Partition riots of Delhi show it as anything but an embodiment of safety, Majmudar presents Delhi from the point of view of children who still had the ability to hope for a haven of safety in the far away place called Delhi. Like the children, Simran aims to reach Amritsar as she feels she will be safe when she reaches her destination. Masud also joins a kafila which is described as “[g]reat human rivers”<sup>311</sup> and starts walking towards Pakistan, the new land for Muslims. Thus the novel shows all the major characters embarking on journeys which, they hope, would lead them to places of safety. The division of the country had taken place on the hope of a new beginning but that beginning was marked by the bloodshed that came with the division. Majmudar depicts the journey of the characters in order to highlight the futility of such journeys as the characters would never feel completely safe after they have been uprooted from their places of belonging.

The three stories are woven together by the narration of the disembodied presence or rather the soul of the twin’s dead father, Roshan Jaitly and as he takes the story forward, we come to know that he comes from a Brahmin family and that he had become ‘contaminated’ when he had married Sonia, a woman much younger to him and much below his social status as she was one of unknown social standing and was one who had been sheltered by the church. Thus the novel takes into account the plight of two young boys or rather children, the plight of a young Sikh girl and that of a Muslim doctor and finally at the end of the novel the plight of Sonia is also shown, the plight of the girl from the margins. The characters of Majmudar’s novel thus can be seen to be taken almost directly from the category of survivors that Butalia had interviewed in her work and to which Majmudar has acknowledged his indebtedness. The novelist thus has attempted to provide a representation of the suffering of all humanity irrespective of their religion, caste, gender during the Partition. This was the illogical nature of the violence during the Partition which did not spare anyone from its fatal effects.

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<sup>309</sup> Ibid, p. 74.

<sup>310</sup> Shauna Singh Baldwin. op. cit. p. 546.

<sup>311</sup> Amit Majmudar. op. cit. p. 85.

The young boys, Keshav and Shankar, lose their mother, Sonia at the train station as they fail to board the train. Both the brothers are injured as they fall on the station as the crowd pushes them in order to board the train. The passengers on this train were destined to be massacred as it is revealed later by the narrator. The Hindu driver of the train Chandan Singh is threatened by Muslim men before the train starts its journey. The driver agrees to stop the train at a particular point where the attack would take place. Luckily the twin brothers are saved from this massacre by their inability to board the train. But as was the fate of children in the turbulent times of Partition, they were kidnapped and sold to a middle-aged Muslim woman.

Eventually they manage to escape and encounter the figure of Maya Rani whom Majmudar has based on the real life figure of Maya Rani as was interviewed by Butalia. In her testimony to Butalia, Maya Rani describes her childhood during the Partition. She also talks about the way in which she and her friends would enter abandoned houses and take whatever the occupants would have left while leaving in a hurry. She identifies herself as a Harijan and believes that her identity as a Harijan had saved her from any harm during the Partition as no one was interested about people of the lower caste. She would jump from the roof of one house to the other and collect food items, clothes and lots of utensils: “And like this, we jumped from roof to roof, not really caring what happened”<sup>312</sup>. She even mentions how she had brought utensils with her as dowry when she got married. Majmudar’s portrayal of Maya Rani is identical to Maya Rani of real life. In the novel, Maya Rani says: “I haven’t set foot on the ground for days. We jump from roof to roof, and all they can do is point up at the whites of our feet. No one dares come up and touches us”<sup>313</sup>. Maya Rani shows off her collection of utensils to the twins and even mentions that it is going to be a part of her dowry. Thus the influence of Butalia’s work is clearly visible in Majmudar’s work.

The predicament of Simran Kaur in the novel is one of escape from her own family members who had planned to sedate and kill the women of the family to save their honour. Simran shows the courage of going against her family and escaping in a bid to save her life. The way in which Simran’s father plans and kills the women of the family makes Simran think herself in the

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<sup>312</sup> Urvashi Butalia. op. cit. p. 300.

<sup>313</sup> Amit Majmudar. op. cit. p. 125.



following terms: “The way her father thought of her body--living deadweight slowing escape, a liability and an ostentation, inviting attack--is how she thinks of her body now, too”<sup>314</sup>. Simran’s father followed the discourse of honour residing in the body of women which needed protection even if that meant the death of the women. Similar to Kusum’s death in Baldwin’s novel, Majmudar has depicted the death of women of Simran’s family. But Simran is shown as an exception as otherwise the men portray the women as courageous in the face of death and willingly accepting to die. Simran, perhaps, presents the realistic aspect of the women who also wished for a chance of survival like the men, survival which was denied to them in majority of the cases.

The presence of the three figures Qasim, Ayub and Saif brings forward another aspect of the turbulent times of the Partition and that is of the abduction of women as Qasim says:”The money these days...is in girls. ‘In girls’, he phrases it, the way businessman might say ‘in rice’ or ‘in shipping’ or ‘in gold’. They are everywhere, left unattended, needing only to be roped and put in a truck”<sup>315</sup>. These three men hire a truck and move around abducting young girls so that they could sell them later at a good price. The author also depicts this group in the act of looting from the people who died during the riots.

Majmudar seems to have depicted every aspect of the human plight of Partition in its details and this becomes clear in the way he shows Sonia at the end of the novel standing at the edge of a well, ready to jump into it: “And now she is standing over the well...She steps into the well...There are other women in the well...She kicks to make room for herself. At last, the bodies under her shift and give, and she sinks a little, the part in her hair still visible above the water”<sup>316</sup>. This incident promptly brings to mind the incident of Thoa Khalsa where women had jumped into the well to save their honour from the men of other religion. Sonia is also the victim of abduction by a man called Ghulam Sikri who had earlier worked in the neighbourhood where Sonia resided with her husband, Roshan Jaitley and her two children. Though she had formed a secret relation with Ghulam Sikri, she had severed all ties with him after the death of her

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<sup>314</sup> Ibid. p. 70.

<sup>315</sup> Ibid. p. 95.

<sup>316</sup> Ibid. p. 209.

husband. But Ghulam Sikri takes the opportunity of her husband's death and the chaos of Partition to separate her from her children at the station. He keeps her locked for four days before making it clear that he wanted her to take up a Muslim name and reside with him. Majmudar, through this episode, depicts the way in which many women were abducted during Partition and forced to live with their abductors. In many cases, even when these women were rescued, they were not accepted by their families as the family members saw them as polluted beings. Many women took resort to committing suicide as Sonia does in the novel.

But Majmudar in his novel, through the episode where Saif runs after the fleeing Simran and catches hold of her and feels an urge to possess her sexually goes as far as any novelist has gone in representing the episode of rape which has always been a silenced episode in testimonies as well as fiction. Though Simran is saved by the arrival of Masud at the correct point of time, it is crucial what Majmudar has tried to do. And even though Baldwin has portrayed Roop as a character who is aware of the 'bad' that can happen to women on the road to Delhi, she has not ventured into trying to depict any such painful episode.

Majmudar has skillfully portrayed the blurred lines between the victim and the victimizer in the novel. He portrays a Muslim mob torturing a Sikh man and a Muslim gang abducting women and looting kafilas but in contrast he also portrays a Muslim doctor helping people without paying heed to religious affiliations. He portrays the painful plight of the Hindu twins and then again portrays a Hindu mob trying to kill one of the children. The Partition riots establish the fact that people from all communities had been both victims and victimizers. Unlike the Holocaust, there was no clear demarcation between the victim and the victimizer during the Partition riots. People from all communities were equally affected during the riots and Majmudar has aimed to convey that aspect through the novel.

Irfan Master's novel *A Beautiful Lie* is a first person account by a thirteen year old boy called Bilal who tries desperately to shield his dying father from the crushing truth about the partition of the country. His father believes that the unity among the people of India would prevent its partition which has been planned by power-hungry politicians who have conspired with the British rulers. Bilal's father believes in the indivisibility of the country as he says: "India will

never be broken, never be split”<sup>317</sup>. The voice of Bilal, the young boy sounds suspiciously mature at certain points, particularly when he describes the event of Partition and says: “Partition was like laying flat a piece of coarse material and cutting it as steadily as you could down the middle. The only difference was, once the first cut was made, no amount of sewing and stitching could make that material whole again”<sup>318</sup>. Thus the interspersed voice of the adult Bilal provides a belated perspective to the novel. Bilal decides to hide the truth about the country’s partition from his father by not allowing anyone to visit his father. For this purpose, he takes the help of his three friends--Chota, Manjeet and Saleem. Interestingly, Master creates a group of friends comprising of various religions and creates a picture of harmony among the friends in contrast to the chaos that the country was undergoing at that point. The group of friends thus becomes a contrasting microcosm of peace, fellow-feeling and brotherhood in the macrocosm of chaos and unrest in the country. Even Bilal’s father presents the sense of fellow feeling among the group of Bilal’s friends: “Look at your friends, Bilal. Do they care that we’re Muslims? We’ve sat and eaten with Chota’s family on many occasions. Are we supposed to hate them because they’re Hindus? Take Manjeet--I’ve known his family since before you were born. I was at Manjeet’s father’s wedding. They’re Sikh yet we share very similar ancestry and have many things in common. We’ll always have differences but our similarities will keep us together.”<sup>319</sup>

The narrative is presented in the format of a coming of age story where it starts with a Prologue and ends with an Epilogue. Both the Prologue and the Epilogue are written from the point of view of the adult Bilal and this frames the narrative of the child Bilal which forms the core of the novel. As Master has projected his novel as one which is aimed at providing knowledge to the people of all ages who lack knowledge about the event of Partition, by presenting the novel from the point of view of a child he might have wanted to project his work as an unbiased one. But it also includes the question of unreliability about the narrative as it is clear from the Prologue that the novel is based on adult Bilal’s memory of the event. This is evident when Bilal says in the Prologue: “Many years ago I told one lie that has taken on a life of its own. It defines me as a

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<sup>317</sup> Irfan Master. *A Beautiful Lie*. London: Bloomsbury, 2011. p. 17.

<sup>318</sup> Ibid. pp. 17-18.

<sup>319</sup> Ibid. pp. 16-17.

person. The only time I was sure of anything was all those years ago, when I was a boy. When I was lying. Since then I've never been comfortable with anything in my life"<sup>320</sup>. By framing the narrative of the child by the adult narratives, Master has tried to provide a sense of reliability but it does not completely achieve that aim as memory in itself is unreliable and remembering something sixty years after it has taken place makes it equally complicated. Bilal, the adult narrator of the framing narratives and Bilal, the child narrator of the core narrative, both sound equally mature and sometimes it becomes difficult to distinguish between the two.

The novel begins at a place in Northern India called Anaar Gully in the month of June in 1947 which is just a couple of months before the declaration of independence of the country. The novel begins by portraying Bilal as a sensitive and perceptive young boy which furthers Master's aim of establishing him as a reliable narrator on whom the readers can place their trust for gaining knowledge. Bilal starts his narration by saying "Something was wrong. I could sense it but I couldn't put my finger on what it was"<sup>321</sup>. This premonition of something 'different' in the atmosphere of the market which was the life force of Anaar Gully and around which the locality had flourished, coupled with the awareness about his father's impending death makes it apparent that Bilal's life is soon to become tremendously chaotic. The novel's initiation itself hints towards the impending doom in Bilal's life and also in the life of the country. The novel brings to its fold a historical event and shows its devastating effect by bringing it into the realm of the personal. Postmemorial fiction on Partition like the work of Master demonstrates the historical event by depicting the effect it has on the psyche of the people who suffer the resulting devastating effects of the aftermath of the event.

The first mention of the word 'partition' in the novel is in a context not with which the word has come to be associated with. The partition in the room in which Bilal's father lies on his deathbed is made "solely of old books stacked floor to ceiling, three books deep"<sup>322</sup>. This is a stark contrast to the partition of the country which caused the death, mutilation and displacement of thousands of people on both sides of the border. Master uses the word 'partition' for the first

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<sup>320</sup> Ibid. p. 1.

<sup>321</sup> Ibid. p. 5.

<sup>322</sup> Ibid. p. 12.

time in the novel in a completely different context than it has come to be associated within the collective memory and vocabulary of the nation. The word is generally used while talking about the independence of the country and has almost become synonymous for the same. “The oddity of the phrase ‘at the time of the Partition’ struck one, therefore, when the aunties and uncles of childhood used it to refer to the independence of the Indian subcontinent”<sup>323</sup>. On the day of independence when the sound of celebration could be heard outside, Bilal’s father passes away. Interestingly Bilal notices that “a few hardbacks had been pulled out”<sup>324</sup> from the wall of books in the room. The wall had lost some of the strength because of the books that had been pulled out. It points to the weakening of the strength of the nations created by Partition and Bilal “wondered how many you’d have to pull out until the whole wall would collapse”<sup>325</sup>. Bilal’s ailing father can be looked upon as a symbol of the ailing country and his death on the day of independence highlights this fact. It is as if Partition did not mark the beginning of the life’s journey of two newly formed nations but it marked the death of united India. Bilal says: “He’s dying. I know. Like this damned country. Day by day it’s slowly falling to its knees”<sup>326</sup>. After his death, Bilal’s father burns along with the house and the partition of books which signify the way in which the country burnt due to riots and clashes. Out of this carnage is born India and to Bilal’s father, Bilal is India. Bilal is the one who underwent the turmoil of the times which defined his sense of self and made him what he became later in his life.

