Muslim Women's Narratives and Partition: A Study of Selected Works of Quratulain Hyder and Khatija Mastoor

Thesis submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
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Declaration

The thesis entitled "***Muslim Women's Narratives and Partition: A Study of Selected Works of Quratulain Hyder and Khatija Mastoor***" submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the Degree of Philosophy is my original work to the best of my knowledge. It has not been submitted elsewhere in part or full for any other degree at any other university or institute of learning.

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Certificate

We recommend that the thesis be placed before the examiners for evaluation

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Needless to say the responsibility for any shortcoming on the part of the research remains solely mine.

CONTENTS

Timeline of Major Events, 1905 – 2016

1905 Bengal partitioned along religious lines by the British Raj.

1906 Muslim League founded.

1911 Bengal reinstated.

1909 Establishment of the separate electorates for Hindus and Muslims by the British Raj.

1916 Lucknow Pact between the Muslim League and Congress about weighting of electorates and allowed for co-operation in the Khalifat and non- cooperation movements.

1929 Congress rejects Jinnah's fourteen points for parity.

1930 Salt March. Direct action campaign led by Gandhi against taxation on salt by the British Raj. Many upper-class Muslims boycott the campaign due to the rejection of the fourteen points by the Congress.

1937 Lucknow Session; League polling poorly in majority Muslim areas.

1939 Lord Linlithgow, Viceroy of India enters India into World War II without consulting political leaders.

1940 Lahore Resolution, also known as the Pakistan Resolution. Muslim League comes forward with the statement calling for the creation for an independent Muslim state.

1942 Cripps Mission: Stafford Cripps sent to India to gain support for the war effort, using negotiations about independence as a bargaining tool. Congress was split over its support and the Muslim League was in support of the war effort.

Quit India Movement started by Congress after the negotiations with Cripps

failed; it demanded immediate withdrawal of the British establishment and led to the imprisonment of many Congress leaders. Muslim League did not support the Quit India Movement.

1945 Simla Conference with Viceroy Wavell and political leaders to make a plan for Indian self-government. Congress and the League failed to agree on an executive assembly.

1946 Muslim League gains popularity in majority regions; League celebrated victory day.

Cabinet Mission proposal for federal India to determine a power-sharing arrangement between Congress and the League. The deadlock between parties led to Partition plan being proposed.

Violence and riots broke out from August.

1947 Plan to divide Indian territory on the basis of religion made public in June and Sir Radcliffe arrived in July.

Transfer of power: 14 August Pakistan independence; 15 August Indian independence.

1948 War over Kashmir; Assassination of M.K Gandhi; Jinnah died of tuberculosis.

1949 UN calls for a cease-fire in Kashmir.

1958 General Ayub Khan military coup, which deposed Iskander Mirza in Pakistan.

1965 India-Pakistan war over Kashmir.

1969 General Agha Muhammad Yahya Khan replaced General Ayub Khan.

1970 Awami League won the majority of seats in the national assembley in Pakistan’s first national elections, but power was not handed over by West Pakistan.

1971 Bangladesh war of liberation.

1977 General Zia-ul-Haq military coup, which overthrew Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

1979 Execution of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

1988 Death of General Zia-ul-Haq.

1989 Armed resistance began in Kashmir. Muslim leaders see the state legislative election of 1987 as rigged and form the militant wing to fight the Indian rule.

1991 India and Pakistan sign agreements about notifications regarding military exercises, preventing airspace violation and establishing overflight rules.

1992 Destruction of Babri Masjid, Ayodha, Uttar Pradesh.

1998 India detonates five nuclear devices at Pokhran, Pakistan responds by detonating nuclear devices at Changai Hills.

1999 Kargil War

General Pervez Musharraf military coup, which overthrew Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

2001 Attack on state assembly in Kashmir. Chief Minister, Farooq Abdullah calls for military aggression against the rebels and the training camps in the valley.

Collapse of Agra summit as both countries fail to reach an agreement.

Attack on the Indian Parliament.

2002 General Musharraf began to lend support to U. S. 'war on terror' while upholding Pakistan's position on Kashmir.

2004 SAARC summit marking the beginning of Composite Dialogue Process between the two countries.

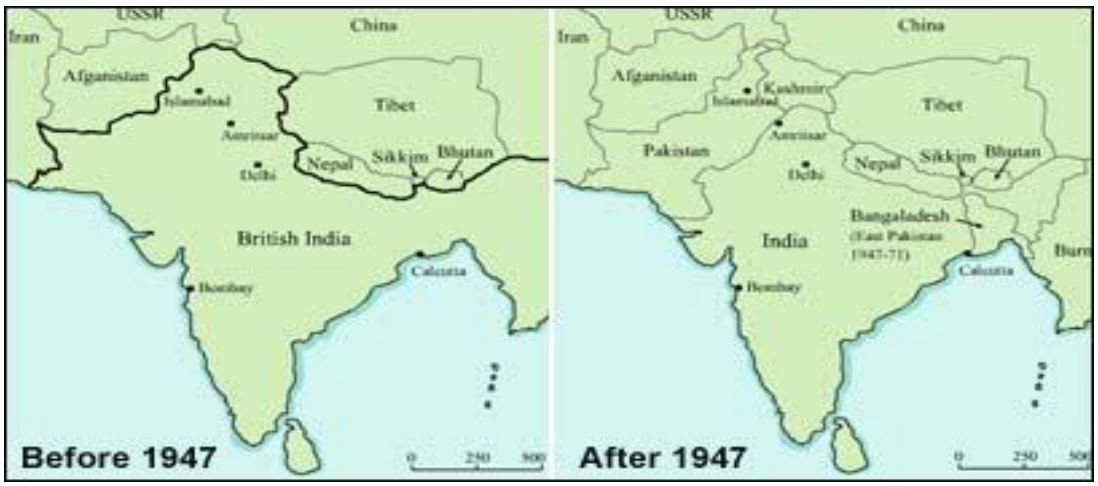
2008 Opening of various trade routes between the two countries

Attack in Mumbai and the end of Composite Dialogue Process

2010 Mass uprising in Kashmir followed by brutal state repression

2014 Narender Modi and Nawaz Sharif hold talks in New Delhi

2016 Killing of Burhan Wani in Kashmir followed by mass protests and six month long curfew imposed by the state along with call for shutdown by the rebel parties.



(Source:http://www.bbc.co.uk/gloucestershire/untold_stories/asian/asian_community.shtml)

INTRODUCTION

"The partition of India into two countries, India and Pakistan, is an event that is said to have taken place in August 1947, yet its beginnings go much further back into history and its ramifications have not yet ended."

(Urvashi Butalia)[1]

"They killed my chacha. They burnt our homes. Our women were raped. How can we even think of going back? My pregnant daughter-in-law had to hide in the sugarcane fields. The killers haven't been arrested. They still roam free in the village. I told you, *for us this was Partition.*"

(Wakiluddin Siddiqui, Muzaffar Nagar, UP, India, 2013)[2]

I

Sixty nine years have passed since the Partition of the subcontinent that resulted in the independence of India from the colonial rule and birth of the new state of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. After close to seven decades of postcolonial experience, Partition reverberates in the consciousness of the people of the subcontinent and any rupture in the social and political fabric of the society reminds people of the time when neighbours turned against each other baying for each other's blood and fighting hard to kill each other. The anti-Muslim riots of Muzaffar Nagar in the year 2013, sixty six years after Partition were as expressed by the victims the occasion to 'finally understand what happened during Partition.' Partition persists in the minds of the people and is kept alive through the political lexicon of the times we live in. 'Go to Pakistan' is the response for any Indian who voices a dissenting opinion against the

[1] Urvashi Butalia, "Community, State and Gender: Some Reflections on the Partition of India", in *Women and the Politics of Violence*, (ed) Taisha Abrahams, Shakti Books, 2002, p.125.

[2] http://www.hindustantimes.com/topic/muzaffarnagar-violence.

current political climate in India. The eternal other, Pakistan is in the imagination of people the aggressive, unattractive, politically dismal and chaotic neighbour. The muddled existence and by extension the unsuccessful being and becoming of the country is an affirmation for India about its grand existence with an even grander past. The political climate in the subcontinent, with regional, political and ethnic struggles across various pockets in the region makes it difficult for the memory of Partition to rest in the remote corners of a national imagination. Kashmir is the unfinished business of Partition and the biggest reminder of how hasty and irresolute was the decision of dividing the subcontinent.[3]

The scholarship around Partition has never receded and rather has witnessed an increase in the production of history and literature since last few decades both in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The effortless reasoning owes it to the communal polarisation in the subcontinent and the rise of identity politics, the anti-Sikh riots of 1984, demolition of the Babri Masjid in 1992, Gujrat riots of 2002, and the constant resistance against the rule of Indian state in Kashmir which is always blamed on Pakistan as the principle instigator. The establishing of *The 1947 Partition Archive*[4] to preserve the stories of the people who experienced the event first hand and the start of *The Partition Museum Project*[5] is a testimony to the fact that the event is momentous

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[3] In brief: During the British rule Jammu and Kashmir was one of the many autonomous princely states ruled by a Hindu Maharaja with allegiance to the British Empire. When Partition was announced, the rulers of the Princely states had the option of acceding to either India or Pakistan or remaining independent. The Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir was indecisive at that particular time but later acceded to India, however the state had a Muslim majority who opposed the decision. This tension underpins much conflict between India and Pakistan to this day, and the first war between the two nations was over Kashmir. Kashmir till date struggles to achieve right to political self determination.

[4]The 1947 Partition Archive is an organization working towards institutionalising the people's history of Partition through documenting personal stories of people who witnessed the Partition. It does so through personal interviews, collection of artifacts related to the memory of Partition. The digital archive will be ready in 2017. http://www.1947partitionarchive.org.

[5] The Partition Museum is being set up by the The Arts and Heritage Cultural trust to preserve the memory of the victims and survivors of 1947. It will be the first museum of such kind in the

in the history of the subcontinent and cannot be looked past at any political juncture. The relevance of Partition as a metaphor seems to be never ending, a 'metaphor for a psychosis of captivity.'[6]

The present project goes back in time and seeks to understand Partition through the women writers who delineated the psychological and social consequences of the hasty cartographic articulation. It has a modest aim; to understand and explore how Muslims and specifically Muslim women experienced the Partition and how that experience was articulated through their writing. I want to mention that I am aware of the dangers of generalising the category 'Muslim woman' as Muslims cannot be taken as a monolith since the question of social location, class and caste factor in how we perceive what happens around us. With this awareness in mind and the intricacies of such claims that I make, I aim to understand the impact of Partition on one specific community for which the offer of creating a new nation was proposed while I remain aware to the questions of social location. The creation of nation came along with the barbaric violence of significant proportions for women which made their relationship with the event complicated. For the purpose of understanding this I look at the writings of Pakistani Muslim women writers and their engagement with nation's political and social situation at that particular point in time. Partition, the moment when social, political and cultural spaces were broken and ruptured, can serve as a starting point for a larger understanding of the intersections between political communities and conceptions of home and family relations. Since scholars have often questioned the silence around the historiography related to the experiences of Muslim

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subcontinent. Amritsar Town hall will house the museum towards which work is going on. http://www.partitionmuseum.org/.

[6]See Sukrita Paul Kumar, *Narrating Partition: Texts, Interpretations, Ideas*, Indialog Publications, Delhi, 2004, pp. 9.

women, I aim to explore how literature can provide insights that may be less readily available in other modes of narration[7]. The significant question here to ask is if literary narratives can serve as an evidence of a political event? Making this enquiry as an entry point I bring out the nuances of the use of political narratives by women writers into literature to claim a place in the history at the intersection of the "private and the public, personal and the political, the national and the postcolonial."[8]My contention is that not only do these writings serve as individual testimonies in a certain way[9] but they also contribute to the variety of counter histories of the event. Rabia Umar states that Partition studies are destined to remain incomplete if the vacuum in historiography about the experiences of Muslim women continues to persist. The silences in historiography about the Muslim women have consigned the question of Muslim women's experience to a realm of anonymity. The reasons for the silence are attributed to, and located in, the cultural fabric of Muslim society and the gendered inequalities of male dominance. The historical silence "compounded by familial silence, tales of rape, abduction or shift in religious priorities can hardly find a place in collective memory and *must not* remain at the margins, unsaid and

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[7] Rabia Umar, "Muslim Women and the Partition of India: A Historiographical Silence", *Islamic Studies*, Vol. 48, No. 3 (Autumn 2009), pp 425-436.

[8] Antoinette Burton, *Dwelling in The Archive: Women Writing House, Home and History in Late Colonial India*, Oxford University Press, 2003, p.4. Burton discusses the significant question of how archives are constituted and how the memories of home can serve as evidence of political history. She states that certain narratives apart from being just stories of a family or 'family history' can also serve as an archive for discerning counter histories. I draw from Burton's approach and suggest that literary texts can help us discern the complex narratives of Partition and help us reconstruct the narratives around 1947.

[9]In this study I do not delve into a discussion on fiction and testimony and do not have a discussion on the testimonial value of literature. However my concern here is to cleave out how certain experiences get coded through fictional representations. In the foreword of their book on the witnessing of holocaust survivors Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub state that the crisis of witnessing in history has translated into the crisis of literature as well since when history fails to articulate the experience literature remains the only source of witnessing. In that case then *literature does remain* a witness to the inarticulate. It is with this intention and insight that I make the proposition of understanding an event through the literary narratives. See Shoshana Felman, Dori Laub, *Testimony: The Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History*, New York and London: Routledge, 1992.

untold"[10]**.** Similar kinds of concerns have been raised by feminists and historians who have worked on collecting oral narratives of the women who were witnesses to the event of Partition.[11]

The lack of ethnographic research about Muslim women in the North Western region has in a way been compensated in the realm of literature, mainly poetry and fiction. Besides reportage, literature remains an important source of social history about Partition and how people lived through it. Where 'traditional' history fails to record moments of rupture and dislocation, literature serves the crucial purpose.[12] The question that such an approach towards these texts poses is how do these writers use literature to revise the complex relationship between gender and nationalism and what are the paradigms and shifts that these writings are informed by? This study tries to discuss some of these concerns and elucidate how do women, through literature, maintain a sustained engagement with politics and use critical historical moments to discuss intimate issues of self, emotions and sexuality.

My primary sources are Quratulain Hyder's *Mere Bhi Sanam Khaney* (1949), *Aag ka Darya* (1959), Khadija Mastoor's *Aangan* (1962) and *Zameen* (1987). The choice of these specific texts is two folds. One these texts do not directly reveal the event of Partition in its brutal form but use it as an overarching metaphor to weave a narrative around it. These texts step aside and look at Partition from a distance and critique its facile notions of the need for a separate country for Muslims. Secondly, each of these texts in a certain way is engaged with rewriting the Partition by challenging the easily

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[10]Rabia Umar, "Muslim Women and the Partition of India: A Historiographical Silence", *Islamic Studies*, Vol. 48, No. 3 (Autumn 2009), pp. 425-436. (emphasis mine).

[11] Nighat Said Khan, "Identity, Violence and Women: A Reflection on the Partition of India 1947," in Rubina Saigol (ed) *Locating the Self: Perspectives on Women and Multiple Identities*, ASR Publications: Lahore, 1994.

[12] Umar , *Muslim Women and the Partition of India* , p.432.

accepted narrative around it. These texts offer representations of women (and men) who negotiated their multiple identities of being an individual and part of a family at the same time in order to survive the political forces beyond their control. Such narratives help one comprehend the representations of specific personal experiences and the silence that surrounds the history of the private sphere's interplay with the political.

The motivating factor to undertake this study is that the documentation and representation of the experiences of Muslim women who had to live through Partition is still an under-researched area. Salma Malik express this concern in her work about the surprisingly little engagement with Pakistani literature that deals with the event of Partition.[13] With this realisation it seems productive to explore women's experiences and their subjectivities through literature produced around the event. This study explores how women writers who wrote about Muslim women households during Partition used literature as a space to explore the complicated relationship that women shared with the then newly formed nation. It brings forth the particular intervention that they made in understanding the event and its ramifications on the lives of women.

My engagement with gender in such cultural narratives is a way to explore the marginal perspectives of the nation and its belonging. In these texts one can see a pattern which disrupts the dominant remembering of Partition. This study realises the importance of taking into account the need to understand the broader context of Partition both temporally and spatially and thus aims to study the texts that do not address the event and the moment of Partition directly but also the time that preceded it and the time after it. The writing about the event from a distance in terms of time

[13] Salma Malik, *"*Revisiting 1947 through Popular Cinema: A Comparative Study of India and Pakistan*". Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol-XLIV, No.36.September, 5, 2009.

could help one gain perspective on how these women negotiated with such circumstances. Imagining about an event from a distance also informs the narrative technique and strategies employed by these writers. The close and contextual reading of these texts helps one understand how the legacy of Partition was dealt with by women who were witness to the horrific violence.[14] It brings out the tension of 'celebrating' and 'mourning' the nation at the same time since the creation of Pakistan was witness to violence and trauma. It aims to shine light on how the texts as cultural products interact with the dominant national narratives in different ways.

II

Partition of the Indian subcontinent has been the most gruesome of events in terms of the loss of life and expression of human cruelty and barbarity. Millions were killed, displaced and brutalized, and many people continue to be numbed by the experience of the event. Although much has been written about and around the event of Partition, nevertheless much more needs to be said in terms of the experience and afterlife of Partition of people who had to go through such a watershed event. Historians have devoted volumes of work discussing the political events that led to the division of India into 'Hindu India' and 'Muslim Pakistan' and later Bangladesh. While there has been much work done on the Indian side of the border, Pakistani experience seems to have been not engaged with rigorously. Scholars over time have been invested in the stories of people who chose to stay in India or who had to stay in India owing to the religion that they belonged to. The Partition historiography in South Asia has been largely focused on the Indian experience of Partition. Hanna Papapnek in *The*

[14] Both the writers witnessed Partition and had to migrate from India to Pakistan. However here I am not referring to the category of writer as witness but to characters in the textual canvas since they are drawn from and located in the political events.

Partition of Scholarship and the Scholarship of Partition opines that the focus on India in the subcontinent has created some serious intellectual consequences. She states that "the separate orbits of scholarship have been damaging to the study of India, along the same lines, but these adverse effects are always harder to detect in the case of majority group which rarely finds a reason to worry about itself."[15] David Gilmartin states that the Partition scholarship has not been able to find a compelling place for Pakistan within the larger historical narratives. British historians of the Partition have narrated the event as a failure on part of the colonial rule, 'an unpleasant blip on the transition from the colonial to the postcolonial worlds.' For Indian historians Partition has been the result of the unsuccessful transition from colonialism to nationalism.[16] Gilmartin states that what is surprising is that even with Pakistani historians, Partition has always occupied an ambiguous place, although the creation and coming of Pakistan into being is at the centre of such narratives but various significant questions about Pakistan and reduction of narratives to a need for a Muslim nation seems lacking analysis. "While some Pakistani historians have argued for a direct narrative line from the arrival of Muslims in India to the creation of Pakistan, the fact that the creation of Pakistan marked a partition not simply of the subcontinent, but of Indian Muslim community itself, has made the fitting of the creation of Pakistan into simple narrative of Muslim community extremely problematic."[17]The creation of Bangladesh at a later stage was a serious rebuttal to such a narrative. Suvir Kaul argues that despite an avalanche of work around Partition, somehow scholars have still not been able to reach a comfortable and clear

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[15] Hanna Papanek, *The Partition of Scholarship and the Scholarship of Partition: Reflections on the Early Years of Pakistan Research by North Americans.* (This paper was procured from CWDS library and did not have page numbers and publication details on it).

[16] David Gilmartin, 'Pakistan, Partition, and South Asian History: In Search of a Narrative', *The Journal of Asian studies* 57, no 4,November 1998: 1068-1095.

[17] Ibid., p. 1068.

position on Partition. "Inspite of the efforts of a number of writers and filmmakers and the work of scholars and analysts, we remain, as a national culture, uncertain and anxious about the place of Partition in our recent history. In many ways, Partition remains the unspoken horror of our times."[18]

Ayesha Jalal's significant work on Jinnah and his quest and struggle for Muslims leads one towards exploration of and significance of Muslim agency and action during Partition of India. Although it was criticized for portraying Jinnah as a rational man caught amidst an array of disorderly forces, Jalal's work becomes important in how it opens up the questions of Muslim identity and myriad other forces that constituted the moral foundation of Pakistan[19]. Frazana Sheikh expresses doubts about such narratives for their tendency to bring forth just an instrumental understanding of Islam while ignoring the critical linkages between normative meanings of Muslim society. In her work she provides a window to the background against which one could discuss how the elite *Ashraf* Muslims imagined a unitary Muslim community in the years preceding Partition.[20]

The early history about the event focused much on the high politics of the event. It was inclined more towards discussing the events leading up to the division of India. While early history and much of it was about the tussle between Congress and Muslim League and how League 'hampered' the progress of Congress and Congress relegated the League to the back burner which eventually led to the Partition of India,

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[18] Suvir Kaul (ed)*The Partition of Memory: The Afterlife of The Division of India*, Permanent Black, 2001, p.3.

[19]Ayesha Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, The Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan*, Cambridge University Press, 1995.

[20] Farzana Shaikh, *Making Sense of Partition*, Hurst, 2009.

later historians shifted their focus from such narratives and tried to excavate other dominant factors which played a significant role in the division of then India.

I would on purpose limit this discussion more to the formation of Pakistan and the narratives around it since the focus of this project is Pakistan and the production of (non)nation in its cultural narratives. The nationalist Indian history has been feeding on the staple diet of high politics, some historians of late have complicated the narratives around Muslim League and role of Jinnah. The League to begin with did not aspire or envision a Muslim nation in territorial terms. The initial struggle was more for Muslim enfranchisement and equal parity within the federal state. "The nation building that occurred was generated through the lack of enfranchisement felt by Muslims in colonial India rather than territorial hopes, and the Pakistan movement finds its roots as a campaign for parity for the Muslim League within the governance of a united India….Indeed the assertion of India's Muslim as a nation was a strategy in attempting to gain power within a federal system, rather than a direct move to engender the national belonging in relation to defined territorial parameters."[21] It is also maintained that the idea of Pakistan was not put forward by Jinnah but it was Allama Iqbal's idea who desired to see Punjab, Sind, North West Provinces and Baluchistan amalgamated into one.[22] Pakistan was an acronym for Punjab, Afghanistan, Kashmir, Sindh and Baluchistan.

T .R Sareen argues that Iqbal did not contemplate a separate nation in 1930s but merely a consolidation of Muslim Provinces in North West India. However after he passed away in 1938, his line of thought was pursued by the leaders of the Muslim

[21]Vazira Fazila Yacoobali Zamindar, *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia: Refugees, Boundaries, Histories* , Columbia University Press, 2010.pp 4

[22]T. R .Sareeen ,*Jinah, Linthiltgow and Making of Pakistan: A Documentary Study*, Uppal Publishing House, New Delhi.p.16.

League like Chowdhary Rahmat Ali, Dr. Abdul Latif, Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan and others. Sareen argues that the idea of Partition began to make substantial progress in India after the actual operation of the Act of 1935. However, all the schemes were prepared by the individuals and presented as "unofficial conception of the future of Muslims in India''[23] Kamla Vishweshwaran argues that Congress's reluctance to accept the federal system which they understood would lead to loss of power eventually pushed the League to demand a separate nation territorially.[24] Muhammad Ali Jinah remained loyal to the Indian National Congress for a considerable time and espoused the idea of a composite Indian nationalism. His refusal to join the 1906 Simla deputation of Muslims and his rejection of the demands of Muslim nation before the Joint Select Committee of 1919, his favouring of joint electorates in 1925 and 1928, his letter to *The Times Of India* defending Congress as a secular organization are all indicative of how he did not envision a separate homeland for Muslims at the beginning. However it was the disappointment generated from Congress' political actions when they formed the government in seven states and ignored the Muslim League that led to the pursuit of idea of a separate Muslim homeland. Rubina Saigol states that when the Lucknow pact was signed in 1916, Sarojini Naidu named Jinnah the ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity. Jinnah's earlier struggles were for the rights of Muslim minority and provincial autonomy within a united India. "The fact the Jinnah and the Muslim League accepted the Cabinet Mission Plan of 1946, which divided India into Hindu states, Muslim states, and princely states within a larger united India is a further indication that carving out a separate country was not the overriding aim of the principal leaders of the Muslims.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Kamala Vishweshwaran, (ed) *Perspectives on Modern South Asia: A Reader in Culture, History and Representation*. Wiley Blackwell, April 2012.

The Indian National Congress's rejection of the plan and its vociferous opposition to the religious separatism, fed into the process in which the Pakistan idea was germinated. It was only gradually that through many twists and turns, the idea of Pakistan became a concrete territorial reality. Sometimes it appears akin to an accident of history, which took place without the conscious control and desire of the historical actors involved".[25]

In her study of the Pakistani text books Saigol refers to the interesting perspectives offered about the formation of Pakistan. In most of the text books the beginning of the sentiment to have a separate nation is attributed to the rise of Muslim consciousness after the mutiny of 1857.[26]Some Pakistani text books trace the origin of Pakistani idea or the awakening of Muslim consciousness to the battle of Plassey in 1757 when Sirajudin Daula was defeated by Robert Clive. According to these text books it was the first wound inflicted on the Muslims and later resulted in the downfall of the Mughal Empire. Similarly various text books offer different narratives about the idea of Pakistan ranging from invasion of Muhammad Bin Qasim to the charter of East India Company, 1600. Some textbook writers go to the absurd limits of claiming that the idea of Pakistan was conceived in 12th century. "During the 12th century the shape of Pakistan was more or less the same as it is today. Under the Khiljis, Pakistan moved further southward to include a greater part of Central India and the Deccan. In retrospect it may be said that the sixteenth century Hindustan disappeared and was completely absorbed in Pakistan."[27] Such textbook narratives reflect the desire to give the Pakistani nation a long past and deny that the idea of Pakistan is recent. It is in

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[25] Rubina Saigol, (ed) *The Pakistani Project: A Feminist Perspective on Nation and Identity*, Women Unlimited, Kali for Women, 2013, p.6.

[26] Ibid.

[27]Yvette Claire Rosser, *Hegemony and Historiography: The Politics of Pedagogy*, www.infinity.foundation.com, p 7.

such accounts of history as mythology Pakistan is seen as existing in teleological way long before it was even conceived.[28]

Vazira Zamindar in her *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia: Refugees, Boundaries, Histories* pushes the limits of the usual argument about the sentiment of the Muslim separatism and makes us ponder on the question of how a claim based on a monolithic Muslim identity was created even when the Muslims of the subcontinent were linguistically and culturally diverse. (This difference in aspirations and the world view of 'Muslims' gets articulated in Quratulain Hyder's novels but an elaborate discussion on that would be taken later in this project). Zamindar states that there are various contested histories of how the idea of Muslims as a separate political community came to be mobilized as part of the Pakistani movement; "how the neologism *Pakistan*, evocatively coined by a Punjabi Muslim student at Cambridge University in 1933 amid numerous 'fabulous place-making' exercises led to the actual 'moth- eaten Pakistan' in 1947…When the Muslim League invoked Pakistan, it did so on behalf of a nation of 'Muslims', even though many Muslims did not support the Pakistani movement, and yet others would be simply left out of a state drawn from regions where Muslims formed an enumerated majority. Furthermore, those who did support the Pakistani movement included Muslims of the regions like Delhi and Uttar Pradesh who could not be part of its territorial claims."[29] Zamindar delves more into the afterlife of Partition and the burdens that the postcolonial citizens had to carry. (A chapter of this project on migration and displacement will draw from Zamindar's argument about how in order to understand

[28] Saigol, *The Pakistani Project*, p.4.

[29] Vazira Fazila Zamindar, *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia: Refugees, Boundaries, Histories* , Columbia University Press, 2010, pp 3.

Partition, it is very important to fold into one's narrative the 'bureaucratic violence' of drawing boundaries through the lives of people).

There were a large number of Muslims who opposed this idea and the coming of Pakistan was not a tale of concordant voices. One of the vociferous critics of the idea of Pakistan was the prominent Congress member, Abdul Kalam Azad. He advocated that Islam did not allow for the invocation of religion for division of territory. He believed that the separation would serve only the elite Muslims who wanted a separate state to maintain a monopoly over economic resources of the country. Azad expressed his doubts and fears in an interview thus; "I must warn that the evil consequences of Partition will not affect India alone, Pakistan will be equally haunted by them. The Partition will be based on the religion of the population and not based on any natural barrier like mountain, desert, or river. A line will be drawn; it is difficult to say how durable it would be….We must remember that an entity conceived in hatred will last only as long as hatred lasts. This hatred will overwhelm the relations between India and Pakistan. The politics of Partition itself will act as a barrier between the two countries. It will not be possible for Pakistan to accommodate all Muslims of India, a task beyond historical capability. On the other hand it will not be possible for Hindus to stay in West Pakistan. They will be thrown out or will leave on their own."[30]

The uncomplicated history where it seems that that India and Pakistan emerged on August 1947 is problematic for it doesn't address the consequences and complexities of such a decision and more importantly its ramifications on the lives of people who

[30] Interview to Shorish Kashmiri, Chattan , 1946, https://yasharya.wordpress.com/2014/11/11/maulana-abul-kalam-azad-gave-the-following-interview-to-journalist-shorish-kashmiri-for-a-lahore-based-urdu-magazine-chattan-in-april-1946/ (accessed on 8.6.2012.)

had to live through the event and after the event had long passed. Most early histories of the region focus on the "moment of arrival" as the struggle for independence from the colonial rule had come to an end and the borders had simply been magically formed.

III

Scholars for a very long period maintained their focus on the political history of Partition while ignoring the 'human history' of the event. Although there was an imbalance in such scholarship since it focused on the experiences of people on the western side of the border, more recently scholars have started addressing the imbalance of Partition stories on the eastern side of the Indian border.[31] It is important to foreground the history of ordinary people who were caught in the 'chaos of the time' and had to live the consequences of the territorial division .The initial history and much of it was about the political aspect of the events and to a large extent about who was responsible for the event. The authenticity of these grand narratives of nationalism, communalism, and 'Muslim separatism' have been challenged and questioned as newer sources and multi-disciplinary approaches have been considered to analyse the events of Partition. Over a period of time though, researchers of Partition have questioned the hegemonic state narratives and ventured into what is called subaltern histories of the event. Historians have raised concerns about the need to revise the historical methods to understand the event of Partition. This shift in historiography has resulted in the 'exploration of particular rather than general' which in turn has disrupted the hegemonic state narrative. It was Gyanendra Pandey who stated that "on the question of Partition, Indian historiography occupies a paradoxical

[31] Tarun Saint, *Witnessing Partition: Memory, History, Fiction*, Routledge, Taylor and Francis, 2010.

position. On the one hand, Partition has dominated the consciousness of nationalist and professional historians in a remarkable way…On the other hand, the history of Partition is effectively suppressed by the focus on India's freedom struggle...the unity of India and the nationalist enterprise continued almost unaffected by Partition and all that accompanied it. The history of Partition (sometimes called the history of 'communalism') is presented separately, or at best as a subordinate and apparently (in the long run) inconsequential motif in the larger drama on India's struggle for independence"[32]

Mushirul Hasan, critiquing the nationalist histories of Partition states that such histories fail to highlight the complexities and subtleties of class, caste and religion based alignment. Such histories repress the struggles and stories of millions of people who were displaced from fields and home and "driven by sheer fear of death to seek safety across a line they had neither drawn nor desired."[33] The Indian Council of Historical Research sponsored two volumes of *Pangs of Partition* that encapsulates the contemporary trends in partition studies, juxtaposing the 'historian's history' in volume I '*Parting of Ways: History, Politics, Economics'* with the people's history in volume II, *'Human Dimension: Culture Society and Literature*. The intention behind such work as given in the introduction was "to review the established theories concerning Partition, focus attention on a wide array of individual and collective experiences of migration, trauma and the intense nostalgia of the displaced for the undivided past."[34]

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[32]Gyanendra Pandey, "The Prose of Otherness" in Arnold D and Hardiman D (ed) *Subaltern Studies,* OUP, Delhi, 1994,pp. 188-221.

[33] Mushirul Hassan. *Inventing Boundaries: Gender, Politics and the Partition of India*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 2002. P. 30.

[34] S.Settar, Indira B.Gupta, *Pangs of Partition: The Human Dimension*, Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 2002, p. 9.

Feminist researchers explored the gendered dimensions of Partition and its aftermath and the experiences of women. They argued that Partition narratives and Partition history had been biased by ignoring the social history and cultural trauma that resulted due to the tearing of the social fabric. The germinal work in this area was done by Urvashi Butalia, Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin who in their work opened a new terrain of research in the Partition historiography- human dimension from a gender perspective. In their work they focused on the experiences of women of Punjab. This kind of enquiry evinced that "Partition was not only a division of properties, of assets and liabilities. It was also, to use a phrase that Partition victims use repeatedly, 'a division of hearts'. It brought untold suffering, tragedy, trauma, pain, violence to communities who had hitherto lived together in some kind of social contract. It separated families across an arbitrarily drawn border, sometime overnight, and made it practically impossible for people to know if their parents, sisters, brothers, children were alive or dead, and these aspects of the partition, how people coped with the trauma, how they rebuilt their lives, what resources, both physical and mental, they drew upon, how their experience of dislocation and trauma shaped their lives, and indeed the cities and towns they settled in, find little reflection in written history."[35]

Historians also raised concerns about partition of East Pakistan and the omission of stories of Bengal from the mainstream historiography. In Pakistan, similar kinds of concerns have been raised by feminists and historians who have worked on collecting oral narratives of Pakistani women. Farrukh Khan in his study[36] has collected

[35] Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence : Voices from Partition of India* , Duke University Press, 2000, p.8.

[36]See Farrukh Khan, Speaking Violence: Pakistani Women's Narratives of Partition in (ed) Navneeta Chadha Behera, *Gender , Conflict and Migration*. Sage Publications, Delhi, 2006, pp.97-115.

narratives of Punjabi women and Nighat Said Khan and Rubina Saigol has also done similar work around collecting oral narratives of women in Pakistan Punjab.[37]

Thus in this shift of historiography from political to social the people are placed at the centre of this historical analysis. Such history makes an attempt to stress the agentive role of people and retrieve their stories that have been marginalized. "What historians might call a 'fragment'--a weaver's diary, a collection of poems by an unknown poet (and to these we might add all those literatures of India that Macaulay condemned, creation myths and women's songs, family genealogies and local traditions of history) is of central importance in challenging the state's construction of history, in thinking other histories and marking those contested spaces through which particular unities are sought to be constituted and others broken up".[38]In such historical methods literary texts become an important source in their representation of marginal voices which do not figure in the grand narratives of Partition. The alternative perspective or the counter narrative that one gets from these writings is of great importance to recover other silenced histories.