The character of Doctorji, a friend of Bilal’s father is of significance as his name is not mentioned anywhere in the novel. Master has tried to nullify religion by not naming the kind doctor. Master has pointed out that his work is more important than his religion--a fact which people forgot during the Partition riots. People in that chaotic time lost all respect for humanity and even looked upon the doctor with suspicion. Doctorji and Bilal almost face death at the hands of a group of villagers whom Doctorji had been helping with treatment and medicines for many years. In the atmosphere of turmoil, the villagers suspect Doctorji and Bilal as Muslim

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<sup>323</sup> GJV Prasad and Stephanos Stephanides. “Introduction: Poetics and Partition in Counterpoint”. *European Journal of English Studies* 19.3 (2015): 243-254. Web. 19 April 2017. p. 244.

<sup>324</sup> Irfan Master. op. cit. p. 274.

<sup>325</sup> Ibid. p. 274.

<sup>326</sup> Ibid. p. 56.

spies and keep them locked and tied in a house whom where they are rescued by a young girl who loved hearing stories from Bilal. Master depicts the figure of child as the representation of rational thinking who based her judgment on the basis of the kindness and benevolence that Doctorji had demonstrated over the past years. This depiction is in contrast to the adults of the village whom Master depicts to have lost their sense of judgment in the chaotic atmosphere where accounts of violence, looting and rioting had become a part of daily life.

Thus through the characters of the children in the novel, Master creates a picture of communal harmony. In his attempt to shield his father from the news about the Partition of India, Bilal creates a newspaper for his father with the help of his friends and teacher Mr. Mukherjee. Significantly the headline of the newspaper reads “One India”--the image of united India can only remain in the imagination of Bilal and his fictitious newspaper. Otherwise the novel depicts the reality of Partition in the episode of mob violence after a cockerel fight which Bilal and his friends had gone to watch. After the fight gets over, the mob breaks loose and Bilal is separated from his friends as they try to run to safety. Later when they reunite, Manjeet is visibly shaken with blood on his clothes and he confesses to have acted in self defense: “Men with sticks and knives were trying to kill each other...burn each other...I tried to get away but men kept rushing at me with sticks and knives...I *had* to defend myself...What else could I have done?”<sup>327</sup> It is ironic how even children were not spared in the mayhem of the Partition riots.

Interestingly, there are no prominent women characters in the novel which makes it an obvious absence in a novel about Partition as the women were one of the worst sufferers during the Partition riots. As this novel has been promoted as a novel for young adults, Master has not incorporated any obvious disturbing element like the rape, abduction of women which would be inappropriate for readers of that impressionable age. Master only mentions once about the killing of women along with children without mentioning anything further. The presence of an Epilogue in the novel which takes place sixty years after 1947 shows a mature Bilal looking back at the events during the Partition and how the lies he had told to save his father from the heartbreak of hearing about the partition of the country had shaped him as an individual and how he viewed life.

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<sup>327</sup> Ibid. p. 229.

Thus after the analysis of the novels, the questions that arise is that whether or not the distance which these authors enjoy from the actual event on which they have chosen to write, allowed them to represent the event more distinctly or have they just created mere mechanical representations of the event. Further questions can be that the testimonies are supposed to provide them with more information and hence make them conscious of what they represent, but have they in any way curbed their creativity and whether or not these fictional works question the 'truth' of the testimonies in any way. What has become obvious is that the authors have been hugely influenced by the testimonies and their works have been intermingled with information from the testimonies and as they are writing about a historical event how much they can use their imagination and how much they have to remain grounded in historical facts and information is rather a matter of debate. It has been pointed out how interestingly postmemory has travelled to these authors mainly through the testimonies and how they have fore-grounded their authorial politics in order to justify their choice of Partition of 1947 as a subject matter for their novels.

## Chapter 4

### The Shadow of Partition: The Continuing Impact of the Event

‘Postmemory’ is a concept which has been current since the 1990s and it has been used evocatively in history, psychology and literary studies to refer to the relationship that binds the ‘generation after’ to the trauma of an earlier generation. The trauma may be personal, cultural, individual or collective; it moves beyond the generation that suffers in the form of narratives, stories, images, dreams, art forms into subsequent generations, forming a kind of collective consciousness which turns at some point into a heritage. Not merely inheritance, but Heritage – something that needs to be preserved and constantly re-examined in the light of more contemporary events.<sup>328</sup>

The boom in memory studies and, along with it, the focus on the response of the ‘generation after’ or the second and third generation to a traumatic event of which they have no lived memory has highlighted creative responses about this phenomenon. The previous chapter dealt with novels which present the event of the Partition itself in the narrative framework, which have been written by second and third generation writers with or without familial memory of the Partition. The authors have imaginatively tried to access the event through their fictional works which have been shaped by interactions with the previous generation, reading and listening to testimonies of the first generation that underwent the trauma of the Partition and also by reading historical accounts about the event. The memory of the event that has been transmitted to the second and the third generation from the first generation gets featured in their works in the form of postmemory of the event. Without any lived experience of the event, the authors reach back to the event and depict the event from various perspectives to provide a wider understanding of the repercussions that it had on the lives of people.

However, the devastating circumstances of the Partition which involved inhuman violence and loss of property and human lives, and the subsequent trauma which affected the members of the

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<sup>328</sup> Charanjeet Kaur. “Editorial: The Heritage of Memory/ Postmemory”. *Muse India* 72(2017). Web. 8 May 2017.



first generation, had an equally deep impact on the subsequent generations. As Dominick LaCapra writes in the context of the Holocaust in *History and Memory after Auschwitz*, “the traumatic event has its greatest and most clearly unjustifiable effect on the victim, but in different ways it also affects everyone who comes in contact with it: perpetrator, collaborator, bystander, resister, those born later” and there is an “effect of belatedness”<sup>329</sup>. This belated aspect is what is depicted in the works of authors of the second and third generation. For these writers, Partition ceases to remain as only a historical event. Their writings focus on the way in which the trauma of Partition affected the lives of the first generation and how subsequently both the personal memory, in case of familial postmemory, and the collective memory, in case of non-familial postmemory, of the event helps them to form their own understanding of the event. The second and third generation writers realize the continuing effect of Partition on the psyche of the entire population of the subcontinent. Partition is a distant event but to know the relationship that the subsequent generations share with this event “is to raise questions about the way history and histories are created and how the arts of memory are exercised”<sup>330</sup>. In the context of second generation Holocaust literature, a similar comment has been made: “The main domain of the second generation’s remarkable cultural output is literature.... In their literary works the Holocaust stands outside the historical framework and becomes an event with flexible borders, an experience cemented into daily life”<sup>331</sup>. Similar to second generation Holocaust literature, second and third generation Partition literature also presents the opportunity to these generations to bear witness to the trauma of Partition. The process of witnessing continues with the second and third generation and they become “witnesses to the witnesses”<sup>332</sup>. Their process of witnessing is distanced from the event itself by the passage of time but the subsequent generations feel a sense of connectedness to the past which propels them on a journey of self-discovery.

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<sup>329</sup> As quoted by Jacob Lothe, Suleiman Susan Rubin and James Phelan. Eds. ‘Introduction’. *After Testimony: The Ethics and Aesthetics of Holocaust Narratives for the Future*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2012. p. 10.

<sup>330</sup> Nita Kumar. ‘Children and the Partition’. Suvir Kaul Ed. *Partitions of Memory: The Afterlife of the Division of India*. Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2011. p. 269.

<sup>331</sup> Dalia Ofer. ‘The Past that Does not Pass: Israelis and Holocaust Memory’. *Israel Studies* 14. 1 (2009): 1-35. *JSTOR*. Web. 12 October 2016. p. 16.

<sup>332</sup> Dalia Ofer. *Ibid.* p. 12.

Thus through their writings, they try to create a space in which their postmemory of the event is expressed through the creation of characters whose lives are shaped by the way in which they perceive the traumatic experiences that their previous generations underwent. The works which will be discussed in this chapter illustrate the impact of the first generation's experience of the Partition on the subsequent generations and how their lives are shaped by the influence of the first generation. These works will demonstrate the way in which Partition has remained a defining aspect in the lives of the people who experienced it and those who have experienced it through the memory of the event.

In contrast to the works discussed in the third chapter which represent the event of the Partition itself, the works that will be discussed in this chapter demonstrate the impact of the experiences and memory of the first generation on the second and the third generation within the narrative framework of the novel. The works which will be discussed in this chapter can be viewed as belated responses to the event of Partition where Partition continues to live on in the lives of the subsequent generations in the form of postmemory of the event. The works demonstrate the way in which the second and third generations are always part of the survivor generation's life even before they realize the impact of their traumatic memories upon them. These works include Meena Arora Nayak's *About Daddy* (2000), Reema Moudgil's *Perfect Eight* (2010), Vishwajyoti Ghosh's *This Side, That Side* (2013) and Sorayya Khan's *Five Queen's Road* (2009). Though my chosen corpus of works includes only Indian English authors, I will discuss a Pakistani writer Sorayya Khan's work in this chapter as it provides us with a rare insight into the life of a person belonging to the Hindu faith residing in Pakistan after the Partition. The depiction from the other side of the border will render our understanding of the effects of the traumatic event more diverse and will provide an additional perspective about the Partition and its effects.

As history fails to represent the inhuman aspect of the death and displacement of thousands of people during the Partition riots and also the varied aspects from which the event can be viewed, Partition fiction takes up this function. The works of second and third generation writers particularly depict the continuing effect of the event on the subsequent generations by depicting the transmission of the memories of the event from the first generation. Hence the works of the second and third generation writers depicting the Partition go beyond just fulfilling the gap-filling function of Partition fiction to provide a view of the effect that Partition had and continues

to have on the collective psyche of the people. Moreover, history presents a particular narrative of the Partition. In addition to that, testimonies present various other narratives of the same event. Further narratives are provided by first generation writers, film makers and photographers. The representation of the event of Partition in these recent works is worth analyzing as they present newer narratives about the event and its continuing impact and significance.

Narrative theory is defined in the book *After Testimony: The Ethics and Aesthetics of Holocaust Narrative for the Future* as: “The area of literary studies that has devoted the most rigorous attention to questions about the techniques of representation, especially representation through storytelling...Narrative theory begins not with the development of its well-known toolbox of analytical concepts but with the observation that storytelling is a distinctive way of making sense of our experiences of our world, particularly our experiences of time, process, and change”<sup>333</sup>. In the works of the authors that will be discussed in this chapter, the way in which the characters make sense of their present in terms of the past event of Partition is worth analyzing. The characters understand the world around them while attempting to understand their relationship with the past event of Partition. Thus the representation of the effect of Partition on the subsequent generations also focuses on the way in which the various experiences of continuing conflicts in the country affect the experiences of the present of the second and third generation. In all the works, the present scenario of the country is compared to the past and the way in which new identities are born and new perspectives are formed about the event are explored by the writers.

The issue of Partition still manages to capture the imagination of the present generation and that is what is evident in the literary works that will be discussed in this chapter. The 2013 Google advertisement called ‘Google Search: Reunion’<sup>334</sup> depicts the way in which the distance created between two friends due to Partition is bridged by the initiative taken by the third generation i.e. the grandchildren. The advertisement shows how technology helps in overcoming the barrier created by Partition and how the two friends are united by receiving help from their respective

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<sup>333</sup> As quoted by Jacob Lothe, Suleiman Susan Rubin and James Phelan. Eds. ‘Introduction’. *After Testimony: The Ethics and Aesthetics of Holocaust Narratives for the Future*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2012. p. 8.

<sup>334</sup> Google India. “Google Search: Reunion”. Online video clip. Youtube. Youtube, 13 November 2013. Web. 8 May 2017.

grandchildren. This 2013 advertisement received overwhelming responses from both sides of the border, especially from the younger generation who have no direct experience of the event but have been witness to the continuing legacy of violence which haunt both India and Pakistan. “The generation that referred to independence as the Partition is almost gone, but the post-memory remains and the wound has not entirely healed. India, Pakistan and Bangladesh are related by blood, blood that stains their national consciousness, with a history of atrocities that claims memorialisation in a land where people of different religions continue to live together in a secular democratic state.”<sup>335</sup> Thus it is important to study and examine this legacy handed down from one generation to the other. The second and third generation’s involvement with the event at a distinct remove of time, and the approach they adopt to involve themselves in the process of memorialisation needs attention.

The involvement of the second generation in memorializing the event comes in the form of representation of the event. As discussed in the second chapter, the representation by the second and third generation is based on the received memory of the event which is far removed from the actual event. This complicates the process of representation and raises the question about the efficacy of such representation and the reason behind the subsequent generation’s involvement with the event. James E. Young discusses Saul Friedlander’s notion of ‘common memory’ and ‘deep memory’ of an event. Friedlander discusses common memory as something which can be represented and which establishes possible redemption and deep memory as something which remains essentially inarticulate and which cannot be represented. But every common memory is always haunted by elements which are beyond representation.<sup>336</sup> The deep memory is that of the survivor generation and involves aspects of the traumatic event which deny representation. It is through the attempts of representation by the second and third generation that even the unrepresented aspects of the traumatic event might receive a chance of representation. This representation is significant as otherwise certain aspects of the event might remain unavailable to the coming generations. Thus James E. Young writes: “The implication is that, beyond the

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<sup>335</sup> GJV Prasad and Stephanos Stephanides. “Introduction: Poetics and Partition in Counterpoint”. *European Journal of English Studies*. 19.3 (2015): 243-254. Web. 19 April 2017. p. 245.