The political history of Partition can be found in abundance but there is a dearth of social history of the event. Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin state that the paucity of the social history of the event renders one curious as to how historians could stay silent about the 'cultural, psychological and social ramifications of such a tremendous event'.[39] They further acknowledge the role of literature in filling the gap created by

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[37] See Nighat Said Khan "Identity, Violence and Women: A Reflection on the Partition of India 1947," *Locating the Self: Perspectives on Women and Multiple Identities,* (ed) Rubina Saigol, Lahore: ASR Publications, 1994.

[38]Gyanendra Pandey, "In Defence of a Fragment: Writing about Hindu-Muslim Riots in India Today", *Economic Political Weekly*, Vol 26, No 11/12, 1991, pp 559-572.

[39] Ritu Menon, Kamla Bhasin, *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition*, Rutgers University Press, 1998.

political history of the event and also of literature being a counter narrative to the official history of the state. They state that literature has partly recorded the stories of Partition which can be considered as social history of the event. "Different sorts of telling reveal different sorts of truths and the fragment is significant precisely because it is marginal rather than mainstream, particular rather than general and because it represents history from below. The perspective such materials offer us can make for insights into how histories are made and what gets inscribed as well as direct us to alternative reading of the master narrative. Their recuperation is important for yet another reason: without them the myriad individual and collective histories that simultaneously run parallel to official accounts of historic events and are their sequel, almost inevitably get submerged : with them may also be submerged the countering of accepted and acceptable versions, to be buried eventually in the rubble of history."[40]

Language is crucial for passing on the memory of an event, remembering an event and for the 'construction of the continuation of history'. If an event is not included in the experience of linguistic representation it consequently does not find space in the history of that event. Veena Das in her *Transactions in the Construction of Pain* states that the silence around the women victims of Partition did not enter the collective consciousness of people and public discursive space because it never found its way into language."Unfortunately, in carrying the pain of abduction, women internalized the pain they had experienced, moving suffering from the surface of their bodies into their depths. Because of intensely personal and secret nature of pain and suffering, women had no chance of displacement of pain through acknowledgement, and thus

[40] Ibid.,p. 43.

their pain could not be alleviated."[41] Das states that giving voice to experience of violence can allay the suffering and become part of the collective history.

Partition narratives represent women as worst sufferers and it is the uniform representation that we see across different genres or different cultures.[42]However there was change in this trend of representation and various fresh perspectives were offered wherein women were creating new identities. Consequently various stereotypes that had earlier defined women in Partition were questioned in the process of new literary trends. "A greater degree of self-consciousness or awareness of one's gendered identity and its possible restructuring in an altered context could not be contained within some of the older frames of reference. The subjectivities of women as victims and in their opposition to their victimization were the focus of modernist writing on this subject"[43] Newer literary techniques were employed to convey such subjectivities and feminist sensibilities became a part of such narratives. Joe Cleary in his book *Literature, Partition and the Nation-State: Culture and Conflict in Ireland, Israel and Palestine*, states the need to take cognizance of the cultural narratives produced by the partitioned societies and lays emphasis on the significance of understanding the dynamics of nation and state building constructed in such narratives. "In the case of partitioned societies cultural narratives play important function. They represent one of the media through which the trauma of Partition is subsequently memorialized and understood by the people involved: they can also help either to ratify the state divisions produced by partition or to contest the partitionist mentalities generated by such divisions…any serious attempt to wrestle with the

[41] Veena Das, "Language and Body: Transactions in the Construction of Pain." Daedalus 125 no.1 (1996) 67-91.

[42] Bodh Prakash: *Writing partition: Aesthetics and Ideology in Hindi and Urdu Literature*, Dorling Kindersley, India, 2009.

[43] Ibid., 96.

larger dynamics of nation and state-building in partitioned contexts must engage with the ways in which partition is constructed and contested in cultural and historiographic narrative in the societies in question."[44]

A different reading of Partition wherein one doesn't read it just as human loss but also as cultural loss has opened up new terrains of research and categories of analysis. Also what are the ways in which these cultural narratives create imaginative truth could also be useful in understanding the relation of self to society**.** Most of the times, the reading of literary texts around the event of Partition has been dominated by analyzing themes of nationalism, and violence. What gets sidelined is the themes of love, family and relationship which had been torn by way of the consequences of the political (un)settlement. What is also significant is how does one depict and delineate the personal pathos of individuals against the backdrop of a momentous event like Partition? How does the intrusion of politics inside the intimate spaces of home create intrusions and erosions? What is the notion of home expressed in such writings and how are the familial relations and axis of nationalism and patriarchy represented in these texts? The chapters of this thesis explore such questions across the four chapters.

Issues of dislocation and citizenship are also central to such writings. The large scale displacement of both men and women during the event resulted in the changing socio-economic patterns of their lives. The gendered readings of Partition have evoked images of grotesque brutality, violence, rape, trauma, loss, displacement, hopelessness and separation. What is often missed in such narratives and such stories of victimhood is the survival strategies that women who escaped the violence employed to survive

[44] Joe Cleary, *Literature, Partition and the Nation State: Culture and Conflict in Ireland, Israel and Palestine,* Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp 11.

and lead their lives. This project explores such tendencies in literature that portrayed such women who stoop up against the towering circumstances and moved against the political forces shaping their destiny.

While historians turned to non formal sources of documenting Partition after some delay, writers on the other hand, across the border, had been dealing with Partition as a thematic concern in their writings immediately after the event took place. Partition as an event captured the imagination of writers from the very beginning and still continues to be used as a strong metaphor in their writing**.** It became a thematic concern for writers of the time and still holds great significance amongst the writers, thus the ever increasing scholarship on the events of 1947. In India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, writers have written in all the languages like Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Bengali and English[45]. While history of the event for a larger part remained limited to the high politics thus creating a mesh of silences and absences, the literature around the event explored the personal stories of people who were involved in Partition. Fiction provided an 'intense window' and gave us a glimpse into what creation of postcolonial nation-states meant for the citizens of these countries. These creative exercises have helped people understand the 'distinctive impact of Partition on the lives of different classes and genders'. Such literature has been significant in highlighting how people did or did not make sense of such a huge event. In these works the tension between the experience of individuals and their variance with the statist narratives is exemplified, thus reshaping the contours of the narratives of partition.

[45] This is discussed at length in Chapter I.

IV

Partition Persists: Fresh Perspectives

Citizens Archive Pakistan is an initiative on the part of a group of people from Pakistan who collect the stories from people who had to migrate to or from Pakistan during the Partition migration or even after that. The initiative stemmed from the concern that the history of the formation of Pakistan was lost in the larger political battles and the cultural preservation took a back seat. The website of Citizens Archive Pakistan (CAP) explains its role as "we are dedicated to cultural and historic preservation and Educational outreach. Our mission is to document Pakistan's rich history, cultivate a unified identity and develop civic responsibility to build a better tomorrow. Our initiatives provide a thought provoking window into the nation's past and present, giving our youth an opportunity to shape a brighter and more progressive future"[46]. One of the projects undertaken by CAP is *Birth of Pakistan* which was an exhibit around the events of Lahore Resolution of 1940 up to the formation of Pakistan as a sovereign state. The aim behind this project was to "highlight the sacrifices made to achieve a homeland in 1947 to the early days of the new nation of Pakistan, as it struggled on its feet."[47]*The Oral History Project* which lies at the heart of the CAP is an initiative to document the stories of people who lived through Partition, people who were staying in what became Pakistan, and people who had to migrate to Pakistan. This project "concentrates on the ordinary people talking about everyday events that they experienced and bring a personal side to an invisible history. The Oral History project also lends a voice to neglected people on the

[46] http://www.citizensarchive.org/

[47] Ibid.

margins of society- those whose voices have been hidden from history."[48] CAP is into digitizing old newspapers, passports, refugee tickets from 1947. Similar but scanty attempts have been made by historians and feminist scholars who have looked beyond the narratives of 'significance' and need for a Muslim land and delved into exploring the narratives of minority communities and women and their experiences of Partition.

Pippa Virdee has collected narratives of Muslim women and their experiences of migration and resettlement in Pakistan. She has documented the silent history by examining official documents, newspapers, and women's oral testimonies.[49] In her work she highlights the fact that little is known about the experiences of Muslim women during Partition, migration and settlement since there is a disparity in the gendered history of Partition. Although Kamla Bhasin, Ritu Memon and Urvashi Butalia have challenged the conventional history of Partition , but they have not been able to address the disparity of the lack of narratives and stories of Muslim women. Virdee excavates stories not just about women as victims of the process of masculine nation building, but also as active agents of nation building and national healing process.

Nighat Said Khan has collected narratives of women in Sind and their experiences of living through Partition. [50]Questioning how Pakistan has still not come to terms with its own history and how common Pakistanis often see the history as recorded from a third person's perspective, Said attempts to shift the focus from Pakistan movement and Muslim League to lend voices to the women who experienced the event as

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[48] Ibid.

[49]Pippa Virdee, "Negotiating the Past: Journey Through Muslim Women's Experience of Partition and Resettlement in Pakistan," in *Cultural and Social History*, Vol 6, No,4, December 2009.

[50] Nighat Said Khan, "Identity, Violence, and Women: A Reflection on the Partition of India 1947" in *Perspectives on Modern South Asia: A Reader in Culture, History and Representation*, Oxford, Wiley, 2011.

migrants and as women. Through interviews Said brings forward how women in Pakistan view the creation of Pakistan and the impact that it has had on their lives. Farruk.A. Khan has done research around exploring experiences of Muslim women by way of analyzing the films and literature about it. Over all there is a very limited research in Pakistan with reference to not why the Partition happened, but how people dealt with the legacy of such an event.[51]

Haroon Khalid in his *The White Trail* has brought forth the stories of the non Muslims living in Pakistan and how their lives have changed with the formation of an Islamic republic. It is an ethnographic study of religious minorities in Pakistan and how they have tried to assimilate over many years. Through a journey into the religious festivals of these minorities, Khalid raises the important sociopolitical concerns facing minorities in an Islamic republic.

Rubina Saigol has undertaken a study of the migrant *(mohajir*) women and attempted to understand the sense of identity and belonging in them. She explores how women who did not initially 'belong' to Pakistan have over the time assimilated, negotiated, forged new identities or rejected or resisted these identities. The specific purpose of her work is to understand some of the ways in which ethnic and ethno-national identities came to be created, and the contradictions that may arise from other belongings, primarily those of class, religion and gender.[52]

Faisal Devji's *Muslim Zion: Pakistan as a Political Idea* offers a fresh perspective on the formation of Pakistan by linking it to the creation of Israel. By discussing the

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[51] Farrukh.A.khan, *Memory, Dislocation, Violence and Women in the Partition Literature of India and Pakistan,* University of Kent, 2002.

[52] Rubina Saigol, *The Partitions of Self: Mohajir Women's Sense of Identity,* Working Paper Series, Sustainable Development policy Institute, Islamabad, 2002.

competitive politics of Ambedkar and Jinnah, he delves into the role of Muslim merchants of Bombay. Devji maintains that much of the Pakistani historiography is held captive by historians obsessed with North India especially Punjab and Sindh. Historians by and large have been obsessed with unproductive questions like if Jinnah wanted Pakistan or not or was Pakistan meant to be a secular state or a religious state. He discusses these questions as unanswerable and highly legalized "presuming to hold someone accountable in a positive way as much as in a negative way, for a historical event"[53] By discussing the role of Bombay Muslims especially merchants who funded the league and from whose ranks Jinnah came, Devji brings forth never explored factors that played a significant role in the formation of Pakistan.

V

Engagement with Gender

My engagement with gender aims to be attentive to considering the marginal and silent perspectives of Partition and analysing them in the light of 'belonging to a nation'. This becomes tricky in relation to Muslim women as the creation of Pakistan rested on the idea of a promised land with equal and more opportunities for a particular community who had been denied the rights in what was India. So how did Muslim women negotiate with the idea of construction of a nation when the very construction and foundation of that nation rested on the violence imprinted and inscribed on women's bodies? How did the Muslim women writers engage with their writing, either as a response to the injustice and the trauma, or as a cathartic exercise with the idea of a nation in which women became symbols of communities and sexed

[53] As stated in an interview: http://twocircles.net/2013dec20/interview_faisal_devji_prepartition_muslim_politics.html#.WA4-bPl97IV

individuals? A gendered engagement cannot just mean an engagement with stories of women but also how the dominant and central narratives are constructed in gendered ways which makes some narratives public and other private. My distinct focus on Muslim women and the feelings of national belonging and its interaction with quotidian allows me to understand the dynamics of relation between nation, gender and religion. How did women writers who wrote about Muslim women household during Partition use literature as a space to explore the complicated relationship that women shared with the then newly formed nation? What particular intervention did they make in understanding the event and its ramifications on the lives of women? While one should take cognizance of the possibility that women writers are also capable of re-inscribing the nationalist narratives and dominant ideologies through their writings, nevertheless what sets their writings apart is that "women articulate and respond to ideologies from complexly constituted and decentered positions within them"[54]. Thus while these texts representing women's experiences of Partition are in different relationships to, and participate in different degrees, the reproduction of hegemonic views of nation, "they can also be read as documents that display what is at stake in the embattled practices of self and agency, and in the making a habitable world, at the margins of patriarchies reconstituted by the emerging bourgeois of empire and nation."[55]

[54]Susie Tharu, K.Lalita (eds) *Women Writing in India, 600 BC to the Present, Volume II: The Twentieth Century.* The Feminist Press, CUNY, New York, 1993, P. 38.

[55] Ibid., p.36.

VI

Chapter I: Urdu Literature and the Postcolonial Condition

I begin my discussion with situating the place of Urdu language and literature in the political spectrum of 1947. How was the Urdu language used as a symbol to construct the Muslim community prior to the Partition as well as in the postcolonial time following the creation of Pakistan that set Urdu as their official national language? I argue that it was not just at the time of impending division of the country but even before that the antipathy of Muslims and Hindus towards Hindi and Urdu respectively was present in the undivided India. I discuss how the cultural value of Urdu language for the Muslim community and later the identification of the language with Muslim identity while helped generate support for the Pakistan movement was flawed. This gets proven by the secession of Bangladesh from Pakistan beginning with disenfranchisement felt by the Bengali community due to the imposition of Urdu language. The chapter discusses the trends in Urdu literature and the impact of these trends on the cultural narratives produced around Partition. It has an elaborate discussion on the writers' engagement with literature as a political tool. A section of the chapter is devoted to discussion on how literature became a space for women writers and their dissenting voices. I introduce the selected writers in this section and position their works in the social and political milieu.

Chapter II: Articulating the (non)Nation through Narration: Beyond the Politics of Writing Nation

This chapter has a discussion on two novels by Quratulain Hyder, *Aag Ka Darya* and *Mere Bhi Sanam Khane*. I argue that the novels under discussion question the desirability of the Partition by writing against the nation and nationalist ideology. My

particular focus is on exploring how writings such as Hyder's became a defiant exercise in the face of a cascade of literature that celebrated the becoming of Pakistan. This chapter highlights how the becoming of Pakistan, the celebration of the new nation was intertwined with cultural mourning since violence formed the essential part of the process of the division. Through the reading of Quartulain Hyder's texts the chapter brings forth the performance of nation and the ensuing trauma in the minds of Muslims. It discusses how women writers brought women to the centre of the history of Partition and explored their subjectivities and their voices.

Chapter III: **Home as a non Neutral Space: Family as Nation, Nation as Family**

This chapter has a discussion on the home as an enduring site of political evidence, a site of control and a site of resistance. The chapter focuses primarily on Khatija Mastoor's *Aangan*, with significant insights from *Aag Ka Darya, Mere Bhi Sanam Khane* and *Zameen.* I aim to discuss how the daily ritual of living inside home is as political as the activities outside in the times of overwhelming political crisis. The colonial occupation was being challenged not just outside by inside as well by constructing a particular Muslim womanhood by various regimes of control. The struggle to make home correspond to its traditional meaning and the male anxiety of constructing a specific 'Muslim feminity' to regain some control snatched from them by the colonizer will also be discussed here; how home becomes the site of control to resist the control of the larger nation/ territory. I aim to shine light on how the project of imperialism and nationalism remain essentially patriarchal in how their concern with territory also gets manifested in their desire to control women.

Chapter IV: Migration, Violence and Partition: Stories from Within

This chapter takes the discussion forward from the third chapter and looks at the apparatus of the familial violence. It focuses primarily on *Zameen* along with *Aag Ka Darya* and *Mere Bhi Sanam Khane*. The discussion is centered around how the representation of migration focuses on the number of killed and raped people and does not offer a deeper perspective of how migration impacted the lives of people after the Partition was considered to be over. It discusses the experiences of women and offers a gendered reading of the experience of migration itself. It discusses the complexities of the process of migration and the agency of women at such critical moments. The discussion around how Partition violence needs to be understood in its entirety by focusing on not just the violence from opposite communities but violence from within the community and family. It discusses how within the home this apparatus of violence operated and also brings forward the intersection of class and Partition. It complicates the category of a Muslim refugee woman in Pakistan and sheds light on the disillusionment that the creation of Pakistan meant for some Muslims.