<sup>336</sup> James E. Young “The Holocaust as Vicarious Past: Art Spiegelman’s ‘Maus’ and the Afterimages of History”. *Critical Inquiry* 24. 3 (1998): 666-699. *JSTOR*. Web. 12 October 2016. p. 666-667.

second generation's artistic and literary representations of it, such deep memory may be lost to history altogether"<sup>337</sup>. This point towards the fact that second and third generation representations of the event found in the literary works can provide varied point of views of looking back at the event and its continuing effects.

The temporal distance of the subsequent generations from the traumatic event is bridged by their attempt to imagine themselves as part of that traumatic past. Though it is apparently impossible to go back to a past that one has not been a part of, the subsequent generations adopt various means to reach back to the past in order to forge an identity of their own. While discussing the way in which the traumatic memories of the Holocaust survivors affect their children, Carol A. Kidron writes: "The child...imagines him--or herself to have actually been with the parents in their war experiences. Children of survivors thus aim to redeem their parents suffering not only in order to rescue their parents...but also to create a more coherent, historical and personal foundation for their own emotional well-being"<sup>338</sup>. Dalia Ofer also presents a similar view when she writes: "The main motifs in second generation literature are a profound identification with the survivor parents, the fear of disappointing them, the desire to protect them, and apprehension that the parents' experiences will carry them back to 'there', from where they will not be able to return"<sup>339</sup>. In a certain sense, the second generation through their imaginative recall of the event creates their own postmemory of the event. Thus, "by virtue of the embodied syndrome and memories, these offspring earn the legitimate status of authentic survivor"<sup>340</sup>. The second generation witness imbibes the trauma of the survivor generation and tries to develop a coherent picture of the past by reading the various actions and behavioral patterns of the survivor generation. This reaching back to the past is also aided by family photographs, stories, letters, and various possessions of the survivor generation. These familial memories shape the consciousness of a particular individual who in turn attempts to come to terms with his own self in terms of these memories. The member of the second generation analyses the experiences of

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<sup>337</sup> James E. Young. *Ibid.* p. 667.

<sup>338</sup> Carol A. Kidron "Surviving a Distant past: A Case Study of the Cultural Construction of Trauma Descendant Identity". *Ethos* 31. 4 (2003): 513-544. *JSTOR*. Web. 12 October 2016. p. 518-519.

<sup>339</sup> Dalia Ofer. *op. cit.* p. 13.

<sup>340</sup> *Ibid.* p. 519.

his own life keeping the experience of the first generation at the back of his or her mind. Michael G. Levine writes regarding this aspect: “For this second generation it was a question not only of helping to elicit their parents’ stories--of persuading them to write, speak, or agree to be interviewed--but also of coming to terms with their own implication in their parents’ experiences”<sup>341</sup>. Thus the second generation is always a part of their parents’ life and experiences and those experiences shape the way in which the second generation view the world around them.

Before moving on to the analysis of the second and third generation works on Partition, a discussion of Art Spiegelman’s comic narrative *Maus* can provide a suitable background about the characteristics and nature of such works. *Maus*, perhaps, is one of the crucial works which deal with the notion of postmemory and the representation of the Holocaust by the second generation. *Maus: A Survivor’s Tale* was published in two volumes--*Maus I: My Father Bleeds History* (1986) and *Maus II: And Here My Troubles Began* (1991). In his work, Spiegelman presents the experiences of his father, Vladek, during the Holocaust and also his own experiences of being the son of survivors. Belonging to the second generation meant that Art Spiegelman felt the direct influence of his survivor parents’ traumatic experiences on his childhood. The memories of Holocaust haunt the survivor parents and in turn also continue to haunt the child who has not experienced the Holocaust. This shows the continuing effect of a traumatic event on the subsequent generations. Interestingly, the book opens with Art’s experience and not his father’s which indicates the fact that the book is going to be the presentation of the son’s perspective on the experiences of his father. The opening of the book shows Art as a child skating with his friends and how his friends leave him after he slips and falls. Art complains to his father about his friends and instead of consoling him like usual parents, Vladek says: “Friends? Your Friends? If you lock them together in a room with no food for a week then you could see what it is, Friends!”<sup>342</sup> Spiegelman talks about this experience of growing up with Holocaust survivor parents in an interview:

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<sup>341</sup> As quoted by Alison Mandaville. “Tailing Violence: Comics Narrative, Gender, and the Father Tale in Art Spiegelman’s *Maus*”. *Pacific Coast Philology* 44. 2 (2009): 216-248. *JSTOR*. Web. 12 October 2016. p. 217.

<sup>342</sup> Art Spiegelman. *Maus: A Survivor’s Tale*. London: Penguin Books, 2003. p. 6.

You grow up as a survivor's kid--it seems to be a common denominator--that as a kid, you're playing baseball or whatever and you break a window and then your mother or father says, "Ach, for this I survived?" And that's a heavy load to carry around for breaking a window with a baseball-or less. And it tends to make kids who grow up to become doctors, lawyers, professionals, overachievers of one kind or another, who tend to try very hard to make things easy for their parents. And for whatever mad molecule is in my particular genetic makeup, I was in rebellion against my parents from an early age and had a very difficult time coming to terms with them.<sup>343</sup>

The book depicts Art's problematic relationship with his father and the way in which he can never fully understand his father's point of view. He says: "... I can't even make any sense out of my relationship with my father... How am I supposed to make any sense out of Auschwitz?... Of the Holocaust?"<sup>344</sup> At times, he even felt that his father actually resembled the image of the Jews as propagated by Hitler. Vladek is shown to be a stingy man who is always worried about his finances and even breaks off his marriage with his second wife, Mala, suspecting her of stealing his money. Interestingly, the Jewish characters are represented as mice and the German characters as cats. This peculiar way of representation stems from the way the Jewish people were treated at the hands of the Germans under Nazi regime. As the cats prey on mice, the Germans looked upon the Jewish people as vermin who needed to be exterminated. The epigraph of *Maus II* is from a newspaper article published in Prussia, Germany which says:

Mickey Mouse is the most miserable ideal ever revealed....Healthy emotions tell every independent young man and every honourable youth that the dirty and filth-covered vermin, the greatest bacteria carrier in the animal kingdom, cannot be the ideal type of animal....Away with Jewish brutalization of the people! Down with Mickey Mouse! Wear the Swastika Cross!<sup>345</sup>

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<sup>343</sup> As quoted by Michael E. Staub "The Shoah Goes on and on: Remembrance and Representation in Art Spiegelman's *Maus*". *MELUS* 20. 3 (1995): 33-46. *JSTOR*. Web. 12 October 2016. p. 40.

<sup>344</sup> Art Spiegelman. op. cit. p. 174.

<sup>345</sup> Ibid. p. 164.

*Maus* can be viewed as the second generation member's attempt to delve into a past that he was not a part of but a past which has immense influence on his life. As Andreas Huyssen writes: "It rather results from the desire of members of the second generation to learn about their parents' past, of which they are always, willingly or not, already a part..."<sup>346</sup>. This is the nature of all second generation and also by extension third generation works. This will become evident while discussing the works of Moudgil and Nayak later in this chapter. The way in which Art is obsessed with his brother Richieu who died long before Art himself was born shows his involvement with his inherited past. It is evident in the way Art speaks about Richieu: "I didn't think about him much when I was growing up... He was mainly a large, blurry photograph hanging in my parents' bedroom.... The photo never threw tantrums or got in any kind of trouble... It was an ideal kid, and I was a pain in the ass, I couldn't compete.... It's spooky, having sibling rivalry with a snapshot"<sup>347</sup>. Thus it is only the photograph of Richieu which creates such a deep impact on Art.

*Maus* is written in the form of comic and Spiegelman himself features in the work as Artie. Art Spiegelman is both the writer and the narrator of the work. Hans Kellner writes: "He does not create his tale (and yet he does); it does not happen to him (and yet it does)"<sup>348</sup>. The writer presents his process of composing the work and the narrator works through his father's traumatic narrative in order to make sense of his own life. The work thus receives a self-reflexive nature at the hands of the author as he often discusses *Maus* within the narrative framework of *Maus* itself. In case of the second and third generation works on Partition, the writer has not himself or herself featured in the works as Spiegelman features in *Maus*. But the authors with familial connection with the event might have presented their own experiences with their parents through the characters that they create.

Moreover, in the panels, flies can be viewed all over and the chapter is titled 'Time Flies'. Hence, these flies can be seen as flies from the past depicting the memories of a time past and how those

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<sup>346</sup> Andreas Huyssen. "Of Mice and Mimesis: Reading Spiegelman with Adorno". *New German Critique* 81 (2000): 65-82. *JSTOR*. Web. 12 October 2016. p. 71.

<sup>347</sup> Art Spiegelman. op. cit. p. 175.

<sup>348</sup> As quoted by Froma I. Zeitlin. "The Vicarious Witness: Belated Memory and Authorial Presence in Recent Holocaust Literature". *History and Memory* 10. 2 (1998): 5-42. *JSTOR*. Web. 12 October 2016. p. 7.



memories continue to have an effect on Art. In another instance Art while talking to his wife Françoise says:

Don't get me wrong. I wasn't obsessed with this stuff...It's just that sometimes I would fantasize Zyklon B coming out of our shower instead of water. I know this is insane but I somehow wish I had been in Auschwitz with my parents so I could really know what they lived through! ... I guess it's some kind of guilt about having had an easier life than they did.<sup>349</sup>

These words by Art are demonstrative of the way in which the traumatic memories are transmitted from one generation to the other and the deep impact those memories have on the psyche of the second generation. This deep connection to the parent's past can also be viewed in the characters of Ira and Simran found in Moudgil and Nayak's works respectively.

In this work, Spiegelman's interviews his father, Vladek and Vladek's experiences are presented in the comic frames of the work. The time frame of the book moves forward and backward as the work shows Vladek being interviewed by Art in the present and also the simultaneous movement back to the past as narrated by Vladek. Chapter II of *Maus II* titled 'Time Flies' shows Spiegelman sitting at his desk working on the comic panel of this book where he reports the death of his father. But in the subsequent frames, he once again depicts his father. What one needs to understand is that Art had recorded his father's entire testimony on a tape-recorder or on paper and would listen to his narration or read the notes before beginning to sketch. This is precisely the narrative strategy of the book where the narrative of the father along with the narrative of the son is unraveled. One is incomplete without the other. "The roundabout method of memorytelling is captured here in ways unavailable to straighter narrative. It is a narrative that tells both the story of events and its own unfolding as narrative"<sup>350</sup>. The works of Moudgil and Nayak also create a juxtaposition of the history of the parents and the current life led by the children. Like Spiegelman in *Maus*, Moudgil and Nayak does not present the life story of the parents in a linear fashion but weaves the history of the parents through the unravelling of the lives of the children.

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<sup>349</sup> Ibid. p. 176.

<sup>350</sup> James E. Young. op. cit. p. 673.

Though at certain times, it is seen that Art does not completely rely on his father's narration of events. He is shown to ask for clarification from Pavel about the tin shop where his father worked while in the camp. Spiegelman says in an interview: "Now, my father's not necessarily a reliable witness and I never presumed that he was. So, as far as I could corroborate anything he said, I did--which meant on occasion talking to friends and to relatives and also doing as much reading as I could"<sup>351</sup>. In one instance, Art offers a different account from that of his father based on his reading about the Holocaust. He talks about the playing of the camp orchestra as the camp prisoners marched out to work but his father cannot remember anything about the orchestra. Art draws two different panels--one to depict his knowledge based on his readings about the Holocaust and the other to depict his father's memory. This harks back to the point of issue of reliability of testimony in providing information about a past event as discussed in the second chapter. As memory can play tricks on a person's mind, the testimony given by Vladek cannot be entirely believed as pointed out by Art. "Spiegelman does not suppose that in hearing a survivor's testimony he is any closer to having an authentic encounter with the Holocaust. He insists throughout on the insufficiency of his father's narrative to communicate the reality of the Holocaust to him..."<sup>352</sup>. Thus the second generation narratives are in a way interpretations of the past event based on the available testimony about the event.

Another aspect of *Maus* is that Art's mother, Anja, remains physically absent from the narrative as presented in the book but her presence is strongly felt as her suicide is shown to have a deep impact on the author. Anja had kept a diary about her experiences of the Holocaust and which the writer/son believed would prove to be of immense value to his work. But to his utter dismay and shock, Vladek confesses that he had burnt the diary. Art accuses his father of being a murderer and indeed he was a murderer, may be not literally, but metaphorically he was a murderer of the voice of Anja. The writer and in turn the readers do not get to know Anja's side of the story as her narrative is silenced by Vladek. Art Spiegelman had depicted his mother's suicide and the subsequent effect it had on him in one of his earlier works called 'Prisoner of the

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<sup>351</sup> As quoted by Eric Berlatsky. "Memory as Forgetting: The Problem of the Postmodern in Kundera's 'The Book of Laughter and Forgetting' and Spiegelman's 'Maus'". *Cultural Critique* 55 (2003):101-151. *JSTOR*. Web. 12 October 2016. p. 127.

<sup>352</sup> Andrew Loman. "'Well Intended Liberal Slop': Allegories of Race in Spiegelman's 'Maus'". *Journal of American Studies* 40. 3 (2006): 551-571. *JSTOR*. Web. 12 October, 2016. p. 555.

Hell Planet' which he has included in this book. This is the only part of the book which depicts human characters in contrast to the animal characters of the rest of the book. In the story of the father and son, the mother's voice somewhere gets lost and it points towards the fact that however much a person tries, there will always be some aspect of the past which will elude representation. The second generation and the subsequent generation's attempt or journey to know the past is never fully complete. Marriane Hirsch writes about *Maus* that the book has

a self-conscious, innovative, and critical aesthetic that palpably conveys absence and loss; the determination to know about the past and the acknowledgement of its elusiveness; the testimonial structure of listener and witness separated by relative proximity and distance to the events of the war... the reliance on looking and reading, on visual media in addition to verbal ones; and the consciousness that the memory of the past is an act firmly located in the present.<sup>353</sup>

Though *Maus* depicts a father-son relationship through which the working of postmemory is viewed, the works of Moudgil and Nayak depict the characters of daughters who bear the burden of their parents' memories of Partition. Unlike *Maus* where the voice of the mother is suppressed, Moudgil's work depicts the mother-daughter relationship as the site of transference of memories of Partition. In case of Partition narratives, it is quite impossible to suppress the voices of women after the publication of the testimonies in works of Butalia, Menon and Bhasin in 1998. This is evident in the emergence of the voices of daughters as narrators in the works of Moudgil and Nayak.

There are various other works by members of the second generation which attempt to depict the continuing effect of the event and American-Jewish author Thomas Friedmann's *Damaged Goods* is also such a second generation Holocaust text which portrays the journey of Jason, the son of Holocaust survivors. Though Spiegelman does not want to portray his work as a work of fiction, Friedmann's work is a novel based on his personal experiences. The novel juxtaposes the past with the present which is a characteristic feature of second generation work. Jason's father is a deeply religious Jewish person who never talks about his past to his son and his mother is

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<sup>353</sup> Marriane Hirsch. *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture after the Holocaust*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2012. p. 40.

someone who prefers remaining silent in the presence of his father. In the entire course of the novel, Jason tries to balance two worlds--the world of his father (a conservative and deeply religious one) and the world he tries to create for himself (a liberal world). But he ends up stuck in between the two worlds where he cannot completely give up his religiosity and also cannot completely adhere to it. Interestingly, Jason falls in love with a woman named Rachel which is also the name of his mother. Rachel, who is a non-religious person, presents an opportunity for him to leave behind his parents' world. But it is not easy for Jason to leave behind the world which had shaped his identity. The silence of his parents about their Holocaust experiences forces Jason to create his own impression about the event: "My mother has given me no childhood memories; Father is secretive about the wife and son he had before the War....I find out about things indirectly..."<sup>354</sup>. Other recent second generation engagements with the Holocaust include works like Rosalie Greenberg's collection of stories written by her mother Molly Greenberg called *Secrets in the Suitcase: Stories My Mother Never Told Me* published in 2012 and Rita Goldberg's memoir *Motherland: Growing Up With the Holocaust* published in 2015. Rosalie Greenberg's work shows the second generation's interest in the stories of the first generation survivor. Greenberg and her sister luckily discover the key to the suitcase which contained her mother's stories about her own childhood and experiences during the Holocaust which she had never shared with them. She writes in the Introduction of the book: "Once my sister told me about her fortuitous discovery of my mother's forgotten writings, I knew that finding the key and the suitcase were the signs that I *had* to work on this book. Or put another way, as I like to view it, my sister's discovery meant that this book was truly *besheret*"<sup>355</sup>. In a more recent work, Rita Goldberg talks about the way in which her parents' and grandparents' stories and experiences shaped her life: "I had seen the haunted faces of my parents' friends and family. I had noted the little clouds that haunted my mother's peace, the emotional fragility of certain evenings... And I had heard the story of my grandparents, the story that formed my

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<sup>354</sup> Thomas Friedmann. *Damaged Goods*. New York: The Permanent Press, 1984. p. 68.

<sup>355</sup> Molly Greenberg and Rosalie Greenberg. *Secrets in the Suitcase: Stories my Mother Never Told Me*. Google Book Search. Web. 23 May 2017. p. xvi.

sisters and me and mean that, no matter what we did, some part of us was always rooted in the tainted soil where their ashes lay”<sup>356</sup>.

The characteristics that are found in these second generation Holocaust works can be helpful while analyzing the second and third generation works on Partition. The works discussed above portray the second generation authors own experiences either in fictional or non-fictional form. The second and third generation works on Partition that will be discussed in this chapter present a fictional retelling of their understanding of the event of Partition. Moreover, the authors in question may or may not have a familial connection to Partition and may themselves not be children or grandchildren of survivors of Partition violence but they depict the children of survivors in their works. In the works which will be discussed in this chapter, Vishwajyoti Ghosh’s work is not a work of simply fiction but is a collection of graphic narratives which present the perspectives of the second and third generation about the event.

Reema Moudgil writes *Perfect Eight* with “the idea of Partition dividing India even today”<sup>357</sup>. In this novel she presents the entire journey of the life of the second generation character of Ira, the first person narrator of the novel who inherits her mother’s sense of fear and loss of happiness as she says in the beginning of the novel: “I learnt from her to smell grief before it struck”<sup>358</sup>. Ira already ‘knows’ the past and she presents her connection to her mother even when she is in her womb. The body which nourished her in the womb also shared with her the experiences which shaped her and teaches her to “trust pain more than happiness”<sup>359</sup>. The novel presents Ira’s life from her childhood to adulthood and takes the form of a Bildungsroman where she depicts her mother’s narrative from her perspective and how her life has been defined and guided by her mother’s traumatic experiences. All characters and actions are narrated from Ira’s perspective and how she comprehends life happening around her. K. Yeshoda Nanjappa writes: “Narrating is

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<sup>356</sup> Rita Goldberg. *Motherland: Growing Up with the Holocaust*. Google Book Search. Web. 23 May 2017. p. xix-xx.

<sup>357</sup> Reema Moudgil. “Reema Moudgil”. *Sangat Review*. 16 October 2015. Web. 16 May 2017. <<http://www.sangatreview.org/reema-moudgil/>>.

<sup>358</sup> Reema Moudgil. *Perfect Eight*. New Delhi: Tranquebar Press, 2010. p. 3.

<sup>359</sup> *Ibid.* p. 14.

perhaps the best way of remembering.... The entire text thus is an act of remembering”<sup>360</sup>. It is not until the end of the novel, where we meet adult Ira that we come to know the name of the narrator. This is indicative of the fact that the entire novel is in the form of remembering from the perspective of adult Ira who doesn't think her name is worth revealing until she forges an identity of her own.

Ira talks about her mother only as Ma and does not mention her name anywhere in the novel. This is characteristic of works which depict second generation postmemorial experiences as the narrative is that of the daughter. Thus Ma's identity is only that of being Ira's mother. Rather than focusing on the individuality of the characters by mentioning their names, Moudgil has tried to draw our attention to the intensity of the mother-daughter relationship and the almost similar type of existence that both these characters have. Ira's life is intricately bound to her mother's as both of them suffer from misfortunes throughout their life. Laurie Vickroy talks about “the mother/daughter relation as an important locus of identity formation and perpetuation of traumatic identities”<sup>361</sup> in contemporary narratives on trauma.

Till the age of five, Ira's mother was brought up in a prosperous home in Lahore but she is uprooted when the communal riots start and the parents are killed when their house is set on fire. She is saved as she was playing in the backyard when this incident took place. Later she takes refuge in a neighbouring Muslim household who hide her and keep her away from danger. She is then sent to Kanpur to the house of a friend of her father with Tai, a Hindu cleaning woman of the neighbourhood. Ira reaches Kanpur safely under the watchful guidance of Tai. Significantly Tai, the figure of the saviour completely disappears from the narrative after Ira reaches a place of safety away from the chaos of the Partition riots. This brings to the fore a curious class bias on the part of Moudgil who erases the plight of a woman belonging to the lower class from her narrative.

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<sup>360</sup> Yeshoda K. Nanjappa. “Postmemory, Identity and Narrative: Reema Moudgil's *Perfect Eight*”. *International Journal on Multicultural Literature* 2. 1 (2012): 71-79. Web. 14 April 2017. p. 74.

<sup>361</sup> As quoted by Preetha Vasan. “Memorizing Partition and Transmission of Trauma in Reema Moudgil's *Perfect Eight*”. *International Journal of Education and Multidisciplinary Studies*. 5. 2(2016): 86-93. Web. 14 April 2017. p. 90.

The journey that she undertakes on foot provides a detailed description of the atrocious conditions faced by people during the communal riots. Moudgil mentions the situation of trains during Partition which is now all too familiar to the readers as it has become an integral part of the narrative about the Partition: “Trains were no longer safe--sometimes the dead in them outnumbered the living”<sup>362</sup>. She also refers to the vultures which flew over the large ‘kafilas’ to feed on carcasses as people died due to exhaustion, hunger or enemy attacks. These images of Partition violence have become an integral part of the subsequent generation’s perception and memory about the event. It is this terrible journey that Ira’s mother undertakes which makes her into the individual who feared happiness and learnt that “happiness could never be foretold, but pain could”<sup>363</sup>. Her prosperous childhood had promised her a bright future but Partition takes away that future from her forever. After she lost her house and parents in Lahore, Ira’s mother lost any interest in finding happiness for herself and was always suspicious if happiness reached her by chance. Her stay at her father’s friend’s house in Kanpur also does not prove to be very helpful to her. She feels uncomfortable in her new home as she was suddenly uprooted from her place of belonging. This sense of not belonging continues to haunt Ira’s mother and by extension Ira throughout their lives. They never experience any stability in their life and it is as if the displacement during Partition becomes a permanent displacement and no place could accommodate these displaced beings. Partition sets off a series of displacements, both in terms of places and situations, which define the way in which Ira’s mother and subsequently Ira, navigate through life and people. As Ira says: “Ma’s investments in people were selective and soul-deep. I had taken after her though I didn’t know it then”<sup>364</sup>.

In the new country, Ira’s mother is called the “little refugee bitch” after the murder of Mahatma Gandhi by Nathuram Godse. After people realize that Godse was not a refugee, they leave her alone. In this hostile environment, she forms a friendship with Anamika/Anna, one of the daughters of her father’s friend. But that friendship cannot provide her with enough solace and she jumps out of the second floor window which leads Ira to say: “What a mess it all was. And

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<sup>362</sup> Reema Moudgil. *op. cit.* p. 16.

<sup>363</sup> *Ibid.* p. 17.

<sup>364</sup> *Ibid.* p. 51.

all because Ma had jumped from a second-floor window when she was six”<sup>365</sup>. Ira’s mother is sent to a residential school in Ferozpur after this indiscretion on her part where her friendship with Anna strengthens with the letters that they write to each other. She finishes school and college and gets the job of a primary school teacher and is married off to a man from Patiala who was a “dream-smith without a livelihood”<sup>366</sup>. Even her marital home is unwelcoming and her refugee status invites the ire of her mother-in-law who says: “I don’t like rifoojis. They spread misfortune wherever they go”<sup>367</sup>. It is ironic that in her place of belonging, Lahore, she had become unwelcome because she belonged to a Hindu family and in the place where she comes after her displacement; she becomes unwelcome because people believe she belongs to the other side of the border. She even thinks of committing suicide when she was carrying Ira in her womb but she decides against it when she feels Ira’s presence: “And then we promised each other that we would always hold each other”<sup>368</sup>. The refugee status of Ira’s mother which defined her sense of displacement, estrangement and exile is inherited by Ira throughout her life. Ira’s mother’s life receives a slight tinge of happiness only when they lived for a short period in Missamari Cantonment where they feel a certain sense of stability. After a brief stint with a printing press and the job of a marketing manager, Ira’s father passes away suddenly leaving behind both mother and daughter to fend for themselves. But Ira’s mother had learnt to survive during the days of Partition and even after her husband’s death; Ira’s mother stoically looks at life and decides to continue living and this is another learning that Ira receives from her mother.

In this novel, Ira’s identity is formed by the postmemory of her mother’s experiences during the Partition. In the course of the novel, Ira’s mother is never depicted as talking to Ira about her Partition experiences but it is as if the memories of those experiences flow intrinsically into Ira and shapes the way in which she views the world. Ira says: “Happiness, Ma had taught me, was a thorny, tricky animal. Wiggling in your arms. Threatening to wound you and get away”<sup>369</sup> and

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<sup>365</sup> Ibid. p. 10.

<sup>366</sup> Ibid. p. 26.

<sup>367</sup> Ibid. p. 26.

<sup>368</sup> Ibid. p. 14.

<sup>369</sup> Ibid. p. 23.



also that “[h]appiness was something we would always leave behind and go somewhere else”<sup>370</sup>. Ira had learnt to read her mother’s actions and emotions and it shaped the way in which Ira responded to the world around her. Ira states about her mother: “I never saw her smile too much. Life for her was a puzzle halved into life and death, and she had never been able to decide which piece she wanted”<sup>371</sup>. Because of this nature of her mother, Ira learnt that “...everything died. Beautiful things. Loved things. It was risky to love anything too much. And silly to take anything for granted”<sup>372</sup>. The events of her life seem to follow this knowledge that she receives from her mother. Her relationship with her father, with Samir or with her husband, Gautam--neither of them can give her any sense of permanent happiness and she seems to be aware of this fact. As a child, Ira is different from the other children in the cantonment of Missamari and she is tagged as ‘strange’ even by her own parents. People around her did not think of her as a normal child and she also thought of herself as dysfunctional. Ira compares herself to the crippled Sunny who also lived in the cantonment and says: “My legs could go anywhere they wished but my soul could not. It was paralysed”<sup>373</sup>. She focused on rather morbid things as a child and in social gatherings she brought up unpleasant topics like the death of a jawan due to tapeworm infection or the suicide of a neighbour by setting herself on fire. This morbidity gets ingrained in her and she can never fathom the way in which people gained happiness in their lives as happiness always seemed to elude her.