Chapter I

Urdu Literature and the Postcolonial Condition

Urdu language since the beginning of the twentieth century has been associated with Muslim identity. In this chapter I shall trace a trajectory of the events that led to the spring of alienation and antipathy on part of the two communities, Hindus and Muslims towards Hindi and Urdu languages respectively. I shall look at the events before the actual event of 1947 and attempt to explicate the support that the 'Urdu movement' got during the Pakistan movement of the 1940s. This chapter also has a discussion on how it was this very emphasis on Urdu being the Muslim language, did the new nation of Bangladesh come into being. The discussion is meant to highlight the fissures within how all the Muslims did not see Urdu as an Islamic or Muslim language. From discussing the linkages between Urdu and Muslim identity, I shall look into the concerns about Muslims that Urdu literature took up before and after the Partition, and discuss some crucial movements in Urdu literature that had a significant impact on the Partition literature. Furthermore I shall discuss and put into context how did women writers figure in the exercise of raising consciousness through literature and introduce the two writers whose work is the subject of this thesis

Language as a Symbol of community

Jin sheharon mai goongi thi Galib ki nawan barson
un shehron mai aaj Urdu be namo-nashaan thehri
Azadi ke kamil ka ailan huwa jis din
ma 'aatoob zabaan thehri, gaddar zabaan thehri
(The cities that reverberated with Ghalib's voice
Those cities have no trace of Urdu left
When the freedom bells were rung
It was declared cursed and a treacherous language)

How did Muslim and Urdu come to be so closely associated has various reasons ranging from social to political. Urdu language became the language of Islam for the Muslims of the subcontinent and thus during the Pakistan movement it was fixed as one of the symbols of Muslim identity around which support was sought. Arabic is thought of intrinsically holy by Muslims and no such status is accorded to Persian or Urdu but nevertheless in South Asia it has continued to be associated with Islam. Tariq Rahman opines that it was the language of the elites in India and with the advent of the British as they started losing their privileges, they made use of Urdu to consolidate their power in the cultural arena. They started formal schools with Urdu as a medium and even commissioned printing press that would disseminate information in Urdu[1]. Francis Robinson reads this intervention as the strategy of Ulema to retain some power over common masses as they were losing all the political power to the British.[2]

Scholars have had various opinions about the origin of the Urdu language in the Indian subcontinent. While a detailed discussion about the origin and growth of the Urdu language is outside the scope of this study, a brief sketch of the same is relevant. There isn't a firm consensus about the origin of the Urdu language in the subcontinent. Scholars have had varied opinions about it. It is taken for granted that the language was the byproduct of intermingling of two communities together who influenced each other's linguistic environment[3]. Abdul Lais Sidiqui states that the language was neither what the Arabs and Persians brought with them, nor was it

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[1] Tariq Rahman, 'Urdu as an Islamic Language', *Annuals of Urdu Literature*, Volume 25, 2006. pp. 101-109.

[2] Francis Robinson, "Islam and the Impact of Print in South Asia" in *The Transmission of Knowledge in South Asia*. edited by Nancy Cook. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996.pp 66-104.

[3] Belkacem Belmekki, *The Urdu-Hindi Language Issue and the Idea of Muslim Separate Identity in British India: The View of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan*, http://e-crit3224.univ-fcomte.fr/download/3224-ecrit/document/numero_1/m-article_belmekki_165-76.pdf, accessed on 18.11.2015.

already spoken before they arrived in India. It was in fact a mixture of Persianised and Hindi dialects that gave us Urdu. It is a result of the amity and social accord between Hindus and Muslims.[4] Khurshid Aziz commenting on the growth of language suggests that Urdu borrowed from both Persian and Arabic, but the influence of Hindi was equally significant[5]. Over a period of time indologists have come to the conclusion that the language was *Rekhta,* an amalgamation of both Hindi and Urdu before it came in contact with Sanskrit and Persian and went under transformation. With this development what was formed was 'Sanskiritised hindavi' and 'Persianised Hindavi', which later was called Hindustani[6].

In the nineteenth century East India Company began to replace Persian with various local and vernacular languages for official and courtly purposes. In North India however, it was Urdu in Persian script instead of Devanagri that was given precedence[7].This move had immediate consequences since it created a language policy where Urdu and Hindu was both encouraged in schools, but for official purposes Hindi was discouraged. This antagonized the Hindi speaking communities as they saw it working to their disadvantage. Hindus in the provinces of Agra and Awadh demanded that Hindi be made official language instead of Urdu. A memorandum was presented to the officials with 67,000 signatures from various cities. It was advocated that Urdu be replaced since majority does not speak and read

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[4] Quoted in Farman Fatehpuri, *Pakistan Movement and Hindu-Urdu Conflict*, Sang-E-Meel Publications, Lahore, 1987, p. 22.

[5] Khursheed K. Aziz, *The Making of Pakistan: A Study in Nationalism*, Chattos & Windus, London, 1967, p. 126.

[6] Ibid.

[7] See Christine Everaet, *Tracing the Boundaries Between Hindi and Urdu: Lost and Added in Translation Between 20th century Short Stories*, Brill, Leiden, Boston, 2010.

the language because of the complex Arabic and Persian influence on the language[8]. It was Babu Shiva Prasad of Benaras[9] who sought support to convince the British government to replace Urdu with Hindi since the former was seen as a symbol of Persian dominance in the subcontinent.[10]In his memorandum on court characters in 1868 to the British he accused the Mughals of forcing the Persian language on Indians. In a meeting organized in the same year Madhuk Bhattacharjee led an anti-Urdu meeting saying that it was Hindi that should be the official language since with the languages spoken, it is the Hindi that should be given the first place.[11] Later it was Madan Mohan Malviya who published several documents advocating the replacement of Urdu with Hindi.[12] These sentiments gave rise to various Hindi movements over different places like the *Nagri Pracharini Sabah* in Benaras in 1893, *Hindi Sahitya Sammelan*, in Allahabad 1910, *Dakshini Bahrat Prachar Sabha*, in 1918, *Rashtra Basha Prachar Samiti* in 1926.[13]

While the Hindi movement was gaining momentum[14]Muslim groups were equally enthusiastically advocating the status of Urdu as a significantly official language. *Anjumane-Taraqi-e-Urdu,* a group headed by Moulvi Abdul Haq spearheaded a movement for Urdu. The organisation stated that it was easier for Urdu to be made the official language since the script of Hindi could not be written faster and it lacked

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[8] See Fatehpuri, *Pakistan Movement and Hindu-Urdu Conflict*, pp.22-27.

[9] Benaras was and still is like a holy city for Hindus where they go to pilgrimage. The religious significance of the place would have contributed a great deal in garnering support from community members.

[10] Shameem. H. Kadri, *Creation of Pakistan*, Wajidalis, Lahore, 1982, p. 6.

[11] Madhu Limaye, *Indian National Movement: Its Ideological and Socio-economic Dimensions*, London, Sangam Books, 1989, p. 127.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Hafeez Malik, *Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Muslim Modernization in India and Pakistan*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1980, pp. 245-46.

[14] Vasudha Dalmiya, *The Nationalisation of Hindu Traditions: Bhartendu Harishchandra and Nineteenth Century Banaras*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997.

standardization. Also, it held that Hindi could still grow as a language even when it wasn't made the official language.[15]

As a result of this conflict between Hindi-Urdu, the members of each community began to 'purify' their language of the influence of each others' language. Hindi and Urdu began to be embellished with more of Sanskrit and Persian words respectively. Both communities were tenaciously clinging to their languages and getting more enthusiastic about it. The more Hindus laid emphasis on Hindi language, the more attached Muslims were getting to the Urdu language[16]. It was in such circumstances that even when Urdu was by no means a Muslim language, it was made to be one, and it became one[17]. Shun Muhammad states that it wasn't just the language that was hated but it was the Muslim community that this hatred was directed at. The hatred towards Islam and Muslims in South Asia was evident in the hate speeches given by the campaigners. He quotes one of the speeches as; "The Persian character has no significance except to remind us of the association of a not always high past, or rather middle age, it is the worn out badge of slavery left after the freedom has been achieved."[18]

The tension around the language issue became more serious and resulted in communal feelings. Many intellectuals like Sir Syed Khan were appalled at the politics of both Hindus and Muslims who had created an issue around different languages. He expressed his anxieties and suspicion to the local British magistrate. Shun Muhmamad goes on to say that what was more shocking to Sir Syed Khan was to see some of his

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[15] Malik, *Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Muslim Modernization in India and Pakistan*, pp. 245-46.

[16] Aziz, *The Making of Pakistan: A Study in Nationalism*, p. 126.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Quoted in Shun Muhammad (ed.), *The Aligarh Movement: Basic Documents: 1864-1898*, Meenakshi Prakashan, Meerut (India), 1978, p. xxvii

very liberal friends also fall prey to such language politics. One of his close friends, Raja Jayakishen publicly supported the abolition of Urdu in government schools[19]. In one of his letters he writes, "I have received a piece of news which made me extremely sad and anxious, it is egged by the suggestions of Babu Shiv Prashad Sahib, there is the general favor of effacing from the world, the Urdu language and the Persian script, which are the memorials of the Muslims...On this proposal there will in no way be an agreement and unity among the Hindus and the Muslims. Muslims will never agree on Hindi...and the consequence will be that Hindus and Muslims become separate"[20]

What is also worthy of mentioning here is that Raja Jayakishen who was also the founding member of the scientific society announced that the publications of journals and all translations would be undertaken in Nagri Script (Hindi) instead of Persian (Urdu). Sayyid Ahmad stated in the following excerpt taken from a letter that he wrote from London on 29 April 1870 to Mahdi Ali Khan, a close friend of his:

"I understand Hindus are roused to destroy the Muslims' (cultural) symbol embodied in the Urdu language and the Persian script. I have heard that they have made representation through the Hindu members of the Scientific Society that the Society's '*Akhbar'* (journal) should be published in the Devnagri (or Nagiri) rather than in the Persian script, and that all translations of (foreign language) books should likewise be

[19]Malik, *Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Muslim Modernization in India and Pakistan*, pp. 245-46.

[20] Quouted in Belkacem Belmekki, *The Urdu-Hindi Language Issue and the Idea of Muslim Separate Identity in British India: The View of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan*, http://e-crit3224.univ-fcomte.fr/download/3224-ecrit/document/numero_1/m-article_belmekki_165-76.pdf, accessed on 18.11.2015

in Hindi. This proposal would destroy cooperation between the Hindus and Muslims"[21].

This politics around language and associating language with religion travelled ahead and during the 1940s Urdu became a cultural symbol which Muslims identified themselves with. It was these symbols that were used to create a seemingly monolith Muslim community out of what in fact was a very diverse community with linguistic and cultural differences. Urdu became a symbol of Muslims that was intentioned to unify their community. In his work on nationalism and Partition in Bengal, Jones Recee states that in order to create an image of a romantic homeland where people could live without the fear of persecution, the employment of certain symbols that bind the group together even with their differences is important for mobilization. The nationalizing leaders have to focus on one symbol that is familiar to the community rather than inviting new iconography. These symbols remind the people of "a common origin, predicament and destiny inexorably tied together".[22] Thus in the case of Indian Muslims, the symbol that tied them inexorably together was to be Urdu. It was the symbol that was used to make an 'objectively different' group into a 'subjectively conscious community'[23].

Commenting on the role of the British, Rahman states that this shift of Urdu as an Islamic language and not Arabic, which is the language of Quran "would not have occurred without the British intervention which brought modernity to South Asia. Indeed the very idea that the numbers are politically significant for quotas in jobs,

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[21] Quoted in Malik, '*Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan's Contribution to the Development of Muslim Nationalism in India*, p. 139.

[22] Reece Jones, 'Whose Homeland? Territoriality and Religious Nationalism in Pre-Partition Bengal' *South Asia Research*, Vol. 26: 2, Sage Publications, London, 2006, p. 117.

[23] Paul Brass, *Language, Religion and Politics in North India*, Cambridge University Press, London, 1974. See especially chapter 9, The Process of Nationality- Formation in North India, p. 403-434.

admissions to educational institutions, government patronage etc was created by the British who introduced the modern concepts like representation of the people, equality before a secular legal system and the creation of a ubiquitous public service system across India…The game of the numbers created the perception of a monolithic Muslim community suppressing class, ethnic and linguistic divisions"[24].

After the creation of Pakistan, Urdu which had already become the 'subsidiary symbol of Muslim identity'[25] was established as the national language of Pakistan. The symbolic value of language to construct a community is also realized by perusing the policies that were framed around the Urdu language both in India and Pakistan after 1947. Urdu was declared the national language of Pakistan although the majority of the population did not speak the language. Sindhi, Pashto, Siraiki, Punjabi and Bengali were the main languages spoken in the geographical area that became Pakistan. While Urdu language established itself as a national language in Pakistan, what was happening in India around the same time should be given some space here in order to understand how it was considered to be linked to the Muslim identity. After the Partition and migration of some population of Muslims to Pakistan the Muslims who stayed in India had to reconstitute their identity and also engage with the symbols that were used by the leaders to espouse their cause of a separate nation on the basis of religion. The position of Indian Muslims who did not or could not migrate to the newly formed nation was very difficult. Mohammad Raza Khan commenting on the state of such Muslims says:"Having worked for the creation of Pakistan they found themselves left without an organization and leadership with nobody to guide them, Mr Jinnah left for Karachi to lead the new State…A fear

[24] Rahman, '*Urdu as an Islamic Language'*, pp.101-119.

[25] See Christopher King, *One Language, Two Scripts: The Hindi movement in Nineteenth Century North India* , Bombay, Oxford University Press, 1994.

complex had overtaken the Muslim community throughout the country. They could not think in terms of their political rights or their material welfare. The mood of withdrawal lingers even today."[26] These fears were not ill founded for some of the symbols that were associated with Muslims came under attack. Urdu language too became a victim of neglect by the government for the same reason. In the state of UP it was denied a legitimate status on account of terming it as a minority language. The government through various policies relegated Urdu to second language of the State of UP and delinked it from educational and administrative services. Thus Urdu was restricted to the poor classes of UP and this created a sense of deprivation which still continues. This treatment of Urdu stemmed from the language's identification as a Muslim language. Paul Brass states that in the Indian militant mind Hindi language will always be superior to Urdu as the language of India because the attachment of Muslims to an alien script will always be seen as suspicious.[27] It could also be attributed to the fact that most of the religious literature available to Muslims in India is available in Urdu. Pakistan on the other hand being a religious inspired state gave Urdu the status of the national language stressing the Persio-Arabic roots and thus strengthening the 'muslimness' of the language.

This was also in keeping with the two nation theory based on difference. Pakistani State invested in Urdu in order to bridge the internally diverse identities within Pakistan. But the difference of language that was used to demand a separate nation from India was used by the Bengali community in Pakistan in the same manner as the leaders of Muslim League did.

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[26] Quoted in S.M.Ikram, *Indian Muslims and the Partition of India*, Atlantic Publishers, 1992.p.434.

[27] Paul Brass, *Language, Religion and Politics in North India*, Cambridge University Press, London, 1974.

This idea of difference provided a sort of impetus to the idea of a Muslim nation. Somehow nationalism depends on the idea of difference and distinctiveness, and yet it is this difference which works against the very idea of nation building. After the creation of Pakistan, it was the struggle for independence of Bangladesh that emerged along with the language controversy. The new state of Pakistan was faced with the issue of whether Urdu or Bengali should be made the State language. The controversy over the State language had far reaching consequences for the newly created Pakistan. Imposition of Urdu as a State language was thought unjust by the Bengali population who were advocating for an equal status to Bengali language. Immediately after the independence of Pakistan, when Pakistani government started the use of Urdu in money order, postal stamps, currencies, coins, railway tickets and official letterheads , it created strong resentment amidst the Bengali population who resisted this move of making Urdu the official state language at the cost of ignoring the aspirations of East Pakistan.

The language controversy started with the establishment of non Bengali leaders of All India Muslim League (AIML) who pushed for Urdu to be the state language. The central parliamentary board of AIML prepared a manifesto for the protection and promotion of Urdu language and script.[28] Dr Ziauddin Ahmed, Vice Chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University also declared that only Urdu is fit to be a language of a Muslim nation. His advocacy of Urdu was challenged by Dr. Muhmmad Shahidullah who rejected his discriminatory proposal and wrote *Pakistaner Bhasha Shamashya* (The Language Problem of Pakistan) wherein he wrote "Bengali being the mother tongue of 55% of the total population of Pakistan deserves to be the state language of

[28] Masarat Jabeen, Qasim Ali, *Language controversy: Impact on National Politics and Secession of East Pakistan,* , Source: South Asian Studies,vol 25.No.1, January – June, 2010, pp .99-124.

the new nation. Once Bengali is adopted as the state language, we may then deliberately focus on the question whether or not Urdu can be afforded the status of one of the State languages of Pakistan."[29]

Democratic Youth League, established in 1948 decided to call a conference to design the future course of action through deliberations and towards the protection and integrity of Bengali language and culture. The government bitterly opposed this conference and thought of it as a conspiracy as the issue of regional autonomy was also on agenda. Pakistani government made various attacks on the members of the organization and charged some of its members in the name of communism[30]. The Pakistan Educational Conference was held in Karachi on November 1947. "Fazlur Rehman, Bengali Minister of Education called this conference for introducing reforms in educational system and promotion of Islamic ideology. In this conference it was decided that Bengali would be dropped from all government stationeries, including money order forms, envelopes and postcards, which would be printed only in Urdu and English. It was vehemently stated that Urdu had to be the official language of Pakistan"[31]. This conference agitated many people from East Pakistan, especially the members of *Tamaddun Majlis*- organization of students and professors at Dhaka University. Professor Abdul Kashem from the organization convened the literary meeting to discuss the issue of national language. It was Fazlur Rahman's provocative speeches that made the *Majlis* to make serious preparations to counter him. Later many liberal leaders joined the organization and it turned out to be a mass movement.

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[29] Ibid.

[30] M. Rafique Afzal, *Pakistan: History and Politics 1947-1971*, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2001.