Though Ira’s life is also characterized by displacement throughout like her mother’s life, Ambrosa, Anna Aunty’s place provided a momentary sense of relief to both mother and daughter. The only place which was devoid of all the harsher realities of the world was the tea estate of Ambrosa where Ira’s Anna Aunty and her son Samir, with whom she falls in love, lived. The tea estate and its beautiful surroundings act as an escape for both Ira and her mother every time they feel trapped by their surroundings. It creates a space away from the world which could not provide them with any sense of prolonged happiness. The only long term bond or relationship that Ira’s mother nurtures is with Anna and in turn Ira also forges a relationship with

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<sup>370</sup> Ibid. p. 5.

<sup>371</sup> Ibid. p. 3.

<sup>372</sup> Ibid. p. 3.

<sup>373</sup> Ibid. p. 9.

Anna Aunty which provided her with a sense of comfort and warmth. Preetha Vasan writes: “Anna aunty and Annaville are the novel’s alternate worlds of happiness, fortune and sunshine. Anna aunty is in some ways mother’s alter-ego, having everything she always wished for. Be it sudden blossoms, sunny days, stars on a rainy night or her husband who names his opulent ancestral plantation after her, Anna aunty is mother’s binary for she asks life for happiness and receives it in armfuls”<sup>374</sup>. Throughout Ira’s life, she is taunted by everyone who looks upon her as strange either because of her appearance or behavior. Anna Aunty is the only person who provides her unconditional love and support not only in the form of material things like clothes and food but also through her understanding of Ira’s feelings. But even this idyllic landscape of Ambrosa loses its charm when Samir breaks Ira’s heart as he was never able to understand her love. Throughout the novel, Ira’s fragility and her sense of despair especially in the presence of Samir made her an entity beyond everyone’s understanding. Ira’s love for Samir remains as a guiding force for most of the novel but after the failed marriage with Gautam, when Ira returns to Samir, she realizes that Samir has nothing to offer to her as he was about to marry a girl named Navya. Thus Ira says looking into Samir’s eyes at the end of the novel: “His eyes peered down at me. I saw in them Ma and myself and the bundles of pain and fear we had carried on our backs. I saw strangers ripping apart Ma’s life in Lahore. I saw her life-long mourning”<sup>375</sup>. Ira’s life and relationships bear the burden of the postmemory of the trauma that her mother had experienced and she can never seem to move beyond that.

None of the relationships that Ira shares be it with her father whom she calls Papu, or with Samir, or with her husband, Gautam, can give her any sense of sustenance and stability. The postmemory of her mother’s displacement and ensuing fragility and fear haunts Ira’s relationships. Moreover, the people with whom she chooses to form relationships with also turn out to be people without any conviction, sincerity or stability. It seems as if the curse of her mother’s life follows her for the entire period of her life. Ira’s father tries to provide her with a good life but the lack of any permanent source of income and eventually his sudden death robs Ira from her chance of familial happiness. Samir appears in Ira’s life in intervals, creates ripples in her life and then again disappears to appear again suddenly. At times, he seems understanding

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<sup>374</sup> Preetha Vasan. op. cit. p. 91.

<sup>375</sup> Reema Moudgil. op. cit. p. 250.

of her and at other times insults her and pushes her away from his life. As Ira remains confused about her own identity, Samir's presence in her life does not make it any less difficult for her. Her life gets more muddled as she can never completely understand Samir and the relationship that she shared with him. At times she feels cornered by her cousins, by her uncle Naren's wife Nimmo, by Anu, daughter of Anna's sister Manna and even by Samir. Further her marriage with Gautam, which her uncle Naren arranges for her, leads to a similar doomed ending. Even though Ira's mother thought that the marriage would provide her stability, Ira's comment makes it amply clear that nothing of that sort was going to happen: "It was my turn to jump from a ledge like Ma"<sup>376</sup>. Gautam turns out to be someone who married her not out of love for her but because he could not get married to Sarita, his boss at the newspaper agency where he worked. But after the initial months of Ira's marriage, Gautam fails to hide his feelings for Sarita when he is around her. Gradually Ira's marriage moves towards its fated doom and she realizes that Gautam was not the stable ground that she was trying to hold on to. After she is verbally and physically assaulted by a bus conductor on board a bus and Gautam blames her for having overreacted, Ira attempts to commit suicide just like her mother had done earlier but eventually holds on to her life as she had learnt the art of survival from her mother. Her mother had walked along with a servant across the border and had survived. So Ira remembers her mother's ordeal during Partiton and says "I suddenly realized it was crucial to live. I had to live. For myself.... For the woman who stood on a bridge and did not jump because I had stirred within her"<sup>377</sup>. While writing about the concept of postmemory in twentieth century Ethnic American Women's Literature, Maria J. Rice stresses on the relationship of a mother and daughter as a space for deep connection and transmission of memories and experiences which define the daughter's life. She writes: "[T]he intimacy of the home space deepens the intersubjective communion between mother and daughter, daughters often repeat variations of their mothers' experiences in their own lives and experience difficulty differentiating from their traumatic inheritance"<sup>378</sup>.

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<sup>376</sup> Ibid, p. 165.

<sup>377</sup> Ibid, p. 206.

<sup>378</sup> Maria J. Rice. *Migrations of Memory: Postmemory in Twentieth Century Ethnic American Women's Literature*. Ph. D. Thesis. The State University of New Jersey, 2007. Web. 4 June 2017.

Interestingly, the novel moves from Lahore to Kanpur to Patiala to Missamari in Assam and to Ambrosa in Kangra valley and to Bangalore. During this journey, the country also goes through various unrests like the Emergency, anti-Sikh riots, and the riots following the demolition of the Babri Masjid. We see that at certain points that Ira juxtaposes the public with the private and also the past with the present. As Ira's life undergoes disturbances and displacements, the country also experiences the same. As Ira's life is burdened with the postmemory of her mother, the country also seethes under the postmemory of Partition. K.Yeshoda Nanjappa writes in this context: "Intricately interwoven with their personal story is the turbulent history of modern India and the complex ramifications of communal violence"<sup>379</sup>.

Moudgil while depicting the influence of Partition on the second generation also depicts the continuing communal conflicts in the country. This shows that the seed of communalism which was sown during Partition still continues to give rise to communal unrests in the country. Moudgil, in an attempt to depict the continuing mistrust between Hindus and Muslims brings in the characters of Zoya and Ravi as the friends that Ira makes in Bangalore. Zoya and Ravi, both from Delhi, had fallen in love with each other and eloped to Bangalore as both their families were almost on the verge of killing each other because of their inherent mistrust towards the other community. As Ira accompanied them one evening to a small movie theatre in a dingy locality, they are faced by a sudden Hindu-Muslim riot which results in a curfew all over the city. They are chased by a mob with bottles and butcher knives and all three of them escape narrowly from the situation. This incident takes place when the Ayodhya tension was brewing in the background. Moudgil cleverly interweaves the continuing events of turmoil in the country with the turmoils in both Ira and her mother's life. Thus the collective memory of Partition is represented in the novel along with the ramifications of the traumatic event in the personal sphere. The blurb on the back cover of *Perfect Eight* sums it up perfectly: "And Perfect Eight, a road in Ambrosa, twists on like a never-ending story about the cultural skeins that outlast violence and our enduring connections with people long dead and memories that outlast death and destruction"<sup>380</sup>.

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<sup>379</sup> Yeshoda K. Nanjappa. op. cit. p. 71.

<sup>380</sup> Reema Mougil. op. cit. Back Cover.

Similar to Moudgil's Ira, in Meena Arora Nayak's novel *About Daddy*, the first person narrator Simran's life is guided by the postmemory of Partition which she receives from her father. But the important aspect that needs to be highlighted in this aspect is that the character of the father in *About Daddy* is at once a victim and a perpetrator during the Partition riots whereas the character of the mother in *Perfect Eight* is a victim whose parents were killed during the riots. This draws our attention to the fact that unlike the Holocaust where the distinction between the victim and perpetrator was clearly defined, in the case of the Partition riots, someone who was a victim at one point could have been a perpetrator at some other moment. This blurring of the lines between the victim and the perpetrator draws our attention to the difficulty of understanding the complex nature of the experiences of the survivors of the Partition riots. Thus in both the novels, the protagonists struggle to come to terms with the memories of the parent who survived the Partition riots. The protagonists try to negotiate an identity of their own by engaging with the transferred memories of their parents. Their lives are so intricately tied to the parents' memories that they try to understand the present in terms of the past, they try to define their own lives by the memories handed down to them by their parents. As Art had struggled with his father's memories as a Holocaust survivor in *Maus*, both Ira and Simran struggle with their respective parent's memories to forge an identity of their own. As the opening of *Maus* had featured Art's experience, the openings of the works of Moudgil and Nayak also present the point of view of the second generation characters and the perception about their parents' past.

Nayak is a diasporic writer trying to connect herself to the traumatic beginning of her country of origin. She writes in the acknowledgement of the book: "I thank my parents for reliving their painful past for me"<sup>381</sup> thus establishing a family connection to the event of Partition. Nayak's depiction of the event is based on the memories that her parents recounted to her which in turn forms her postmemory about the event. Hence, Nayak is a second generation writer who has depicted a second generation character, Simran, who narrates the story of coming from America to India to sprinkle her father's ashes at the India-Pakistan border as that was the last wish of her father who said: "Don't cremate me in India. I cannot ask her to bear the weight of my pyre. I have taken from her enough. But sprinkle my ashes on the border so that my soul can feel the

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<sup>381</sup> Meena Arora Nayak. *About Daddy*. New Delhi: Penguin Books India, 2000.

wound I helped inflict as long as it bleeds”<sup>382</sup>. Simran feels such a deep connection to her father’s memories that she can almost hear her father saying, “I helped divide India... I killed the trust between Hindus and Muslims so that they can never live together in peace again. I hurt her. I cut her up”<sup>383</sup>. But before she can sprinkle the ashes, Simran is arrested on suspicion of being a threat to national security as she had clicked a photograph of the border in order to remember the last resting place of her father. Simran says: “Isn’t it ironic that I was imprisoned for Daddy’s ashes?”<sup>384</sup> The father’s deeds seem to punish the daughter even after his death.

The novel then moves forward with Simran’s struggles in prison, the hardships she faces to get her father’s ashes back, her relationship with her boyfriend Scott who comes from America to help her, Arun, the journalist who helps her during her trial, and Kali da, the peace activist who later turns out to be a man with connections to Pakistan’s terrorist organizations. But among all these, the crucial aspect of the novel is the manner in which Simran weaves the narrative of her father within her own narrative. It is as if the father even after passing away continues to haunt Simran’s life and dictate the decisions she makes as she can never let go of the memories that had travelled from her father to her. At times, she tries to find comfort by remembering the story that her father told about a quilt that his mother had made for him and at other times, she is burdened by a sense of immense guilt by remembering her father’s past.

This journey that Simran undertakes in the novel can be looked upon as a “commemorative journey”<sup>385</sup> to try to forge a relationship with the place to which her father once belonged. Initially Simran thinks of herself as American and not Indian and only associates to the Indian identity as that was the identity of her parents. But once she learns of her father’s history, she feels immensely connected to the country and its traumatic past. Simran’s father had experienced the loss of loved ones during the riots as his father and Gajji, whom he looked up to as a father figure, were killed during the riots. But both Simran and her father focus on the part where in a

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<sup>382</sup> Ibid. p. 1.

<sup>383</sup> Ibid. p. 2.

<sup>384</sup> Ibid. p. 133.

<sup>385</sup> Graham Huggan. *Extreme Pursuits: Travel/ Writing in an Age of Globalization*. Google Book Search. Web. 14 November. 2014. p. 149.

blind rage, he killed many innocent people in a marketplace. This aspect of her father's history becomes so ingrained in her mind that she became immensely traumatized when during her childhood she meets her friend Farzana's grandmother whose hand had been severed during the riots. Farzana and her parents had migrated from Pakistan to the United States after the Partition. Farzana, following the conventional notion of us vs. them calls Simran her 'enemy' because of her identity as a person from India. Later, when Simran meets Farzana's grandmother, she looks upon her as one of her father's victims. To Simran, her Daddy's "fear appeared so tangible, [she] could feel it in [her] own throat"<sup>386</sup>. Unlike Moudgil's Ira who had inherited her mother's sense of fear because of the immense loss of parents that Ira's mother had suffered during the Partition riots, Simran's fear stems from her inherent desire to protect her father. She continuously fears losing him because of his past deeds. After she undergoes a nervous breakdown as a result of meeting Farzana's grandmother, Simran thinks of various ways of protecting her father. "I promised myself I would take good care of Daddy... I thought about making my parents move to another city, getting my father to undergo facial surgery so no one would recognize him, going to the Indian Embassy and confessing all. My last thought that night was to beg them to put me in jail instead of my father."<sup>387</sup>

The postmemory of Simran, then, bears a significant relationship to the crime that her father had committed and this traumatic memory is handed over to Simran in the form of an oral testimony of her father. Marriane Hirsch talks about the way in which stories, behaviours etc. among which the 'generation after' grows up can help in constituting what we understand as postmemory. Even as a child, Simran notices the way in which neither of her parents talked about India, the place of their belonging. She questions her parents about this and at that moment her father confesses about his crimes and says: "I'm the reason we don't visit India. Why we don't talk about it... I hurt India. I hurt her badly."<sup>388</sup> In Hirsch's formulation of postmemory, the family unit is an important space for the transmission of memories and this is noticeable in the way in which right from childhood Simran's family environment creates in her an awareness about her own identity as an Indian which had been forged through pain and suffering for her father. One

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<sup>386</sup> Meena Arora Nayak. op. cit. p. 15.

<sup>387</sup> Ibid. p. 36.

<sup>388</sup> Ibid, p. 13.

object which tries to provide some sense of protection to Simran is the blanket that she inherits from her father. It is a patchwork quilt Simran's grandmother had made for her father to save him from a beggar's curse. She finds solace in the quilt after her father's death and remembers the story of the quilt just after she is tortured in prison in India. After her father's death, it is the quilt and her father's favourite chair, a black leather-bound Laz-E-Boy which provides her enough comfort to sleep at night. Thus items which are handed over through generations along with stories, images help in the transmission or travel of memories. The daughter undertakes an imaginative recall throughout the novel to keep herself connected to her father.

After Simran's grandmother passed away, her grandfather had shifted with his family to her aunt's place in Lahore. But her grandfather abandoned her father and went away with a sadhu without informing anyone. Simran's father's childhood is spent in Lahore where he befriends Amjad. Nayak portrays this friendship between two members of opposing religions as a contrast to Simran's experiences of the present state of affairs in India which involved communal rivalries and clashes. Simran's father, Manohar is adopted by Amjad's mother and taken into the folds of her family after he is forced to beg for food on the streets because of his torturing aunt. Amjad's mother treats him as his own son and the relationship between the two friends are like that of two brothers. The representation of Gajji, the pehelwan, in whose akhara both Amjad and Manohar trained, depicts the picture of a secular person who dreams of unity between the Hindus and the Muslims. Nayak presents a nostalgic picture of the country before Partition where there is harmony between the two communities. Simran says: "My father used to tell me how at one time, before the Partition, the Hindus and Muslims lived like one community"<sup>389</sup>. As communal clashes started in Lahore and the talks of Partition began, many of Gajji pehelwan's students stop coming to his akhara in fear of trouble. Amjad's father withdraws both Amjad and Manohar from the akhara but Manohar, Simran's father had formed a close bond with Gajji and looks upon him like a father figure. Eventually Amjad's father tracks down Simran's grandfather in Nanowal and sends Manohar there in fear of danger to his life in the escalating communal tension in Lahore. But no sooner than Manohar reunites with his father in Nanowal, his father is killed by a mob. Manohar returns to Lahore and finds that Amjad's family has shifted to Rawalpindi to be with relatives in the time of crisis. He then turns to his only friend in Lahore,

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<sup>389</sup> Ibid. p. 102.



Gajji pehelwan. But Gajji is also killed soon after because of his secular beliefs. This leads to Simran's father's terrible rage and the violence that he unleashes against the Muslims where he even forgets the kindness of Amjad's family to him. The horrific image of the violence unleashed by Simran's father is described as follows: "Severed limbs, decapitated heads fell around him like windfall fruit. Reeling bodies collapsed at his feet. With every blow, blood vessels burst, squirting his face, his hands, his body. Smearred in Muslim blood, he ran down the streets, striking anyone who came in the way",<sup>390</sup>.

Simran recollects her father's deeds while interacting with Sultana, an inmate in the prison where she was being held for photographing at the border. Sultana, who is known as a terrorist in the prison, reveals the nature of her crime to Simran. She had killed two Hindu men who had burnt her house along with the houses of her neighbours just because they were Muslims residing in a Hindu majority neighbourhood. Her father was killed and her brother's hands got severely burnt so that he would never be able to fulfill his dream of being a cricketer. Sultana had recognized the men who had started the fire and in order to take revenge she kills two of them. Sultana's father who was a teacher is similar to Gajji in his secular beliefs and his love for his students and his country. But like Gajji, he is killed because of his religion and like Simran's father; Sultana had killed two men in her rage. When Arun asks her to write about the conditions of the prison and the rape of the inmates including Sultana, Simran can only write about the communal tensions still plaguing the country years after independence: "I write about Daddy and Sultana, youth lost in blind rage and revenge.... And I write about myself, an unwilling participant forced into the midst of it all and now hopelessly involved"<sup>391</sup>. Simran's involvement in her father's history becomes more entangled when she decides to stay back in India even when she is released from prison on the condition of her immediate return to America. She decides to not leave India till she gets back her father's ashes from the custody of the police as they had confiscated all her belongings during her arrest. She says: "I know I cannot leave now, because I am my father's daughter"<sup>392</sup>. She even goes to visit Sultana's brother, Iftekhar and meets the others affected by the fire which killed Sultana's father and burnt down their house. Simran

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<sup>390</sup> Ibid. p. 111.

<sup>391</sup> Ibid. p. 112.

<sup>392</sup> Ibid. p. 163.

carries within herself immense guilt for her father's deeds and blames herself for India's communal problems: "How does one apologize for the murder of loved ones, for the betrayal of one's own, for being the daughter of a man who poisoned the very soil meant to nurture?"<sup>393</sup>

Though Simran was born and brought up in America away from the collective memory of Partition, when she visits India, we see an attempt in her to relate to and analyze the incidents that take place around her in terms of her inherited memory. She finds similarities between the friends she makes in prison and her father's friends about whom she had heard from his father: "... I feel a gratifying sense of continuum between Daddy's life in this country more than a half century ago and the present... How Koki's friends sound so much like the people Daddy lived with in the country"<sup>394</sup>. Simran also feels a deep sense of obligation and guilt on the part of her father when she sees the continuing nature of communal riots and unrest in the country. Thus when she meets the friends of Sultana, she "sees[s] them as inheritors of Daddy's legacy"<sup>395</sup>. The deep sense of connectedness that Simran feels to her own father's past is also noticed by Arun when he says: "Your guilt is self-imposed, Simran. It will destroy you like it did your father... And for heaven's sake, lay your father to rest, because until you do, you'll never have a life of your own"<sup>396</sup>. But that is one thing that Simran cannot do; she feels that she has to deliver her father to the penance that he wanted.

Simran's experiences with Kalida, a peace activist also lead her to experience the face of communal violence directly. A Hindu religious procession passing through a Muslim majority area becomes the bone of contention between the two communities. As a result of this, a man named Janki Prasad and members of his family are murdered by the Muslims. Kalida proposes to be the peace keeper between the two communities. Meanwhile, Simran discovers the truth behind the peace organization run by Kalida. Kalida, a former Naxalite, believes in the power of destruction before the creation of anything positive. His connection with terror related activities in Pakistan leads to Simran's disillusionment about the fate of the country which her father loved.

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<sup>393</sup> Ibid. p. 162.

<sup>394</sup> Ibid, p. 58.

<sup>395</sup> Ibid, p. 160.

<sup>396</sup> Ibid, p. 213.

The end of the novel depicts Simran trapped in the middle of a religious procession which turns violent and her father's ashes which she is carrying gets mixed in the dust when there is an explosion. But she feels that she has rescued his soul and delivered it not to penance but to ecstasy<sup>397</sup>. Hirsch has written: "Postmemory's connection to the past is... not mediated by recall but by imaginative investment, projection, and creation. To grow up with such overwhelming inherited memories, to be dominated by narratives that preceded one's birth... is to risk having one's own stories and experiences displaced, even evacuated by those of a previous generation"<sup>398</sup>. This is what happens to Simran as her life is completely taken over by the memories of her father and even influences the decisions she makes in the present. At the end of the novel, when Simran makes a decision to stay back in India by saying, "This is my home, Scott, just like it was Daddy's", Scott remarks: "It's not this country. It's your father. I can't believe you're letting a dead man come between us"<sup>399</sup>. After going through the varied experiences in India, she realizes that her father's wish for penance stemmed from his intense love for the country and in turn she falls in love with the same country.

The title of the novel itself is indicative of the fact that the entire novel is about Daddy or about the father figure. The entire narrative is from the point of view of Simran and how she remembers her father's memory of the Partition. Her experiences in India and those of her father years ago are mingled together to form her postmemory. Similar to Moudgil, Nayak also depicts the communal clashes that plague India till date. Though Partition is an event of the past, its effect is still visible in the subcontinent. Nayak has portrayed the current situation of the country with its faulty judicial system, the inhuman conditions in the jails, the way journalism works, the fraudulent peace organizations and the continuing communal clashes. Nayak's postmemory of Partition is formed based on her parents' memories, and her interactions with various people in India. In this attempt of hers to establish a connection with India, she juxtaposes the present of India to its past and has attempted to find justifications for the present in the past. Through the

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<sup>397</sup> Ibid, p. 293.

<sup>398</sup> Marianne Hirsch. "The Generation of Postmemory". *Poetics Today* 29, 1 (2008): 107. Web. 28 April 2012. <<http://facweb.northseattle.edu/cscheuer/Winter%202012/Engl%20102%20Culture/Readings/Hirsch%20Postmemory.pdf>>.

<sup>399</sup> Ibid, p. 244.

character of Simran and her father/ Daddy, Nayak harks back to the Partition as the decisive event which leads to the current problems in India.

Apart from Moudgil and Nayak's novels, the 2009 novel *Five Queen's Road* by Sorayya Khan provides a glimpse of the aftermath of Partition from the other side of the border. Interestingly, Khan portrays the position of a Hindu man, a member of the minority in Lahore during the Partition. The aftermath of Partition and the way in which the characters forge various relationships between themselves as a result of the division are brilliantly portrayed in the novel. The power equations between the characters depict the way in which relationships can change based on the lines drawn on the basis of communal politics. The postmemory of Khan about Partition is also based on her familial memories which she received from her father and her various other relatives. The testimony of her father and her father's sisters about their experiences during Partition helped her form an image of the life and times during Partition. She writes in the acknowledgements of the novel: "I owe the inspiration for the novel the folklore of my family. My father, Munir Ahmad Khan, indulged repeated questions about Partition, growing up in Lahore and a variety of other, more obscure topics. More importantly, he provided glimpses into family legends that sustained my writing imagination."<sup>400</sup> As testimonies are an important source of the transmission of memories, Khan also engages in research about the event based on her brother's oral archive pertaining to Partition. The author also incorporates the memories of her mother about World War II through the depiction of the character of Irene who struggles with her memories of World War II. Thus Khan skillfully juxtaposes Partition memories with those of World War II, another traumatic event.

In an interview given to Global Asian Times, Khan is asked: "How were you able to accomplish this gigantic task without living through this traumatic period of history?" to which she answers:

While the generation that experienced Partition is now slowly dying out, we grew up on its stories. In this way, we learned what Partition was like, even for those, like my father's family, which was already in Lahore and did not cross borders. Perhaps there is almost a body memory that has been passed along, whether in the form of stories we grew up on, or in the traumas that our parents' generation survived. Further, as with my

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<sup>400</sup> Sorayya Khan. *Five Queen's Road*. New Delhi: Penguin Books India, 2009. p. 212.

other novels, I conducted extensive research, which in this case included interviewing family members, listening to an archive of interviews my brother compiled for another project, reading newspapers and other accounts, studying maps, and looking at photographs. I was also lucky to have amazing cousins who confirmed details about Lahore's flora, geographic details, and a sundry of other things.<sup>401</sup>

The postmemory of Khan about the Partition is formed by the combination of familial memories and her own research. Her postmemory about the event is depicted in the novel not through the depiction of second generation characters influenced by parents' memories as found in *Perfect Eight* and *About Daddy* but through the depiction of her understanding of borders and boundaries and how it affected people after Partition. Khan creates a microcosm within the house Five Queen's Road where she depicts the trials and tribulations that both the Hindu and Muslim family undergo after the house is divided and they start inhabiting on both sides--Amir Shah and his family in the front house and Dina Lal at the back. The characters experience a range of emotions for each other starting from suspicion to rage and hatred but the underlying feeling of brotherhood and love cannot be overlooked.

The novel focuses on a man named Dina Lal who refuses to leave Lahore in 1947 when the country is partitioned. He refuses to abandon Five Queen's Road, a house he had bought from a departing Englishman. The house becomes a metaphor for the borders drawn between the newly formed countries as it is shared by a Hindu and Muslim family. The occupants of the house fight over it, try to possess various parts of it and create borders demarcating various parts just as the country was being divided and borders were being drawn to claim possession by various communities. Dina Lal does not believe in any "make believe border" and thinks that it is an outrage, "this business of drawing lines where there had been none"<sup>402</sup>. He further says: "Who were the British to draw imaginary--crooked, even--lines across his land and proclaim a random date when it would break (like a biscuit, for God's sake!) into two countries?"<sup>403</sup> Thus Dina Lal,

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<sup>401</sup> Sorayya Khan. "Murky Pakistani Politics Inspire City of Spies". Interview by Vinita Kinra. *Global Asian Times*. 20 March 2016. Web. 20 June 2017.