[31] Jabeen,, Ali, '*Language controversy: Impact on National Politics and Secession of East Pakistan*',pp99-124

On February 23, 1098 when the first session of Constituent Assembly of Pakistan began at Karachi, it was proposed that the members would speak either in Urdu or English. It was Dhirendrana Datta, a member of East Pakistan Congress party who tabled an amendment motion to include Bengali as of the languages of the constituent assembly. "Out of 69 million population of Pakistan, 44 million were from East Pakistan with Bangla as their mother tongue"[32]. It was strongly opposed by the central leaders like Liaquat Ali Khan who was the Prime Minister of Pakistan and Khawaja Nazimuddin, Chief Minister of East Bengal who said "The object of this amendment is to create a rift between the people of Pakistan…is to take away from the Musalmans that *unifying force* that brings them together".[33]

Under the pressure of widespread agitation and the expected visit of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the Chief Minister of East Pakistan accepted the demand for making Bengali a state language. The resolution was accepted in the provincial assembly in the later years but the centre did not consider it. Students and leaders continued their protests during and after Jinnah's week long visit to East Pakistan in March 1948. When Jinnah declared, "make no mistake about it. There can be only one state language if the component parts of the state are to march forward in unison and that language in my opinion can only be Urdu".[34] This categorical assertion in favour of Urdu was instantly protested by the students attending the convocation ceremony. Later Jinnah delivered a similar speech at Curzon Hall of Dhaka University and even there he was met with a lot of resistance. Before his departure from Dhaka, Jinnah delivered a speech on radio reasserting his policy of making Urdu the national language. With the

[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid.

political crisis, the economic condition in East Pakistan also deteriorated. People of East Pakistan started losing faith in Muslim League and a new political party was formed known as, Awami Muslim League with Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bashani, as its leader in 1949. Party later dropped the word Muslim to accommodate the other minorities and became Awami League. This party exploited the growing sense of deprivation and exploitation in East Pakistan and attributed all this as a new form of colonialism that had replaced British imperialism. Under these circumstances, the Language controversy got a new momentum in 1952. The language controversy spiraled and the political situation also changed which eventually culminated in the formation of East Bengal as an independent country called Bangladesh.

Shifting Trends in Urdu Literature: Modernist Tendencies

In the above section I tried to demonstrate how Urdu language was associated with Muslim identity and what were the kinds of interventions that were made to construct a nation by using language as a symbol. This section would attempt to discuss how Urdu literature became a space that was used by writers to discuss the issues related to Muslims and Islam both.

Omair Qureshi states that it was Urdu's destiny or misfortune that it became identified as the lingua franca of the Muslim community. The dilemma of Muslim identity and Urdu became intertwined and it still is an unresolved dilemma. He states that the "effort to define Indian Muslim nationhood in the new colonial environment placed issues of past, present and future identity at the centre of elite Muslim concerns. Not only were these concerns expressed largely in Urdu but the literary legacy of Urdu

formed the terrain on which some of the more significant debates were conducted"[35] Since a discussion on the literary trends in Urdu literature at length is beyond the scope of this thesis I would very briefly state (except for progressive writers movement because it deeply influenced the writings around Partition) the kinds of shifts that Urdu literature went through before it came to the use of realism in literature which we see in most of the immediate Partition literature. Urdu literature saw the trend of romantic tendencies in writers of Iqbal's generation. Romantic writers considered the imagination and free spirit as the subject matter of their creative exercise. The cultural production of that time was around the themes of individual emancipation and freedom. It was followed by the Progressive Writers Movement which was followed by the Circle of Connoisseurs (*Halqae Zauq*). This group eschewed from discussing political or social issues and focused on the inner self. Although they did advocate art for art's sake trend in literature but nevertheless they did discuss the predicaments of individuals in the society but on a psychological level. Realism as a technique was not their representative trend like members of the Progressive Writers Association. Since much of the Partition literature used realism as a technique in their works a discussion on PWA is significant.

In the year 1934 a group of young intellectuals had a meeting in London convened by Sajjad Zaheer. The purpose of the meeting was to draft a document about the future of Indian literature. The members of the meeting were all young and came from affluent families who were sent by their families to seek education in the West. Motivated by the anti-fascist and socialist wave in the West, these young people were teeming with energy and hope to give their country a new shape. The members of the meeting

[35] Omair Qureshi, "Twentieth Century Urdu Literature" in *Handbook of Twentieth Century Literatures of India*, (eds) Nalini Natrajan, Emmanuel Sampath Nelson, Greenwood Press, Westport, CT, 1996. P.329.

would go on to become significant faces in the field of politics and literature. Ali Hussain says that "the institution that was emerging through this meeting was destined to majestically straddle the traditions of Indian literature in general and Urdu in particular."[36] The meeting had its origin in one of the significant incidents that had happened two years ago. In 1932, a collection of short stories called *Angarey* (embers) was published, the contributors were Sajjad Zaheer, Rashid Jahan, Mahmuduzzafar and Ahmed Ali. The stories were a condemnation of the cultural, social and sexual mores of the Indian society. The themes ranged from hypocrisy of social life in contemporary India to religious orthodoxy. After the publication of Angarey, uproar ensued especially from Muslim circles that declared it blasphemous for criticizing Islam and for being obscene. The All India Shia conference passed a resolution condemning the "heart-rending and filthy pamphlet called Angarey…which has wounded the feelings of the entire Muslim community by ridiculing God and His prophets and which is extremely objectionable from the standpoint of both religion and morality."[37]A case was registered under Section 295A of the Indian Penal Code according to which the publication of such material was prohibited. However the writers associated with the publication of *Angarey* were in no mood to repent their actions and stood by what they had written about. In 1933, Mahmuduzzaffar wrote in an article, "*Shall we Submit to Gagging*" published in an Allahabad based paper, *The Leader*:

I am surprised to find… that an author cannot take all this for granted, that what he says in straightforward language is met with serious and unintelligent abuse and even threats of violence…The writers of this book do not wish to make an apology for it. They leave it to

[36] Ali Hussain Mir, Raza Mir, *A Celebration of Progressive Urdu Poetry: Anthems of Resistance*, India Ink,Roli Books, New Delhi, 2006. P.2.

[37] Ibid.,3

float or sink of itself. They only wish to defend the right of launching it and all other vessels like it…They have chosen the particular field of Islam not because they bear any special malice towards it, but because being born into that particular society, they felt better qualified to speak for that alone…Our practical purpose is the formation immediately of a league of progressive authors, which should bring forth similar collections from time to time, both in English and the various vernaculars of our country.[38]

The members of the meeting decided to use literature as a tool to pierce through the orthodox fortifications of the Indian society. It was decided to call the group Progressive Writers Association (PWA). It was Sajjad Zaheer, the architect of this association who took the responsibility of spreading the mission through the South Asian region. The manifesto of the group was ready by the year 1935 and Sajjad Zaheer invited other literary figures to discuss it with. It immediately attracted many writers of the same leaning like Premchand, a tall figure of Hindustani literature. He published the Hindi translation of the manifesto later. The English translation was published in *Left Review,* in February 1935. Below is part of the text of the manifesto;

Radical changes are taking place in Indian society. Fixed ideas and old beliefs, social and political institutions are being challenged. Out of the present turmoil and conflict a new society is emerging. The spirit of reaction however, though moribund and doomed to ultimate decay, is still operative and is making desperate efforts to prolong itself…witness the mystical devotional obsession of our literature, its furtive and sentimental attitude towards sex, its emotional exhibitionism and its almost total lack of rationality. Such literature was produced particularly during past two centuries, one of the most unfortunate periods of our history, a period of disintegrating feudalism and of acute misery and degradation for the Indian people as a whole… it is the object of our association to rescue literature and other arts from the

[38] Quouted in Geeta Patel, *Lyrical Moments, Historical Hauntings: On Gender, Colonialism and Desire in Miraji's Urdu Poetry,* Stanford University Press, 2001, P. 93-94.

priestly, academic and decadent classes in whose hands they have degenerated so long; to bring arts into the closest touch with the people and to make them vital organs which will register the actualities of life, as well as lead us to the future[39].

The manifesto was seen as modernist and anti-religious seeking to bring revolutionary changes in the literary landscape. It also emphasized the use of realism to address the pertinent issues of society. It made ripples particularly in the Urdu literature circles and had a huge impact. However Amir Ali argues that it wasn't because the ideas were totally novel or revolutionary since a young critic called Akhtar Hussain Raipuri had already introduced many of these ideas in his "*Adab aur Zaindagi*" (Literature and Life) where he had denounced such literature that did not speak of relevant social issues. In a way it was Raipuri's ideas that made it easy for PWA's manifesto to impact the Urdu literature circles.[40]

PWA had not just upset religious circles but it had generated some suspicion in the eyes of the government as well owing to its anti-colonial political stance. A letter by home minister written in 1936 sent to concerned authorities said:

"I am directed to address you in connection with an organization known as the Progressive Writer's Association…The proclaimed aims of the association are comparatively innocent and suggest that it concerns itself solely with the organization of journalists and writers and the promotion of interest in literature of a progressive nature…I am desired to suggest therefore that suitable opportunities may be taken to convey, preferably in conversations,

[39] This manifesto appeared in 1935 in *Left Review*, London. The text here is quoted from a reproduction from Priya Joshi, *In another Country: Colonialism, Culture and The English Novel in India*, Columbia University Press, 2002, P. 207. Joshi also hints at the difference in the Hindi translation being a little subdued having departed from the tone, language and some content as well.

[40] Mir, Raza Mir, *A Celebration of Progressive Urdu Poetry*, p.2.

friendly warnings about this association to journalists, educationists and others who may be attracted by its ostensible programmes."[41]

PWA had established itself as a strong influence for it spoke of its time and society. It enjoyed support from various people who were not politically inclined to communism but became the votaries of PWA. Some of them were Rabindranath Tagore, Pandit Nehru, Maulvi Abdul Haq, Josh, Firaq, Aziz Ahmed, Hayatullah Ansari, Ahmed Nadeem Qasam, the Telugu poet Sri Sri, Gujarati poet Umashankar Joshi, Punjabi writer Gurbux Singh, Marathi litterateur Anna Bhau Sathe.[42] The concerns it took up were the criticism of life, of its times and religious practices. The support that it was gaining was indicative of the fact the Urdu literature had opened up to a new set of ideas of intellectual and emotional changes. Although Urdu literature had already had become a field of national struggle after the mutiny of 1857[43], it was with the beginning of PWA that it was ready to confront issues that were thought of to be private;

"That is the question I wish to raise here. Coming to the contents of the book itself, the stories of my friend S. Sajjad Zaheer are concerned chiefly with the criticism and a satire of the current Moslem conceptions, life and practices. His attack is directed primarily against the intolerable theological burden that is imposed from childhood upon the average Moslem in this country-a burden that leads to a contortion and a cramping of the inquisitive or speculative mind and the vital vigours of body of both man and woman. Ahmed Ali essays into the realms of poverty, material, spiritual and physical, especially the poverty of the

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[41] Quoted in Saba Mahmud, Angare and the founding of Progressive Writers Association, *Modern Asian Studies*, CUP Vol 30, No 2 (May, 1996), pp 447-467

[42] Ahmed Ali, N.M.Rasheed, "The Progressive Writers Movement and its Historical Perspective", *Journal of South Asian Literature*, Vol 13, No 1 / 4, Miscellany (Fall-Winter-Spring-Summer 1997-1998), pp 91-97.

[43] Rakshanda Jalil discusses this in some detail in the chapter 'The Linkages between Social change and Urdu Literature' in her book *Liking Progress, Loving Change*, Oxford University Press, 20014. See page 1-51.

Moslem woman, and imagination and admirable boldness breaks through the veils of convention to expose the stark reality. Rashid Jehan, who is also a Doctor of Medicine drawing on her practical experience, also portrays vividly the ghastly plight of the woman behind the purdah. Nobody can deny the truthfulness of those portraits, and anyone who chooses to exert himself can see that they are not drawn for the sake of literary 'flair', but spring from an inner indignation against this".[44]

The PWA discussed the issues of society and individuals not in abstract terms like the Romantics but through issues of social injustices. Influenced by the socialist movements in the West these writers took up the question of rampant class oppression which increased their popularity in the Urdu speaking communities. The writings became a mirror of the orthodoxy and injustices of the society towards the less privileged population. The progressive writers did the valuable service of "keeping Urdu writers sensitive to their socio-political environment and its injustices."[45] One of the strong ideological stances of the PWA was hate against the British rule. That is how many writers who did not share the formal affinity of the writers also were drawn towards them solely for this reason. Rajender Singh Bedi although did not approve of the ideological formalism of the association nevertheless joined because of the anti British slant. The fight against the imperialistic design was also one of the important concerns of the association[46].

After the formation of the independent state in 1947, and the ensuing Partition, PWA found itself waning in its influence and rebellious zeal. There were various reasons that factored in towards the fading cultural consensus that the association had arrived

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[44] Mahmud, *Angare and the founding of Progressive Writers Association*, pp. 447-467.

[45] Carlo Coppola, *Urdu Literature 1935-1970: The Progressive Episode*, University of Chicago, 1975.

[46] Muhammad Umar Memon, 'Partition Literature: A Study of Intizar Hussain', *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (1980), pp. 377-410.

at. The bloodshed of Partition had radicalized some of its writers who took to being the partisans of communalism[47]. Also the blow that Urdu suffered after the Partition when it was made to be a Muslim language which resulted in loss of state patronage shook the association. The patronage was directed to Hindi which was declared the official language as a result of which the readers and writers of Urdu began dwindling in India.[48] The Progressives had to come to terms with the "growing communalisation of the polity, an issue that became increasingly urgent after the Partition of the country along religious lines. An unfortunate corollary was the communalization of Urdu itself in India. Urdu suffered a debilitating blow when it became identified as the language of Pakistan, and by specious extension, the language of Muslims."[49] Within the organization there was a rift for certain writers who shifted their focus from collective society to individual were not accepted in the circle uncritically. Poets and writers who were thought of to have drifted from the ideological line of the party were reprimanded and publicly criticized.[50] It was because of this that many writers distanced themselves from PWA and followed their creative exercise individually.

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[47] Muhammad Umar Memom in his work on the Progressive Writers states that before the Partition, the last issue of *Savera*, was completely silent on anything to do with Jinnah, Muslim League and the demand for Pakistan. In fact it was devoted to India's immediate liberation and had a translation of some excerpts from Nehru's *Discovery of India*. The demand for Pakistan on religious lines was an anathema to the dreams of Progressive writers so much that Hasan Raipuri had denounced Iqbal and his vision for a Muslim nation as Islamic fascism. Fissures began to developed and some of the writers like Fateh Muhammad Malik were irked to see *Savera* carry a piece on Gandhi's assassination and nothing on Jinah's death. It was M.D Tasir who took the questions of Muslim concerns in his writing and also wrote about the art and culture of Pakistan in the tone of being proud of it. He was severely criticized by Zahid Kashmiri for outraging the progressive ideals by establishing 'Pakistani literature' and moving away from the ideals set by the association. Any expression of solidarity with Muslims on the basis of Islamic heritage and shared culture was criticized. It was this attitude that led many writers drift from the association.

[48] Hafeez Malik, 'Marxist Literary Movement in India and Pakistan', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 4 (Aug., 1967), pp. 649-664. Also See Muhammad Umar Memon, 'Partition Literature: A Study if Intizar Hussain', *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (1980), pp. 377-410.

[49] Mir, Raza Mir, *A celebration of Progressive Urdu Poetry*, p.12.

[50] Ibid.

In Pakistan, Progressive Writers could not immediately gather together to form a concrete group but they kept on writing with similar sensibilities and inclinations. Various writers who had to migrate to Pakistan continued to write about concerns that concerned India as well as Pakistan. It was these writers who were responsible "for the voice of India to be heard in Pakistan".[51] While in India the communalization of Urdu along with various other factors contributed to the downfall of the association, in Pakistan these writers were faced with a different ideological challenge. By 1948 Communist Party of Pakistan had been established.[52] The party operated as a legal party but it was always under the gaze of the establishment for the members were suspected of being communist stooges. In 1951, Liauqat Khan, the then prime minister of Pakistan accused the party members of conspiring to overthrow the government. After this two of the most important members of the party, Faiz Ahmed Faiz and Sajjad Zaheer were arrested. They were both convicted and as a result the Communist Party of Pakistan stood thoroughly banned. However the party members had influenced many other lesser known literary circles that continued the cultural production along the lines of Progressive sensibilities.

Mian Iftikharud-Din[53] started publishing *Pakistan Times* and *Imroze* and various political and literary magazines. Later it was Ahmed Nadim Qasmi, the secretary of APPWA who was made the editor. Under him the Progressive Writers Association grew in how it influenced and invited many young people to be part of it. Malik attributes it to "the personal charm of Faiz Ahmad Faiz and Ahmad Nadim Qasmi,

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[51] Malik, *Marxist Literary Movement in India and Pakistan*, pp. 649-664.

[52] The CPI did not have any well known leaders with roots in Pakistan. After deliberations Sajjad Zaheer was named Secretary-General of the Communist Party of Pakistan (CPP). Zaheer, who until 1948 had been the Secretary-General of the AIPWA in addition to being a member of the Central Committee of the CPI had to resign his position. With the birth of the All-Pakistan Progressive Writers Association (APPWA) in Lahore, Ahmad Nadim Qasmi became its first secretary.