<sup>402</sup> Sorayya Khan. *Five Queen's Road*. New Delhi: Penguin Books India, 2009. p. 14.

<sup>403</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 14-15.

who refuses to migrate to India, continues to “live in communities of memories and images”<sup>404</sup> while remembering the glorious days of the past.

Dina Lal’s sons abandon him and his wife Janoo, and cross the border to India. With growing communal tensions and after Janoo is attacked and robbed by a few men on the driveway of the house, Dina Lal changes his religion and invites Amir Shah, a lawyer and rents the front part of the house to him at a nominal rent with the hope of protecting himself from the rioters. His hope was that a Muslim family in the house would protect him from communal violence. Dina Lal builds the Partition dividing the house into two with various pieces of furniture left behind by the Englishman. The division is as random as the division of the country as viewed by Dina Lal. But one day when Janoo is alone at home with only Javid and Rubina, Amir Shah’s children, in the front house, she is abducted by four unknown men. Though the police investigate the matter, she is never found again. Dina Lal’s hope of Amir Shah protecting him and Janoo is completely shattered and this gives rise to everlasting anger and resentment in Dina Lal’s mind towards his tenant.

Janoo’s abduction signals the beginning of a ritual--a ritual of Amir Shah’s family feeding Dina Lal for the rest of his life. And this ritual continues through even the ugliest of fights that both the men enter into where they end up calling each other names. Over the years, Amir Shah becomes a permanent tenant of Dina Lal’s house and both form a symbiotic relationship with each other. Dina Lal, a man who had no one left to call his own receives food from Amir Shah and Amir Shah, a man displaced by Partition, receives shelter in Dina Lal’s house.

Coincidentally, Dina Lal is the one who saves the life of Amir Shah and both his children in times of emergency. When Javid accidentally washes his face with acid-mixed water, when Rubina is about to give birth with no one in the house and when the wall of the library in the front house of Five Queen’s Road collapse almost killing Amir Shah--it is Dina Lal who helps them each time. Even under the garb of years of anger and resentment, Dina Lal does not lose his humanity. Khan depicts Dina Lal as a contrast to the numerous people who engaged in violence during the Partition and even later when Dina Lal is attacked brutally and left to die in the driveway of the house from where Javid saves him. Through Dina Lal and Amir Shah’s hatred

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<sup>404</sup> Alok Bhalla. *Partition Dialogues: Memories of Lost Home*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006. p. 45.

towards each other, Khan has attempted to depict the relationship that the two countries have shared over the years after Partition. And through the acts of kindness that both men demonstrate, Khan depicts the way in which feelings of human love and kindness should not be forgotten even in the face of trauma and tragedy.

The novel starts in 1957, ten years after the Partition and moves backward and forward to provide us with a picture of the lives led by the characters then and in the present. Although Dina Lal hated Amir Shah, he had formed a close bond with his son Javid and even paid for his University application so that he could continue his studies in America. Javid meets his European wife Irene while studying in America and through the character of Irene; Khan provides an outsider's perspective on the situation in Five Queen's Road. She is the one who questions about the ownership of the house. With the passing years, a car shop settlement grows in the lawns in front of the house and a sweepers' colony develops on the top of the driveway expanding itself gradually which are later revealed to have been allowed by Dina Lal out of his lack of faith in his Muslim neighbour after Janoo's abduction. Once Irene comes to live in Five Queen's Road with her husband, she is baffled by her surroundings and the relationship that her father-in-law shared with his neighbour. Irene repeatedly wants to know to whom the house belonged in order to understand the tensed relationship between Amir Shah and Dina Lal. The answer that she receives is that the house belonged to no one. The not belonging of the house presents the reality of Partition itself as the belongingness of the country to either Hindus and Muslims led to the Partition of the country. Partition tried to decide to who belonged to which side of the border and that led to bloodshed and violence on an unimaginable scale.

After Dina Lal passes away, his bedroom is found to be filled with newspapers worth sixteen years--a collection which he had started on the day in July, 1947 when his sons abandoned him and Janoo and left for India. "He had put the newspapers in the corner of the bedroom, proof the day had existed, there had been stories to write and details to share, even though none had to do with him.... For fifteen years and ten months Dina Lal collected evidence of time passing and lives shortening amid the tangle of what remained of him after his two grown boys absconded"<sup>405</sup>. Partition had ruined Dina Lal's life and what remained was a lonely man struggling with his own survival. The blurb of the novel on the back cover reads: "In this

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<sup>405</sup> Ibid. p. 200.

stunning novel that weaves family saga and national history, Sorayya Khan writes deftly of characters who battle memories and each other alike”<sup>406</sup>.

Apart from the novels discussed in this chapter, 2013 saw the publication of another important work, an anthology of graphic narratives called *This Side, That Side* brought together by Vishwajyoti Ghosh. As Art Spiegelman has experimented with the comic form to depict the Holocaust memories of his father and its influences on him, Vishwajyoti Ghosh has brought together narratives from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh of the subsequent generations’ engagement with the Partition and depicted them as graphic narratives. The narratives are described as “creative explorations by those who may not have witnessed Partition, but who continue, till date, to negotiate its legacy”<sup>407</sup>. The subtitle of the work is ‘Restorying Partition’ and the various narratives by the members of the subsequent generations view the event from various perspectives and also depicts the way in which the event has had an effect on the lives of various people. Ghosh writes: “Restorying Partition can never be easy. If one wants to avoid the usual revival of Mass Memory, one has to look beyond those maps lodged in our nervous systems that make nervous headlines on our televisions. To listen to the subsequent generations and the grandchildren and how they have negotiated maps that never got drawn. *This Side, That Side* is a tiny drop in the river of stories that must be told before the markers run dry”<sup>408</sup>. Thus this work is proof that the later generations try to represent their understanding of Partition by understanding the long standing effects that Partition has had over the years.

The book features twenty eight narratives which are a result of collaborations between writers and artists. The stories are written by people from a wide range of professions like comic artists, illustrators, film makers, theatre artists and writers. Tabish Khair and Priya Kuriyan’s story ‘An Old Fable’ talks about the illogical decision of partitioning the country by depicting the story of a child being cut into two. The child becomes symbolic of the country which was divided and its effect was felt by the common people. The absurdity of a political decision ruining the life of the story is the moral of the story.

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<sup>406</sup> Ibid. Back Cover.

<sup>407</sup> Vishwajyoti Ghosh. *This Side, That Side*. New Delhi: Yoda Press, 2013. Back Cover.

<sup>408</sup> Ibid. p. 12.



Ahmad Rafay Alam and Martand Khosla's story '90 Upper Mall' is a story of real life coincidence where Martand Khosla's grandfather G D Khosla owned 90 Upper Mall before Partition and Ahmad Rafay Alam's grandfather Mehmood Alam was sanctioned the same house when he moved to Pakistan with his family. Years later their grandchildren Ahmad Rafay Alam and Martand Khosla meet while studying in the United Kingdom and discover this connection between them. There is a curious coincidence and Ahmad Rafay Alam says: "... I now associate Partition with how my family came to live in Martand's house"<sup>409</sup>. This story has helped these two men to move away from the narrative of "loss and violence" and it has acted as a "buffer against the prejudices of history"<sup>410</sup>. This story, like many others in Ghosh's book features photographs which provide us a window to glimpse into the past.

Ankur Ahuja presents the story of her grandfather in 'The Red Ledger' and shows the urge of a third generation member to know about the experiences undergone by the grandparent during Partition. Her grandfather did not talk much about his life in Pakistan but only about the brotherhood between the Hindus and Muslims. Years after her grandfather's death, her grandmother told her about the incident where one of his grandfather's sisters was abducted during the journey they undertook to reach Delhi. Though she was found later, her grandfather refused to discuss what happened with her.

All the writers and illustrators are members of the second and third generation and show incredible involvement with the subject of Partition. Not all of them have depicted familial stories and the influence it had on them. They have also tried to engage with the still continuing effects that Partition has had on the common people. In the stories, there are interactions between journalists on both sides of the border who muse over the difficulty of getting a visa to visit each other's country; there are depictions of Hindus working in Pakistan and Muslims in India and the problems that the members of both communities face. In Sonya Fatah and Archana Sreenivasan's story 'Karachi-Delhi Katha', such a story is presented where the Hindu maid in Pakistan fears for her daughter and cannot even wear a bindi for fear of being identified as a Hindu and the Muslim maid in India wears a bindi to hide her identity as a Muslim. On both sides of the border, the

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<sup>409</sup> Ibid. p. 189.

<sup>410</sup> Ibid. p. 189.

deep-seated fear of the 'other' still remains as a part of the psyche of people. There is curiosity to visit the homeland one is forced to leave behind and also speculation about life on the other side. Vishwajyoti Ghosh presents a multifarious narrative which provides the readers an opportunity to view the event of Partition through various lenses and the graphic form of the narrative provides an additional visual element which triggers and captures the imagination of the readers.

Therefore, the second and third generations inherit the memories of the event and form their own postmemory involving their own understanding of the world around them in terms of the memories of the event. The inheritance of Partition memories can take place through various forms like familial memory, collective and cultural memory, reading of testimonies, historical documents etc. But the depictions by the subsequent generations continue to form various modes of memorializing the event. Rather than attempting to depict the event, the works analyzed in this chapter depict the effects of the memory of Partition prevalent even today. The works depict continuing communal clashes, issues of distrust and lack of fellow-feeling between communities. These second and third generation works continue to supplement the archive with the postmemory of Partition and view the event as the germinating point of the lines that have been drawn between communities. Partition has not been removed from the realm of the subsequent generations' purview as the event still defines many relationships and decisions which affect their lives. What history books cannot depict is presented by these authors as the effect of Partition is felt palpably by them--those with familial connection to the event feel the presence of the event in their lives because of incessant recollections of their family members and those without familial connection feel the presence of the event in the way they lead their lives and forge relationships with people around them. As Partition started the journey of the country, it still continues to influence people's thoughts and actions.

## Conclusion

India was no discarded paper that you had to tear to bits.

I want to erase the word 47

I want to wash away the inkstain of 47

With water and soap.

47 – the word pricks like a thorn in my throat

I do not want to swallow it.

I want to vomit it out

-- Taslima Nasrin<sup>411</sup>

This poem succinctly describes the situation of second and third generation members of Partition who cannot deny the presence of Partition in their lives like a ‘thorn’ lodged in their throat-- neither can they swallow it nor can they vomit it out. It is a difficult position to be situated in-- neither a part of the event nor completely detached from it. The ever-present communal clashes around the country and the politics of segregation that is still a sad reality in the sub-continent make the second and third generation a willing or unwilling participant in the discourse of the legacy of Partition. Kavita Daiya has written: “...the 1947 Partition continues to haunt contemporary life in India”<sup>412</sup>. Hence, the event which still has palpable presence in the country can hardly be said to have receded to the past.

The aim of this thesis was to understand the concept of Postmemory in the context of Partition by taking recourse to the theoretical formulations of Postmemory as developed in the field of Holocaust studies. Distinctions have been made between the two events and the victim-perpetrator scenario has proven to be more complicated in case of Partition. But the theoretical formulations in the field of Holocaust studies have been utilized to reach a nuanced

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<sup>411</sup> Taslima Nasrin. ‘Denial’. <http://www.india-seminar.com/2002/510/510%20poems%20on%20partition.htm>. 1 June 2017.

<sup>412</sup> Kavita Daiya. *Violent Belongings: Partition, Gender, and National Culture in Postcolonial India*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008. p. 2.

understanding of the notion of Postmemory in the context of Partition. The notion of Postmemory of Partition has been developed based on recent fictions by second and third generation authors about the event which have been written specifically after 1998--the year of the publication of oral testimonies of Partition. The works of Urvashi Butalia, and Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin have contributed significantly to the field of Partition oral history and the second and third generation Partition fiction authors have accepted their indebtedness to their works in providing invaluable information about an event which long preceded their birth.

This thesis has gained momentum from the gradual erasure of the memory of the survivor generation with the growing temporal distance from the event which brings forward an anxiety about the future ways of remembering the event of Partition. This anxiety has led to the creation of oral history projects which have become an invaluable source to the second and third generation authors representing Partition in their works. The various ways of representation of the event of Partition have been analyzed while trying to understand the ways in which the authors have reached back to an event which happened years before they had taken birth. The writers whose works have been analyzed write about event without any first-hand knowledge of the event.

The involvement of the authors with the event is shown to be a result of research based on oral histories, in some cases their own family histories and added to that a growing sense of responsibility towards keeping the memory of the event alive. The event needs to be remembered in order to find further ways of creating a path for resolution of years of conflict. A path for resolution can only be created in the future if the current generations get themselves involved in trying to know the event and forge relationships with it. Only then will we find a way to look forward. If official history had advocated forgetting for peace and integrity to prevail in the nation, that has been a failed project. Official history needs to take cognizance of the event to create meaningful dialogues towards the creation of paths of resolution. In this regard, a plea from Shehryar Ahmad, a representative belonging to the second generation, who visited India from Pakistan as a member of the rock band Junoon, is significant: "I feel a great sadness for the six decades since partition that we have lived side by side with each other in distrust and hate. I beg for the politicians to let the people of India and Pakistan coexist in love, harmony, and peace.

Stop sowing the seeds of hatred amongst our people. Let us now sow the seeds of love and peace”<sup>413</sup>.