[53] He headed the Azad Pakistan party but later joined the Muslim League.

who were very effective poets in the traditional style of Urdu poetry, and generally maintained unblemished personal reputations. They drew to the movement a large number of young writers and poets interested intellectually and emotionally in social and economic justice"[54] Initially all the writers who employed the technique of 'incisive realism' to 'affective sensibility' were taken in under the umbrella of the association. Writers wrote about socialism, class struggle, poverty and revolution. CPP organized a conference where they presented a manifesto about the literary trends in Pakistan. The call for a critique of the state became more and more visible with each passing day as the write-ups starting appearing in magazines like *Savera*, *Sange-meel*, *Naqoosh*, *Adabe-Latif*. All these magazines managed to come up with significant criticism of the establishment. The manifesto urged the writers to focus on portraying the society and let go the rosy picture of future. It denounced the 'art for art's sake' approach and asked writers to speak up and stand up. It condemned the writers who served the establishment. The manifesto stated that "progressive writers look upon art not as a mere reflection of life but as a tool to change society for the better. They believe in the theory of art for life, art for the struggle of life, and art for the success of socialist revolution. The progressive writers were asked to produce poetry and prose which would help in the realization of these aims. The manifesto also named certain periodicals, including *Mah-i Nao, Naya Daur*, *Saqi*, and *Urdu Adab*, as reactionary publications and asked the progressive writers not to contribute their works to them"[55] The rigid attitude of the writers was not received well by all the writers, the result of which was the split. Writers like Sad'aat Hassan Manto and Hasan Askari drifted and focused on their own style of writing and themes of their choice. They were followed by lot of other writers who had migrated from India and

[54]Malik, *Marxist Literary Movement in India and Pakistan*, pp. 649-664.

[55] Ibid.

wanted to write in a certain colloquial Urdu. The other group led by Ahmed Nadim Qasmi and Faiz Ahmed Faiz went to make what was later called *Savera* group. This rift along with the constant vigilance of the government and sustained harassment led to the dwindling of the association to the extent that by the end of the 1950s any residue of communist and progressive association was a closed chapter in Pakistan[56].

The growth and fall of PWA gives us significant insights into the engagement of Urdu with the issues of nationalism, class, religion and politics. Despite many obstacles that were erected in its way, the association was successful in raising a consciousness that questioned the practices of social injustice. Ali Hussain Mir says PWA did succeed in dominating the literary era of its times for it put an end to the hollow romantic flights of literature and instead brought it in conversation with the everyday. The credit for developing a new literary trend goes to Progressives for they "fashioned a new tradition, turning the conventional metaphors of *shamma parwaana* (flame-moth), *firaaq-visaal* (separation-union) and *husn-ishq* (beauty- love) on their heads in the service of new aesthetic social change. Instead of writing ghazals about pining lovers, they penned popular poems to celebrate progress and modernity. Instead of elegies of Majnoon and Farhad, they composed dirges about martyred revolutionaries…the playful iconoclasm of the godless was transformed into a no-holds barred attack on

[56] The eleven resolutions that the Progressive Writers Association passed in Lahore conference in 1499 were taken too seriously by the Pakistani government. With the party struggling to make an impact in the society, the only base it enjoyed was in some urban pockets. With such meager following it could not face up to the challenge of the government. Pakistani government was in the first decade but it slowly gained strength to crush any resistance that came its way. The association was allowed to function but the harassment by the government was only mounting day by day. It was during Ayub Khan's regime that the association was completely crushed. He accused the Progressive papers of collaborating with China and forcibly sold it at an auction to some Pakistani business men. The overtake of Progressive Papers Limited was the last nail in the coffin of the All Pakistan Progressive Writers Association. With the source of income gone, writers had to look elsewhere to eke out something to survive on.

the orthodoxy and conservatism of religious practices"[57]. Bodh Prakash suggests that the publication of *Angarey* was the first manifestation of modernist tendencies in Urdu literature. He opines that the foregrounding of social issues by the use of psychological realism and feminism was the reflection of modernism and modernist tendencies.[58] Sobia Kiran however believes that Progressive writers took it to a different level as the modernist tendencies were expressed in Urdu literature in the work of Hali and Shibli who were the "first to consciously relate literature to society."[59] Whatever the speculation about when modernism made forays in Urdu literature and whether Progressives were modernists or rebelled against it since they insisted on commitment, what remains acknowledged is that they did start a certain kind of literature that was rooted in society. Along with poetry, short stories and novels also followed the thematic and structural rules that progressives set.

Partition and the Literary Paradigm

Partition literature was the field of progressives in the sense that after 1947 it gripped the imagination of writers and almost every known writer's creative exercise was centred around it. In what ways was Partition used as a trope by these writers will be the subject of discussion in this section. I have used few selected writings to bring home the point of how literature and Partition interacted. After the Partition of India there was an immense increase in the production of literature around the event. Writers began to use literature as a space to voice their protest and support for Partition. "The condition of post-colonial nationality was examined from psychological and progressive point of view and special emphasis was placed on the

[57] Ali, Raza Mir, *A Celebration of Progressive Urdu* Poetry, p.22.

[58] Prakash , *Writing Partition*, p.28.

[59] Sobia Kiran, "Modernism and the progressive Movement in Urdu Literature" , *American International Journal of Contemporary Research*, Vol 2 No 3, 2012 (176-182).p.177.

dystopia which quickly set after the event"[60] For analytical reasons and to facilitate our understanding of how Partition figured in the Urdu writings I would be discussing distinct genres within what is called Partition literature. By doing this I attempt to show how the form of the work was used as critique of the event. These works do not necessarily represent Partition as it seemed to have unfolded but also create counterfactual representations as well. In Urdu literary circles it was mostly the writers who had in some capacity identified with Progressive Writers Movement who took upon the issues of Partition. The writers for whom Partition became a thematic concern wrote about the event immediately after it had occurred and confined to the secular humanist perspective by questioning the logic of dividing people on the basis of their religious affiliations. The bewilderment and incomprehensibility of the event is best captured in the works of Sadat Hassan Manto whose stories dealt with the impact of the Partition on the psyche of people.

Madness as a Trope: The trope of madness was a device to reflect the incomprehensibility of the event. Since Partition and the violence that ensued was beyond the imagination of people the immediate reaction was that of incomprehensibility. The immediate madness became an expression of dissent, a denial to accept what had happened. The performative madness became a counter narrative to the very logical explanation of those who were party to the decision of Partition. Using madness as a trope thus becomes an instrument to questions the production of national meaning[61]. Tarun Saint and Ravikant state that, "at one level the metaphor of madness could be used as conventional shorthand to communicate a sense of incomprehension. At another deeper level, it could denote a refusal to

[60] Qureshi, *Twentieth Century Urdu Literature*, p.342.

[61] See Sarika Cherrtry, Madness: A Study of Saadat Hasan Manto's stories 'Toba Tek Singh' 'Thanda Gosht' and' Khol Do', *Lapis Lazuli: An International Literary Journal*, Vol.5 / No.1/Spring 2015.

understand. It was a comfortable way out for having consigned the irrational to the domain of madness, the speaker/writer could preserve the domain of the rational for himself/herself. This strategy achieved a double purpose. The Partition could be dismissed as an aberration and the responsibility of owing up to its ugly reality, denied"[62] Sadaat Hassan Manto is without a doubt the best short story writer who has captured the incomprehensibility of the event through his fragmentary stories. His most famous story, *Toba Tek Singh* is the representative of the madness of dividing people on the basis of religious affiliations. The protagonist of the story Bhisham Singh is known by the name Toba Tek Singh, also the name of the village that he belongs to. His identity merges with the identity of his community, his village and his people. Inside the asylum when the news spreads that the lunatics have to be redistributed and sent to India and Pakistan[63] according to the religion they belong to, Bhisham Singh is overtaken by disorientation and expresses an obsessive concern for his village called Toba Tek Singh. When his friend Fazal Din comes to pay him a visit and tell him that his family had left for India, he asks him, "Where is Toba Tek Singh…In India…No Pakistan". To this Bhisham Singh replies "'*Uper the gur gur*

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[62] See 'Introduction' of Ravikant, Tarun K Saint ,*Translating Partition*, Katha, 2001.p. XVI.

[63] In His essay on Manto, Tarun Saint states that Alok Sarin, the psychiatrist had come across documents that actually regulated the governments of India and Pakistan to exchange the inhabitants of the asylum on the basis of their religion. The report as quoted in Saint's paper said; "In his remarks on the report of the Punjab mental hospital at Amritsar for the year 1950 by the Director of Health Services, Punjab, the following appears. The outstanding feature of the work of the hospital during the year was a repatriation of the non-Muslim mental patients from Western Pakistan. Since this was scheduled to coincide with the transfer of the Muslim patients from many other states besides Punjab in India, and since this exchange was canalised through Amritsar, it involved considerable preliminary organisational work. Four hundred and fifty non-Muslim mental patients were received from Lahore out of which 282 Punjabi patients were accommodated in the Amritsar mental hospital, the remaining having been sent on to the Inter-Provincial Mental Hospital, Ranchi. As against this 233 Muslim patients drawn from different mental hospitals in India were evacuated in the opposite direction to Lahore. That against an estimated non-Muslim population of six to seven hundred of the Mental Hospital, Lahore at the time of the partition only 317 patients were actually exchanged at the time of the transfer, is a tragic fact which sadly betrays the treatment meted out to those unfortunate victims who could not be retrieved earlier from the Lahore hospital. (Annual Report of the Punjab Mental Hospital, Lahore, 1950).

the annexe the be dhyana the mung the dal of the Pakistan and Hindustan dur fittey munh." When a day is fixed for the exchange of the prisoners and the guards get hold of Bhisham Singh to be sent to India, he asks them "Where is Toba Tek Singh, In India or Pakistan?" When the guards tell him that it was in Pakistan, the place that he was about to leave because he was not a Muslim by faith, he escapes their clutches and runs away. He is chased after but to no avail for he keeps blabbering "*Uper the gur gur the annexe the be dhyana the mung the dal of the Pakistan and Hindustan dur fittey munh*". Towards the end of the story Bhisham Singh lays on the area between the two barbed wires on the one side of which was India and on the other side Pakistan. He collapses in the area between two wires and is left face-down in the no man's land.

Reflecting on the trope of madness used a formal device in the story, Bodh Prakash states that "by juxtaposing the world of benign, conventional lunacy with the world outside , which is bent on mindlessly destroying the existing social fabric, Manto redefines the notion of lunacy itself…Dividing the country and identifying the inmates as Pakistani and Hindustani becomes a bizarre and insane act and the simple, direct question of the lunatics underlines the insanity of the communal leaders"[64] For Tarun Saint Bishan Singh's "sense of integrity of self and his commitment to the quest for certainty as regards where his village of birth is to be located in the new political geography created after the drawing of national boundaries by the Boundary Commission leads to his refusal to move, or accept the directives of the officials, who eventually let the 'harmless fellow' be as he stands resolutely in no man's land at the

[64] Prakash, *Writing Partition: Aesthetics and Ideology in Hindi and Urdu*, p.51.

Wagah border. His character reflects the resistance of the common man unable to comprehend the directives of the government officials"[65].

Abdulah Hussein's *Udaas Naslein* centers around the struggles of the protagonist Naim, who shifts from being a loyal British supporter by serving in the army to someone who upholds the cause of independence of India. Later he dabbles with the Indian Congress but is also influenced by the events of the Pakistan movement. He never voices his support for its creation though but his struggles manifest in his daily life as he is considered a mad man by other people. He refuses to leave India but finds himself in the caravan of people who are leaving for Pakistan. He could have travelled with his family by air but he chooses to be with *his* people. This struggle to find an identity continues and towards the end he gets killed by a thug. The absurdity of his life reflects the dilemma of the nationalist Muslims during independence who couldn't find peace with either staying in India or moving to Pakistan

The writers in India also used the trope of madness to convey their dismay and disorientation. Bhisham sahni's *Tamas* tells the story of Jarnail who is a strong supporter of the nationalist struggle. His obsession borders on madness for he carries the tricolor always with him and in fact wraps it around his body. Amidst the violent clashes and riots Jarnail is seen running around frantically with the tricolor and delivering fragmentary speeches of peace and harmony. His life is cut short by the rioters and he ends up being killed with the tricolor around him. *Topi Shukla* by Masoom Rahi Raza is another such narrative where the madness or the incapacity to understand the unfolding of events leads the protagonist to commit suicide. Topi finds

[65] Tarun.K.Saint, "The Long Shadow of Manto's Partition Narratives: 'Fictive' Testimony to Historical Trauma", *Social Scientist*, Vol 40, No. 11/12 (November-December), pp53-62.

it difficult to find a sense of belonging either with Muslims or Hindus and ends his life tragically.

Nostalgia as a trope: While many writers grappled with the incomprehensibility of the event and delved into the psychological struggles of people, others would write eulogies to the times of syncretism gone by. Jamila Hashmi's *Talashe Baharan* is about the times of communal harmony before Partition. All the characters in the novel are Hindu. The central character of the novel is Kanwal Kumari who does not believe in the distinctions of religion and caste. When the riots reach her college she gives away her life to protect her Muslim friends. Since many Urdu writers had migrated from Lucknow, Awadh figured in many of the novels and the craving for the glory and grandeur of the city persisted in some narratives. Qazi Abdus Satar wrote *Shikast Ki Awaaz* about the decline of the feudal system when the British changed the Zamindari system and the consequent decline in the life style of Muslims. Chowdhary Neyamat Rasool Lal is in denial that his fortune is over. The novel also delves into the deep relationships between Hindus and Muslims where a Muslim Nawab fights for the rights of his Hindu brother and even commits a murder to save him. *Pehla Aur Aakhri Khat* is also about the revolutionary times in Awadh when the peasants had become conscious of their rights and with the help of Congress were fighting the Zamindari system. The novel delineates the decline of the *nawabi jageer* in Awadh and impact of the creation of Pakistan on such Muslims. *Gubare Shab* which is again centered in Awadh deals with the life of a feudal lord Jameel who treats his Muslim and Hindu fellows with respect and equality. When the clashes between Congress and Muslim League reach Jampur, Jameel tries his best to fight the divisive forces and stays true to his convictions of communal harmony. When the riots escalate and most of the Muslims begin to leave Jampur, the novel surprises us. Jameel in order to stay

in the place that he loved and amidst the people he belonged to decides to convert to Hinduism and stay back.

Violence as a trope in Partition Narratives: The unimaginable violence that unfolded during the time of Partition found its expression in the works of many of the fiction writers. Literature became a tool of critique, satire and at the same time complicit in keeping the fire blazing by communally charged narratives. Ramanand Sagar's *Bhaag in Bardafaroshon Sey*, is a story of Nirmala who is captured by a Muslim man when her husband runs away with their son and she is left behind. She is taken across Ravi, the part which belonged to Pakistan and is forced to live the life that she did not want to live. Stories of Manto are replete with the theme of violence that women had to incur at the time of Partition. *Shareefan* is a story where rape and violence inflicted on women is shown in most brutal and disturbing manner. Shareefan is raped by some Hindu men and when her father comes home and witnesses the body of his wife and daughter lying on the floor with no clothes on, he loses his mind. He steps outside and shouts at everyone who comes in his way. He is so consumed by feelings of revenge that he thinks only of raping a Hindu girl which in the end leaves him more and more disoriented. He gets hold of a Hindu girl and rapes her. The father of the Hindu girl becomes equally disoriented. Towards the end both the fathers are shown as shouting their daughters' names: Bimla Bimla, Shareefan, Shareefan! The answer to violence is never more violence is what Manto tells us through this story. While *Shareefan* is about violent rape, *Darling* by Manto is about abduction of a girl by a man whose name is *Seen* (a letter of the Urdu alphabet). Seen abducts a girl and tries to win her over. When he realizes that despite inflicting such violence on the woman she did not yield, he turns to win her over by sweet talking: "Darling, I won't murder you, you are safer here…If you want to go out, go, I won't stop you". Towards the end when

the girl accepts him he is disgusted by her because he does not find her pretty. This story depicts the depravity of human beings and the suffering of women who were caught in most difficult situations. Other stories about violence and women are *Izzat Ke Liye, Bismillah, Khol do*.

Pakistan Se Hindustan Tak is a novel by Mahindar Nath that delves into the struggles of women who had to face hatred not from the men of other community but also their own family. The story revolves around Safdar and Pushpa who stayed in the same village before Partition and loved each other. Pushpa is married to a Hindu and stays in a different village with her husband and kids. When Partition is announced and riots break out in Pushpa's village her husband decides to leave the place and go to Delhi and stay in a Hindu neighbourhood. Pushpa is left behind and abducted by a gang of Muslim men and later with the help of Safdar, who develops a conflicting relationship with her, manages to go to Delhi. Her happiness knows no bounds but the family doesn't accept her for she had been staying with Muslims. She is treated like an outcast and given food in separate utensils and served separately. Pushpa is torn inside and is unable to decide whether she hates Muslims or Hindus more. Although she escapes her captors but she stays captive to the hatred of her family. Pushpa's case is representative of those women who were abducted and later recovered and rejected by the family.