The chapters in this thesis have taken into account the various aspects of Postmemory as elaborated and depicted in the works of second and third generation Partition fiction writers. The first chapter dealt with the various theoretical formulations regarding the term ‘Postmemory’ taking recourse majorly to Marriane Hirsch’s work on Holocaust Postmemory. The notion of memory has been analyzed in order to understand its efficacy because the category of history in the context of Partition has failed to present the entire narrative of the event. The subsequent generations have been defined specifically in order to situate them in the context of the discussion in terms of their claims of legitimacy. Both familial and non-familial postmemory have to be given equal importance in order to completely understand the influence of the memory of the event on the subsequent generations. However, the concept of Postmemory does not define an identity position and this is Postmemory’s point of departure from memory. The second and third generation engages with the event by creating a precarious balance between the past and the present. Hence, the chapter states that Postmemory of Partition is very much a part of the cultural memory of the nation and the recent works by quite a few authors bear witness to this fact.

Chapter two of the thesis discussed the various channels through which the memory of Partition reaches the second and third generation. Among various modes of transmission like literature, photographs, and films, survivor testimonies are the predominant means through which the transmission of memories take place. The nature of testimonies has been analyzed in the chapter to establish its mediated nature. Theories of clinical psychotherapy connected to the field of Holocaust have been drawn upon to discuss the way in which testimonies are fraught with breaks and silences. Even then testimonies provide an alternative account of the event in contrast to the depiction of the event in official history. The experience of the survivor generation is thus transmitted to the later generations who in turn create their own representations of the event. Thus the representations by the second and third generation authors are based on the deeply mediated narrative that is available to them. Moreover the chapter highlights the necessity to

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<sup>413</sup> Shehryar Ahmad. ‘Changing the Paradigm’. Smitu Kothari et al. Eds. *Bridging Partition: People’s Initiatives for Peace between India and Pakistan*. New Delhi: Orient BlackSwan, 2010. p. 298.

overcome scepticism regarding the efficacy of memory in order to provide relevant information about a past event. Survivor memory needs to be taken into consideration in order to gain a holistic understanding of the event.

Chapter three deals with three novels namely, Shauna Singh Baldwin's *What the Body Remembers*, Amit Majmudar's *Partitions* and Irfan Master's *A Beautiful Lie*. These novels have represented the event of Partition within their narrative frameworks. All three authors belong to the second and third generation and have based their depiction of the event on the knowledge available to them through testimonies. The authors have accepted their indebtedness to Urvashi Butalia's work which has provided them with invaluable insight into the nature of human tragedy that took place during the Partition. Baldwin and Master share family history with Partition and have been privy to knowledge shared by family members based on their experiences during the Partition. But Majmudar's postmemory is non-familial postmemory of Partition which is entirely based on research and readings of books on Partition. Interestingly all three authors are diasporic authors which brings in a new politics of representation of the event because of both temporal and spatial distance from the event. The temporal distance from the event has provided the authors objectivity in their representation of the event. The chapter has demonstrated the way in which the works of fiction act as memorials of Partition memory in the absence of official memorials and museums.<sup>414</sup> Hence, these novels redefine Partition fiction's role only as a gap-filling project and shows newer ways of identity formation.

Finally, chapter four deals with the notion of Postmemory in works which depict the influence of first generation memory on characters within the narrative framework itself. This chapter analyzes Reema Moudgil's *Perfect Eight*, Meena Arora Nayak's *About Daddy*, Sorayya Khan's *Five Queen's Road* and Vishwajyoti Ghosh's graphic anthology *This Side, That Side*. Moudgil and Nayak depict the characters of two daughters whose lives are guided by the memories of their parents--in case of Moudgil's Ira, her mother's memories of Partition and in case of Nayak's Simran, her father's memories of Partition. In both the novels, the family space becomes the major site of transmission of memory. The characters are shown to analyze the present in terms of the past and the present day communal clashes that India faces find space in

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<sup>414</sup> In 2016, the first Partition Museum has been set up in Amritsar by an NGO.

the novel. These novels also depict newer ways of identity formation and make it clear that the event of Partition still captures the identity of the current generation. Sorayya Khan's novel has been taken into consideration as it depicts the life of a Hindu man who residing in Pakistan who had refused to migrate to India after Partition. Khan, like Moudgil and Nayak, creates a space where the personal life of the characters become mirrors of the borders and boundaries that came into effect after Partition. Vishwajyoti Ghosh's work is unique in its narrative technique and presents varied perspectives towards the event of Partition from the point of view of people with varied connections to Partition.

The thesis has thus looked for an understanding of the way in which Partition has been represented by the second and third generation in their fiction. Earlier, Partition has been represented by writers who had themselves undergone the horrors of the event and thus were temporally close to it. These were authors who were affected by the trauma of Partition, who witnessed the violence of the times and those who were even displaced from their roots. But these representations majorly focused on the violence that took place during the division of the country. "The initial retellings are of course filled with a sense of horror, a desire to see the survival of human goodness and courage in spite of the madness of carnage, to tell it as it is/was but also to see that everyone suffered in this – no side could claim the space of victimhood, neither side could be entirely demonized"<sup>415</sup>. Representations of Partition in the initial years were still grappling with the unimaginable sense of horror at the events that took place surrounding Partition. People had engaged in activities which went beyond the definitions of normalcy and hence questioned the idea of 'unity in diversity' which the country boasted of because of the multiplicity of religions, languages and cultures. Thus after the passage of years after Partition, the representations that are being created about the event have shifted away from the immediate sense of responding to the event in terms of violence and disruption of the normal flow of life. The recent representations of Partition try to come to terms with the event by engaging with it from various perspectives rather than only through the lens of violence and search of humanity amidst the inhumanity that had become the norm of the times of Partition.

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<sup>415</sup> GJV Prasad and Stephanos Stephanides. "Introduction: Poetics and Partition in Counterpoint". *European Journal of English Studies*. 19. 3 (2015): 243-254. Web. 19 April 2017. p. 247.

The works that have been discussed in this thesis have looked at Partition through various lenses and perspectives which were generally missing in the nationalist discourse about Partition before the emergence of survivor voices and testimonies. Shauna Singh Baldwin in *What the Body Remembers* presents the precarious position of the Sikh community focusing especially on the plight of women. After the publication of the works of Butalia, Menon and Bhasin, it is impossible to ignore the gendered perspective of Partition. Amit Majmudar in *Partitions* presents the plight of women, children, and untouchables--all of whose experiences were suppressed earlier. Irfan Master in *A Beautiful Lie* presents the whole narrative from the point of view of a child and has even promoted the novel as one for children to learn about the Partition. Further Reema Moudgil in *Perfect Eight*, Meena Arora Nayak in *About Daddy* and Sorayya Khan in *Five Queen's Road* have presented the effect of Partition on the subsequent generations and Partition's continuing effect on the lives of people even today. Vishwajyoti Ghosh's work is unique in the way it chooses graphic narratives to depict the presence of Partition in present day dialogues. What Ghosh's work brings to the forefront is that the subsequent generations are engaging with the event with various forms of representation creating a space which keeps reminding everyone that the conflicts which arose as a part of the founding trauma of Partition have taken permanent residence in the lives of people. If the members of the survivor generation were writing based on the memory of their first hand experiences during Partition, the second and third generation writers taken into consideration in this thesis have written based on their postmemory of the event.

The question that may arise is about the usefulness or the need for such a representation after the passage of almost seventy years after the Partition. Mushirul Hasan questions whether the "ghosts of partition should be put to rest and not exhumed for frequent post-mortems"<sup>416</sup>. But how can Partition be put to rest when the country is still reeling under its after effects. The conflicted state of Kashmir is a significant example in this regard. Even today Kashmir is at the centre of conflict between India and Pakistan and is the subject of heated debates. Even today Indians look at Pakistanis with suspicion and vice versa. And even today Partition functions as a metaphor for the description of Partition-like communal conflicts that take place in the country.

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<sup>416</sup> Mushirul Hasan. "Memories of a Fragmented Nation: Rewriting the Histories of India's Partition". *Economic and Political Weekly* 33.41 (1998): 2662-2668. *JSTOR*. Web. 4 June 2017. p. 2663.



Thus in spite of the nationalistic agenda to uphold the narrative of the glorious history of the nation which began with independence from British rule, it is futile to think that Partition has been completely buried within the fold of oblivion. Ironically, it is the long wished for Independence from British rule which has become the reason of this continuing conflict in the country and it is all due to the Partition which accompanied independence. GJV Prasad has written: “In short, Independence, the engendering of the nation, is itself the wound that can never be healed because of the Partition that accompanied it”<sup>417</sup>. Hence, in this scenario, it is rather fruitful to engage with the way Partition is being remembered and represented by the second and third generation.

The distance of the authors, whose works have been analyzed in the thesis, from the event of Partition “exposes what one does not, cannot know or articulate adequately”<sup>418</sup>. But this is true of even the representations by the first generation writers as it is never possible to discern an event entirely after the event has taken place, especially when the event in question is traumatic in nature. What are available about the event are mere representations of the event in the form of first generation literature and survivor memory. The second and third generations thus create their own representations based on earlier representations and their own imagination. They carry the weight of the memory of Partition which is expressed in the works that they create. Victoria Aarons writes in the context of Holocaust writing by the subsequent generations: “What we find in the gap between survivor literature and those writing in the aftermath of the Holocaust is both continuity and interruption, an imagined space for the catching of one’s breath, a metaphorical suspension that provides breathing room for a realignment of thought, for the moral reckoning necessary to contend with the profound dislocation and anxious agency that comes from such attempts at engagement”<sup>419</sup>. Writings by second and third generation writers about the Partition also create this space within their writing which can push the readers toward rethinking their current position viz-a-viz the Partition.

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<sup>417</sup> GJV Prasad and Stephanos Stephanides. op. cit. p. 246.

<sup>418</sup> Victoria Aarons. “The Certainties of History and the Uncertainties of Representation in Post-Holocaust Writing”. *Studies in American Jewish Literature*(1981-) 31.2 (2012): 134-148. *JSTOR*. Web. 4 June 2017. p. 144.

<sup>419</sup> Ibid. p. 141.

In this thesis, the understanding that has been reached bases itself on the fact that neither memory or postmemory can create the exact representations of the event because once an event takes place, it cannot be fully retrieved. The difference between memory and postmemory is that memory is based on one's own experience of something whereas postmemory is based purely on imaginative investment in the event. Postmemory of the authors whose works have been discussed in this thesis has been an interesting study because of the paths and processes of the transmission of the memory of the event which in turn formed their postmemory. Not everyone's postmemory of the event is the same as the authors have each responded to the event from their respective subjective positions. In case of authors like Baldwin, Master, Khan, Nayak and Ghosh, familial connection to the event has played a defining role whereas in case of authors like Majmudar and Moudgil the entire narrative is based on knowledge from testimonies, histories and memoirs.

The nature of representations by the subsequent generations in case of Partition intermingle imagination with knowledge from history, memoirs, testimonies. This intermingling creates a particular form of representation which is distinct from first generation literature. GJV Prasad has written:

Memoirs, interviews, anecdotes and imagination intermingle and fuse together in the way partition is approached by writers from different disciplines. Therefore there is the need for a poetics, because documentation isn't enough, nor is mere enumeration of displaced persons, a simple tally of deaths and displacement, of 'rescued' women who were 'brought back' from either country regardless of their own wishes to be rehabilitated in their homelands. The expression of the emotional trauma needs a poetics— first, because it is too marginal to give the entire picture, and second, because it is too central to give the entire picture.<sup>420</sup>

This 'poetics' as referred to by Prasad is the method of representation of the event that has been discussed in the thesis. The various modes of representing the Partition have been discussed through the works that have been analyzed in the thesis. The representations that have been created try to maintain a curious balance between the facts about the past as presented through

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<sup>420</sup> GJV Prasad and Stephanos Stephanides. op. cit. p. 247.

historical records, survivor testimonies and fiction formed by the imagination of the writers who have shaped their present day notions about the event based on their subjective interactions. Jessica Lang writes about Holocaust writings: “the more time that separates the Holocaust from the present such that the less available it is in terms of eyewitness testimony, the more accessible it becomes to readers and writers of fiction...In other words, as with other historical events for which few or no eyewitnesses remain, the Holocaust is increasingly a subject matter for the imagination”<sup>421</sup>. Lang also sees the future of Holocaust literature as one where history and imagination is interpolated. The year 2002 saw the publication of Sujata S. Sabnis’ *A Twist in Destiny*--a work which imagines that the Partition was averted and India remained united against all odds. Even before Lang’s proclamation, the field of Partition literature saw the work of imagination of a writer of the subsequent generation who presented the history of Partition but with a twist.

Thus Partition fiction by second and third generation writers are a step forward in the genre of Partition literature which has become an important subgenre in the field of Indian Writing in English. These writings based on the postmemory of Partition have a responsibility upon them to present the event in such a manner so as to open up fruitful paths of engaging with the event. After the passage of almost seventy years after Partition, Partition fiction has come a long way from being only looked upon as projects of filling gaps in the historical records of the event. Recent Partition fiction has been able to create a legacy of the event for the future generations to look back at the event which would help them to further create their own understanding of Partition.

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<sup>421</sup> Jessica Lang. “*The History of Love, the Contemporary Reader, and the Transmission of Holocaust Memory*”. *Journal of Modern Literature* 33.1 (2009): 43-56. JSTOR. Web. 12 October 2016. p. 44.

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