To expand on the above scenario it is important to talk about a story by the Urdu writer Rajinder Singh Bedi. *Lajwanti* is a story not about the refusal by husbands to accept their wives but about the ruptures of intimacy and the impossibility of going back to the normal. The story gives a nuanced perspective about the complex dynamics of relationships and about the position of recovered women with the

familial domain. Lajwanti is abducted by Muslims and is later recovered and sent back to her house. Her husband Sunderlal accepts her gladly but the relationship dynamics is altered for ever for Sunderlal does not call her Lajjo, as he used to but calls her Devi and in fact treats her like a goddess. He desexualizes Lajjo and never comes close to her. He treats her like a fragile mirror that if touched would be broken. Also, he never talks about her past and never asks her anything about her captor. Sunderlal accepts Lajwanti back to his house, but at what cost? Lajwanti is denied her life and her freedom, her emotions. Her body is treated as a sacred site that can only be looked at from far and cannot be touched. Towards the end of the story the narrator says:

"As the days went by doubts crept in not because Sunderlal had gone back to his old abusive self but he was too good to Lajwanti. She craved to be same Lajjo who would roar with anger at her husband. But now there was no question of a fight. Sunderlal had made her feel that she was a glass doll, so fragile and delicate…Lajwanti looks at herself in the mirrors and realizes that she could be everything but she could never be Lajjo again".[66]

In her discussion on the story Debali Mookearjea Leonard says that "the remaking of Lajwanti's body into sacred, inviolable body of a goddess pushes her beyond human contact and constitutes a denial of her embodiedness. In a move similar to that which configured other women as temptresses ("sluts"), their bodies acquiring an excess of sexual charge, Lajwanti is transformed into a goddess and thus desexualized. While Sunderlal discursively annuls her sexuality, it remains the terrain of contest with his

[66] *Lajwanti*, Rajinder Singh Bedi

absent adversary, the man who abducted her and with whom she lived until she was brought back to India"[67]

Pehla Pathar by Balwant Singh turns away from incidents of violence and discusses the violence inflicted on women by the men of the community. Devdas decides to migrate from Pakistan to India along with his wife and three daughters. His wife is raped and killed by the Muslim raiders but he manages to escape with his three daughters. Upon reaching India, he is given shelter at a Sikh haweli where he stays with his daughters. The owner of the building along with his helpers and other men rapes his daughters. The novel discusses the complex situation of women who had to migrate and also how people assumed the men of one's community to be trustworthy and located the evil only outside. *Lamhe* by the same author again talks about the violence during the Partition and *Tameer* represents the psychological toll that violence and migration had on the psyche of people.

Migration and Struggle to Belong: The dislocation of people during Partition is considered as the largest migration in the history of the twentieth century. Writers took to literature to delve into the questions and consequences of migration and the psychological impact that it had on people's minds. The distinct identity of *Mohajir* and how it interacted with the people who were already settled in Pakistan is explicated in Shauqat Siddiqui's *Ek Haftey Ki Shaam*. The novel is about the life of Muslims who had to migrate from India to Pakistan and the struggles that they had to undertake. Aisha's father and brothers get killed during the riots and she is forced to leave for Pakistan with her mother and sisters. Since she is the eldest in the family she is the one who has to do something for her family to keep them alive. They settle

[67] Deebali Mookerjea Leonard, "Quarantined: Women and the Partition", *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, Volume 24: No 1, 2004.p.33-46.

down around a Muhajir camp where Aisha has to struggle to evade the attention of men around. Because of her strong and outgoing nature she is deemed as *badchalan* and the novel unfolds the struggles that the family has to go through because they are considered outsiders. It is ironical that Muslims migrated with the hope of going to a place that belonged to them, the reality was something else. It wasn't just the religious affiliation that was enough to be accepted in the new country. *Khuda ki Basti* is significant because it was the first novel about the post-Partition Pakistani society. It is a critique of Pakistani society for the semi feudal practices and everything 'unislamic' that it did under the garb of being an Islamic and democratic country. Shauqat Siddiqi was himself a migrant who had settled in Karachi and the novel is a personal reflection on the tribulations of dislocated people. It is also a serious indictment on the Pakistani society that had come to existence to uphold the rights of Muslims in the subcontinent but in practice was far away from those ideals.

Anees Nagi's *Deewar Ke Peechey* is an important novel for it brings the psychological struggles of migrants to the fore but does so with subtlety. Written almost three and half decades after Partition it is a severe critique of Pakistani society that had put restriction on freedom of expression and even on the dress code, the novel delves into the depravity and political greed of people at the helm of affairs. The complex identity of 'muhajirs' and their complicated relationship with Pakistan is also discussed in this novel. Professor, the central character of the novel is captivated by the questions of what Pakistan was created for and what it had become. He is unable to rationalize the moral and political loot of the people and slowly and steadily loses his wits.

Women Writers in Context: Art of Quratulain Hyder and Khatija Mastoor

Before discussing the aura of two writers whose work is the subject of this thesis, a discussion on the women and Urdu literature deserves space so to put in context the times and also the possibilities of how literature was used as a space by women. In order to do so, one needs to look into the historicity of the development of the Urdu novel to comprehend the local narrative voice[68]. Franco Moretti draws from Mukherjee and says that the evolution of literature is always to be looked as a "compromise between Western influences, particularly French and English and the local material"[69] In the context of Urdu literature about women one needs to look into this 'local form' and local context to understand the position of the novel itself and the women who were the subjects of the novel. What I mean by this is that in the context of Muslim women it becomes relevant to understand the various cultural forms which interacted with the cultural production. The rise of the Urdu novel with women as their subjects were very much a product of their time for they stemmed from the particular 'dilemma of the period' with regard to the Muslims of the subcontinent. The reform movement started by Sir Syeed Khan resonated within the middle class Muslim households who found the idea of education enlightening.[70] For the elite gentry who wanted better positions for themselves, women became a subject of a "reformist discourse representing the 'plight of their community; its backwardness, its ignorance of the faith, its perilous cultural and historical viability,

[68] Meenakhsi Mukherjee in her study of the rise of the novel in India reflects that the writers in India experienced a certain dilemma in incorporating the form of the novel. While the social realism did have an impact it cannot be said that the borrowing was complete because the local context interacted with the writing and the theme. For a broader discussion on the esthetic expressions and culture *See Realism and Reality: The Novel and Society in India*, New York, Oxford, 1985.

[69] Franco Moretti, 'Conjectures on World Literature', in *Debating World Literature*, edited by Christopher Prendergast (London: Verso, 2004), pp. 148–162.

[70] Gail Minault, 'Making Invisible Women Visible: Studying the History of Muslim Women in South Asia', *Journal of South Asian Studies* 9:1 (1986), 1–14, p. 1.

particularly when faced with the loss of political power"[71] Deniz Kandiyoti in her work explicates on how during the time of British rule in India and even during the nationalist struggle, it was women who had to bear the 'brunt of imperatives and contradictions'. She says that "at the turn of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, reformers of women's condition in the Muslim world emerged from the ranks of an educated, nationalist male elite. Their concern with women's rights, centering around the issues of education, seclusion, veiling and polygamy, coincided with a broader agenda about 'progress' and the compatibility between Islam and modernity."[72].

Initially women were the subject of Urdu literature that was of prescriptive nature. It was because as the reformist movement within the Muslim societies was going on, the conservative quarters were coming up with ideas to build some resistance and make women impervious to these influences. The Muslim home was sacrosanct which had to be kept protected from the western influence and by extension immoral influence.[73] Muslim reformers like Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi wrote books like *Bihishti Zevar* (Heavenly Ornaments) that were guide books for Muslim women who were thought of to be in danger of falling prey to colonial modernity. *Bihishti Zevar* is the most widely published book that is still in print. Coming from the Deobandi school of thought Ashraf Thanvi[74] found expression through didactic and etiquette books for women. This book is still taken seriously by households in Pakistan, India and

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[71] Amina Yaqin, "Truth, Fiction and Autobiography in the Modern Urdu Narrative Tradition", *Comparative Critical Studies*, Volume 4, Issue 3,2007, pp 379-402.

[72] Deniz Kandiyoti (ed), *Women, Islam and the State*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991.p.29.

[73] A discussion on this will be in the third chapter where such issues of the conflict between Muslim morality and British system of education will be dealt with at length.

[74] See Barbara D. Metcalf, 'Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanavi and Urdu Literature', in '*Urdu and Muslim South Asia*', edited by Christopher Shackle (London: SOAS, 1989), pp. 93–99. See also Barbara D. Metcalf, *Perfecting Women: Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanawi's Bihishti Zewar: A Partial Translation with Commentary* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

Kashmir. Omair Qureshi says that "literature aimed at women although mostly written by men is extremely important for it reflects female identity as patriarchal society saw it or at least as it wanted it to be…guide books to correct behavior and didactic novels and literature meant for women only in broad sense such as novels meant for the general public which focused on the lives of various kinds of women who could constitute alternative female role models".[75]

Deputy Nazi's Ahmed's book *Miratul-Urus*, (Bride's Mirror) a book about educating women at being better daughters, mothers and wives was sort of a best seller. It was made part of the curriculum in the schools and Nazir Ahmed was awarded for it. Amina Yaqin argues that there were two accounts about how Nazir Ahmed got to write the book. One was that he wanted to give it as a dowry to his daughter and another was that he was commissioned to write a book 'suitable for women of India'[76]. In her afterword to The Bride's Mirror, Frances Prichett states "clearly its original impulse was British influenced, reformist and didactic"[77]. Writers like Nazir Ahmed although were encouraged because their writings were 'reformist but not radical, enlightened but not extremist, modern but not revisionist.'[78] Reform was encouraged but patriarchal values were newer questioned. If families are to be reared upon women's earnings why should there be men'[79] Nazir Ahmed followed the publications with two more books; *Banat-al-Nash* (Daughters of the Bier) and *Taubat-al-Nasuh* (Nasuh's repentance) *Mirat al-Urus* was received well within the circles that believed in the need of reform within the Muslim community. While

[75] Qureshi, *Twentieth Century Urdu Literature*, p.361.

[76] See Yaqin, *Truth Fiction and Autobiography in the Modern Urdu Narrative Tradition*, pp 379-402.

[77] Qouted in Rakshanda Jalil, *Liking Progress, Loving Change*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 2014.p.39.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Ibid.

Nazir Ahmed's book wasn't radical it did upset Maulana Ashraf Thanvi who urged people to not read such books as they can 'weaken ones faith' Thanvi was appalled at Nazir Ahmed's equating of Islam with other religions, his praise of the Christian English at the cost of Muslim Indians, and his portrayal of highly capable and dynamic women, who tower over the men around them. This conflict about how women were represented lay at the heart of the conflict between two schools. While the Aligarh School of reform was on the side of British and adapted a conciliatory stance towards some of their education policies, Deobandi School was anti-colonialist that saw British education system as a threat to Islam.

Another genre that was giving representation to women was Urdu magazines and newspapers. *Tahzib-un-Niswan*, *Khatun*, *Ismat* were some of the sites of giving women voice[80]. They ushered debates about women's rights and housekeeping. Jalil opines that although such writings did create ripples but did not have significant consequences. [81] Amina Yaqin argues that these writers gave some sort of representation to women by making them central characters thus recording the presence of women. Also what this disjuncture did was that it paved way for later women writers who raised some of these concerns quite radically. In many ways Urdu literature was a battlefield of ideas focusing on the women's question along with multiplicious concerns that it raised. This I say only to bring forward the point that as assumed[82] Urdu literature was not lagging behind in terms of interacting with the

[80] Ayesha Jalal says that in the nineteenth century with many middle class women acquiring English education, the focus on their writings in various journals gave voice and representation to different experiences from those that were narrated by Nazir Ahmed. See Ayesha Jalal, "The Convenience of Subservience: Women and the State of Pakistan", Deniz Kandiyoti (ed), *Women, Islam and the State*, Basingstoke: Macmillan. P.*77*.

[81] Rakshanda Jalil, *Liking Progress, Loving Change*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 2014.

[82] This statement comes from a certain realization that Urdu is often associated with Muslims, especially of middle and lower middles class and unlike English does not enjoy an informed audience

political scenario. It might not have accepted the western literary trends in totality but it did open up to the influences of socialism, modernism and stepped outside the limited concerns. Rakshanda Jalil comments that the themes that had eluded Urdu literature were being discussed with a certain degree of centrality. Discussions around polygamy, divorce and morality were no longer seen as a taboo[83]. Priyamvada Gopal says that it was the Progressive Writers Association that brought in the 'modern' influences and the participation of women writers writing about what they did was reflective of 'what it meant to be intellectuals with an investment in social change'[84] and more so in writings after the Partition since gendered identities had ruptured and sexuality became a significant theme in terms of how it was played in the power contestation of the two countries.[85]

Christina Oesterheld argues that during the early decades of the twentieth century women writers followed the rules set by men, but in the 1930s and 1940s the 'authentically feminine' voices of Rashid Jahan and Ismat Chughtai began to come forward marking a real defining moment in Urdu literature. These two writers began to radically question male supremacy and the traditionally ascribed role of women.[86] In the backdrop of the writings of Rashid Jahan and later Ismat Chugtai who were

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in the sense of people open to various cultural and social influences. Of course it couldn't be farther from truth since in Urdu we see radical concerns being raised time and again.

[83] Jalil, *Liking Progress, Loving Change*, pp.34-37.

[84] See "The Critical Spirit: Decolonization and the Progressive Writers Association" in Priyamvada Gopal, *Literary Radicalism in India: Gender, Nation and the Transition to Independence*, Routledge, London and New York, 2005.

[85] Balraj Komal in his study of Urdu Novel states that after the Russian revolution of 1917, socialist influences traveled fast and sympathies for such politics grew rapidly. With the making of PWA the stage was set for radical ideas, even though some of the literature in Urdu during the independence struggle had already set some of such ideas in motion. But it was Partition, the immediate time before and after it that these ideas assumed larger proportions. See Balraj Komal, Balraj Komal, 'Twentieth Century Urdu Novel', *Indian Literature*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (208) (March-April, 2002), pp. 157-167.

[86]Christina Oesterheld, 'Urdu literature in Pakistan: A Site for Alternative Vision and Dissent'. *The Annual of Urdu Studies*, Vol 13, 2003, pp.79-98.

questioning the oppressive structures of the society and were also exploring new genres for their creative expression other budding women writers took their cue.

Rashid Jahan was born in Aligarh to one of the most intellectually and culturally rich family. Her father was a Kashmiri Brahmin who had converted to Islam. He believed in progressive ideas and especially in women's education. All the women in Jahan's family were educated, even those of her mother's generation who wrote in newspapers like *Chattan*. Jahan went to pursue medicine and was posted in Lucknow. She remained devoted to socialist sensibilities and it was acknowledged by the USSR. When she had a second time operation for cancer, USSR offered her medical treatment. She remains buried in Moscow.

Writing was her passion from her college days and her stories were published in the college magazines, though early stories were mostly in English. Later she found her calling in Urdu and by 1920s she was writing stories in Urdu. In Lucknow she met some men who were thinking of finding a writers association, which later became PWA. She immediately accepted their invitation to join the group and found herself at the right place. The resistance to stodgy and conservative traditions was right up her alley and she dedicated her efforts to address the questions that needed to be asked within the Muslim community. With the publication of her stories like *Dilli ki Sair* and *Pardey ke Peechey*, she became a household name in Muslim societies. She was both, a symbol of resistance and a symbol of decadence, "a symbol of emancipation for women and, in conservative homes, an example of all the worst that can happen when a woman is given education, not kept in purdah and allowed to take up a career,

even though she came from a highly respectable home."[87] Rashid Jahan's focus was the Muslim woman; her education, morality, religion and her position in the society. In her stories like *Dilli ki Sair, Pardey ke Peechey, Aurat, Istikhara, Asif jahan ki bahu, Chiddi ki Maa,* themes like political non awareness of women, widowhood, childbirth, were discussed.[88] The primary aim of her writing was to promote her ideas on women's issues, most of her stories dealt with the women's problems, issues of sexuality and violence against women.[89]

Ismat Chugtai is considered as Jahan's heir as she also wrote about the issues of repressed sexuality and sexual mores of her time. She knew Rashid jahan as a senior at her school in Aligarh and immediately took a liking to her and was impressed by her outspoken nature. She met her again later as an adult in a meeting of Progressive Writers Association. Jahan's thematic concerns resonated with Ismat, chiefly her questioning of the "standards of the middle class respectability that permitted the oppression of women to occur"[90]. Her candid portrayals of sexuality and women got her into trouble with the state and many of her writings were banned. Her famous work *Lihaaf* became very controversial for its theme. Ismat was issued summons for sexual obscenity by Lahore court. It was a time when sex was not mentioned in Indian literature and more so Urdu literature which enjoyed a conservative audience. The intimate world of feudal class became Ismat Chugtai's playfield where she located most of her characters and thus most of her criticism towards the cultural

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[87] Steven M. Poulos, Rashid Jahan of 'Angare': Her Life and Work, *Indian Literature*, Vol. 30, No. 4 (120) (July-August, 1987), pp. 108-118.

[88] Carlo Coppola and Sajida Zubair, 'Rashid Jahan: Urdu Literature's First Angry Young Woman', *Journal of South Asian Literature*, Vol. 22, No. 1, Sinhala and Tamil Writing from Sri Lanka (Winter, Spring 1987), pp. 166-183.

[89] K.C. Kanda, *Masterpieces of Modern Urdu Poetry*, Delhi, Sterling Publications, 1991.

[90] Gail Minault, 'Coming Out: Decision to Leave Purdah', *India International Centre Quarterly*, Vol, 23, No 3 / 4 Second Nature: Women and the family (Winter 1996), pp 93-105.

practices of this class. For women writers Ismat became a beacon and an avant-garde in terms of using literature as a space of dissent and rebellion.

Progressive Writer's movement thus was very influential in shaping the sensibilities of women writers. The innovative technique and the bold subject matter that was emblematic of such writers influenced women writers exploring across genres. Christina Oesterheld opines that it was Urdu poetry which became more of a dissenting space in the later years. Although poets and novelists both had to succumb to the same fate owing to the regressive policies of the regime, some of them did use innovative techniques in creative spaces to voice their dissent.

The progressive writing and the ideology that it propagated somehow bloomed in what is called Partition literature. Gendered identities were ruptured during the Partition and Urdu literature like other language literatures was affected by it. In the tussle between two communities to prove their difference from each other, one of the significant thematic concerns of the writers came to be sexuality of women and how it played in the relationship of power between the two warring communities[91].

Most of the writings about women and Partition focused on women as victims with no agency of their own. Most of these stories which had women as protagonists were in line with the official narrative of the event. As the state was claiming 'abducted' women who had to be brought back since they were the victims, similarly these writings portrayed women as just victims who had to witness the 'bestiality of the male, the helplessness, abduction, conversion and forced marriage.'[92] But it was women writers who reclaimed their space and moved beyond the arena of focusing

[91] See Yaqin, *Truth Fiction and Autobiography in the Modern Urdu Narrative Tradition*, pp 379-402.

[92] See Prakash, *Writing Partition*: *Aesthetics and Ideology in Hindi and Urdu Literature*, pp.91-129.

solely on the victimhood of women. What these women writers did was that they refused to let these writers script the lives of women in such victim terms. The emphasis was on self and subjectivity of women. Through their writings they created a space where women who had survived Partition and exercised their agency in such difficult times were depicted. The women writers consciously stepped into the 'private arenas' of the lives of women and wrote about not just the political drama surrounding their life but the lives that they lived amidst that drama. They made their writings an instrument of denunciation and political struggle. They wrote about love, family and the unprecedented challenges that had been thrown their way. Women writing about Partition also defied the usual conventions. They moved beyond the expected thematic concerns and wrote about the intimate issues concerning women. Their writings were focused on the intersection of gender and nationalism and moved away from celebrating the nation and rather critiqued it. These women writers raised uncomfortable questions around the position of women in Muslim societies. "It is in the Partition narratives of women writers that one comes across women characters with a nuanced self-awareness. The creative perspective through which the inner selves of women characters are probed reveal inherently irresolvable dilemmas and subtle pressures that introduce shades of grey to the stark picture of a woman's 'victimization' by a 'patriarchal' and 'communal' nation-state, community and family. They reveal how women perceive themselves and also how they can empower themselves in enabling contexts even within a patriarchal society"[93].

Quratulain Hyder, the grand dame of Urdu literature was born in Lucknow and had to migrate to Pakistan after the Partition of India. One of the most influential writers in Urdu literature for having written twelve novels and four collections of short stories,

[93] Ibid.,p.13.

she is the most representative of the women writers who used writing as a dissenting tool. Her canvas is broad and very vast. Born in an upper class Muslim family she knew the world of Nawabs and land lords intimately. Her father and mother were writers too and she also took to writing at a very early age. Khatija Mastoor unlike Hyder came from a middle class family with witness to trials and tribulations. Her father expired when Mastoor was only eight. After that the family had to face severe economic problems. They migrated to Lahore in 1947 during the Partition riots and settled there. In Lahore Khatija and her sister, Hajira became interested in the activities of Progressive Writers Association and began writing. Over the time with the influence that PWA had on them, both sisters produced a number of novels and short stories. Khatija Mastoor wrote two novels *Aangan* , and *Zameen*; and short stories *Bochar*, *Khael*, and *Chand Rooz Aaur* and many more. Unlike Hyder, Mastoor did not resort to grand themes and grand locations for her work. Her stories are based in middle class families and revolve around domesticity and the struggles for survival by women. Hyder began her writing with exploring the decline of feudal class with the imminent Partition of the country and Mastoor wrote about the other side of the story. Also Hyder was influenced by the modernist writers of English and her work reflects such tendencies While Mastoor did not experiment much with the technique and diction, Hyder is considered to be the doyen of Urdu literature and experiments with form. Mastoor was more influenced by the realism movement in literature that started in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century[94]. Both writers made Partition the subject of their writing and wrote about the non-material and psychological loss that the people had to incur. Mastoor made the domestic arena the

[94] Realism as a movement is believed to have begun in France with Honoré de Balzac, Gustave Flaubert, and Guy de Maupassant. Writers such as George Eliot in England, and William Dean Howells in America, T.W. Robertson, Henrik Ibsen, George Bernard Shaw and Henry James, are also considered to be the founders of this technique in literature.

location of most of her writings. In her narratives of and about Partition she delves into the private spaces of Muslim household and the daily struggles and the strain of relationships that ensued owing to the political events. "Mastoor's narratives illustrate the limited role of protector or violator available to men when the predominant social order disintegrates. Her narrators demonstrate how gender roles restrict men as well as women in a patriarchal system where women's honour is based on the purity of their bodies".[95]

Both the writers express the trauma of the nationalist movement and how it interacted with the lives of the people. Although there are no violent incidents portrayed in the novels, the historical context of Partition serves as the contextual background for their writing. All of Hyder's novels were published after Partition and there is a similar trend in the early novels that she wrote. Being a part of the upper class Muslim family, the subject matter of most of her early writing was the nostalgia for Awadh and the decline of feudal class[96]. Shefta Parveen states that Hyder kept a balance between her upper class sensibilities that she had acquired from her feudal culture and her liberal sensibilities that her progressive father Sajad Hildrim had instilled in her. In all her works one can see representation of both worlds side by side.[97] She touched upon many themes in all of her novels and short stories. From questioning the absurdity of the Partition on the basis of religion to the monstrous consequences of the event Hyder raised many uncomfortable questions in her work. Laurel Steel commenting on her writing states that:

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[95] Mohanlaxmi Rajkumar, *Haram in the Harem: Domestic Narratives in India and Algeria*, Peter Lang Publishing, 2009.

[96] Khaled Ashraf, *Bare- Sageer Mai Urdu Novel*, Urdu Majlis, Delhi, 1994.

[97] Shefta Parveen, *Quratulain Hyder, Fikro Fun afsano ki roshni mai*, Educational Publishing House, 2015.

"In her novels and short stories, Hyder captured lost times and current cultural realities… She made choices to represent a reality that was unacceptable to many — unacceptable to many Marxists, to Pakistani officialdom, and to religious dogmatists. She rejected binary divisions when the larger society embraced those divisions. Urdu versus English (she claimed both); Muslim versus Hindu (she wrote of syncretic culture where relationships were both complicate and symbiotic); India versus Pakistan (she wrote about both) — to her these divisions were simplistic and artificial…Her work was too nuanced for the Soviet-style literary analysis that still infuses critical thinking in many sub-continental literary discussions…She was a complex thinker in a cultural establishment not given to complexity…So there she wrote, a largely untranslated author, with no country to promote her ón either India or Pakistan, with no influential critical constituency to agree on her worthiness, and with her own physical location and opinions making her politically difficult. Her readers kept her writing, while her language, location and politics earned her no supporters in the official literary establishment anywhere" [98]

It is such tendencies in her writing that makes her distinctive and sets her apart from other writers of her time. She faced criticism for her fixation with feudal class concerns[99] which she addressed in her later writings where she shifted her focus to other subjects and themes. One of Hyder's novelettes *Housing society* portrays the consequences of the Partition for Muslims who had to relocate to Pakistan. It brings forth the complex reality of the people who had to leave their homes, the clashes and cultural differences with the people who were already settled in the areas, the

[98] Laurel Steele, "We Just Stayed on the Ship to Bombay... Tea and Consequences with Quraratulain Hyder" *The Annuals of Urdu Studies*, Vol 23, 2008,p.182-194.

[99] Many Urdu writers discredit Hyder's writing and her criticism terming her nostalgia as a manifestation of her irreconciliation with the end of feudal class.

language issues and complex identity questions. The novel like most of Hyder's writing does not delineate the violence of Partition but the consequences of it. "While other contemporary writers dwelt in considerable crimes committed by the key components of society on one another, Hyder at the cost of being labeled 'bourgeois' and 'reactionary' chose to depict the disorientation and deracination of a generation of people who for no fault of their own found themselves strangers in the country of their birth one fine morning"[100]

Althoug it is difficult to club Hyder in one category but feminist concerns have been replete in her works. In all of her writings the 'women's question' and their place in the formation of nation has been a concern. *Sheeshey ke Ghar, Pathjad ki Awaaz, Raushani Ki Raftaar, Sitaharan,* are all reflective of the intricate reality of women in a socially and politically shifting scenario. "In her writing women occupy a central position, independent and rebellious women who stand out in the masculine world and challenge the social order. The wave of feminism can be felt in all her writings, be it Mansurul Nisa who rebels in her own home or be it Salma Mirza who succumbs to her powerlessness the issues of women in myriad ways are reflected in Hyder's writing"[101]

If Hyder spoke of women who were cosmopolitan or who were affluent Mastoor kept to the women who did not have such agency or such resources but evolved within the domestic confines of the Muslim household. She questions the idea of nation by investigating the lives of women and the impact of politics on the family and relationships. Her writings focus on how violence and such political events also limit

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[100] Shugufta Shaheen, "*Quratulain Hyder's The Hosuing Society" An Interplay of History and Fiction"* Journal of English, Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Vol-II July- December, 2010, p.93-99.

[101] Parveen, *Quratulain Hyder, Fikro Fun Afsano ki Roshni* , 2015.

the options and lives of men too and not just women. She wrote about lower middle class women and their reality. "Her portrayals of the fractured lives of women without father or husbands, examined the cultural notions of women's roles and their acceptable interactions in the public sphere"[102] Her writings depicted the moral and social decay within the Muslim society. Mastoor was part of the Progressive Writers Association and took her stories beyond the depiction of nationalist ideologies and wrote about gendered nature of Muslim household by delving into its contradictions and complexities. She also focused on the socio- economic issues and gendered nature of violence. In her writings she uses rape to offer a cultural critique to explain the position of women in the family, especially within a Muslim family where sex and any reference to it is considered taboo. In *Zameen* the rape of Taji within the family exemplifies how women's bodies are 'protected' and threatened by men[103]. She questions the making of Pakistan by depicting how it was certain groups that benefited from such political decisions and dissolution of social and cultural ties.

Conclusion

This chapter attempted to trace the trajectory of ascribing religious identity to languages in South Asia during and after the Partition of India. By discussing the events before and after the Partition that eventually led to using languages as symbols this chapter tried to foreground the impact of cultural symbolism during the time of political upheaval. What we have also seen through the discussion is the interface of Urdu literature and concerns of Muslim population. I have tried to explicate how Urdu literature imagined Muslims and how Muslims imagined themselves through such literature. It was the event of Partition that in many ways offered an opportunity to

[102] Rajkumar, *Haram in the Harem*, 2009.

[103] This will be explained in detail in chapter IV.

writers to express a varied set of themes ranging from contradictions of politics, social and sexual mores, notions of belonging, home, private and public space as well as issues of self identity and subjectivity. The event gave writers a certain voice that they used to express the discontent with and ruptures within the society. Partition literature complicates and brings forth the tenuous reality of the claims that were made by the politicians at the time of the process of dividing India. Women writers complicate this equation of nation and religion by their myriad narratives that critique such claims. These women writers wrote about Muslim households during Partition and used literature as a space to explore the complicated relationship that women shared with the then newly formed nation. For women to write 'nation' and engage with it also means to engage with gendered and religious visions and violent upheavals[104]. By thrusting oneself as an equal force in its culture, the women writers also came out against the exclusion imposed by the political and social boundaries.

I will take these concerns further in the next chapter and explicate some of the claims that I make here. I will look into questions of writing against the nation and intricacies of 'performing the nation' and 'living the nation'. Through the analysis of Quratulain Hyder's texts I will explain the practice of nation defying writing by Muslim women and how they articulated the national experience. The following chapter will also throw light on the issue of form as a critique and shed light on alternative narratives about Partition and the psychological trauma that the division ensued.

[104] Muniza Ahmed, (review),'Hoops of Fire: Fifty Years of Fiction by Pakistani Women' by Aamer Hussein, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, University of London, Vol. 63, No. 2 (2000), pp. 304-306.

Chapter II

Articulating the (non)Nation through Narration: Beyond the Politics of Writing Nation

In this chapter I will discuss two novels by Quratulain Hyder, *Aag Ka Darya* and *Mere Bhi Sanam Khane*. I aim to explicate some of the claims made in previous chapter, especially one about how women writers were exploring different themes and writing against the nation at a time when most of the literature was depicting the political times through the frame of nationalism. My reading of Quartulain Hyder's texts and the practice of writing against the nation is done by way of locating the text in Pakistan where it was written, which gives the national experience a different meaning compared to if she were writing it while located in India. The comparison is generated within the larger cultural production of Pakistan around the theme of Partition. My analysis of Hyder's work attempts to foregrounds how her work was nation defying by discussing the implementation of her narrative technique, use of magic realism and by imagining history through the tools of writing fiction. While the first part and an extended part of this chapter is devoted to *Aag ka Darya*, the latter part of the chapter will discuss the nostalgia generated in her writings. I introduce *Mere Bhi Sanam Khane* in a delayed way in this chapter in the penultimate section. In various subsections of this chapter I discuss how Hyder's idea of syncretic culture of the subcontinent makes unstable the binaries created during Partition between the two communities. The discussion of the texts would shine some light on the psychological trauma of Partition and the kind of anxieties that Partition generated in people. To this purpose I will discuss at length the experimentative narrative technique and offer a content based analysis of the texts. It will discuss the sense of loss, anxieties and

dilemmas of 'belonging' of Muslims who migrated against their will. It will conclude with how Hyder offers us a critique of religiously inspired identities and dangers thereof and non viability of such politics.

Defying the Nation by Narrating the Nation

Main Dewtaon ke mutaliq zyada nahi janta, lekin mai samajta hun ki darya ek taqatwar mitlyala dewta hai, Tund Mizaj, Gussela[1]

I do not know much about Gods, but I think that the river is a strong brown God-sullen, untamed and intractable![2]

Aag ka Darya is a phenomenal work of visual imagination that travels between two thousand five hundred years with a narrative that flows and merges from one era into another. The intricate and extended storyline is made readable by the use of various organising principles in the narrative that lend the text open to comprehending an otherwise dense and lengthy plot. The title of the book is taken from the famous couplet of Jigar;

'*Yeh ishqa nahi aasaan, bus itna samaj lijiye, ik aag ka darya hai aur doob ke jana hai'*

(Don't think that this journey to love is easy, it is a river of fire, you will be immersed in it)[3].

The daunting task of representing the history of two thousand five hundred years and the shared culture before the subcontinent was divided in 1947 has been dealt with delicate precision. It begins with the journey and reflection of an individual about temporality and the purpose of life in a vast sea of time and later merges into the questions and concerns of collective identity. The flow of cultures and their transition

[1] Translation of 'The Dry Salvages' at the beginning of *Aag Ka Darya*.

[2] Original in English by T.S.Eliot's "The Dry Salvages", *Four Quartets*, Harcourt Publishers, 1943.

[3] Translations unless mentioned otherwise in this chapter are mine.

from one period to another has been done in such a way that the narrative does not seem jarring and one does not lose sense of time and plot. The narrative technique makes use of fictional tools like, epistolary forms, inter-texuality, parables, varied forms, use of English words and poems in the Urdu text and multiple narrators within the frame of an omniscient narrator introducing them into the plot. The novel opens with questions of time, dilemmas of life and the mortality of existence**.** It begins with Gautam Nilambar exploring the purpose of life in the forest of Shravasti and ends when he, after thousands of years again, meets Harishankar on the highway to the rain forest discussing questions of similar nature that he had begun his quest with. Hyder through this circular narrative subtly produces a critique of history that was being constructed especially after the Partition.[4]

From the forests of Sharavasti with Gautam Nilambhar wandering in the wilderness the story begins thus:

"Gautam Nilambar after a long walk looked back and saw that the dust on the path had settled because of the light rain showers that made the grass look greener. The dazzling orange Ashoka flowers were dancing amidst the lush green blades of grass. Under the grand mango tree, a peacock was spreading its beautiful and colorful wings. This was his first season to witness such magic. The glowing insects called Beerbahuti, also the Bride of Indra or Lord of the Clouds were seen everywhere after the first rain showers… Gautam thought to himself, where do these Beerbahutis come from and where do they go? *What a short life span they have but how this short span is an entire life for them*?"[5]

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[4] I would like to mention that Hyder never comfortably fit into any identity of Indian or Pakistani, but since the book was published in Pakistan and generated a lot of response from critics and writers in the country, I aim to locate it within the cultural production of Pakistan. The critique of notions of received history that *Aag ka Darya* generates is situated in opposition to the history of nationalism and Pakistan movement that was being circulated in Pakistan in the 1950s.The novel's construction of history through the shared culture of subcontinent which in a way supplements the Indian version, was in direct contrast to the kind of historical narratives that were being produced in Pakistan post-Partition especially the kind of history that linked Pakistan and Muslim identity with larger West Asia.

[5] Quratulain Hyder, *Aag Ka Darya*, Educational Publishing House, Delhi, 2013, p.1. (emphasis added).

Thus begins the journey of Gautam Nilambar and a fascinating tale that travels through time, from Buddhist era to post Partition times. The main characters Gautam, Champa, Harishankar, Kamaal, Nirmala all are confronted with different realities and different questions about their existence in that particular period and their place in the political times. Gautam is a student of Gurukul in the Buddhist era who is later born as an intellectual living and travelling between India, London and New York. Champak is the minister's daughter in ancient India, Champavati is the Pundit's sister who becomes Champa Jan-the famous courtesan of Awadh in colonial India and Champa Ahmed, the modern educated Muslim woman in pre and post Partition era. Syed Abdul Mansur Kamaludin the fair eyed Persian who becomes part of Indian ethos becomes Kamaal the Muslim man who is distraught and lost in finding a mooring for his identity. Harishankar, the prince is the Hari Shankar of modern times who is Kamal's second self. Princess Nirmala appears again in modern times, lovelorn who succumbs to her illness and passes away. Cyril Ashley is the English fascinated by and obsessed with India but never seems to understand it.

Hyder's presentation of a cyclic view of time through recurrence of these characters makes her novel earn a comparison with the much acclaimed Gabriel Garcia Marques; "The handling of the names of the characters in River of Fire (*Aag ka Darya*) is similar to that found in Marques's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* where the names of the original members of the Jose Arcadio Buendia family are given to members of later generations of the same family. By doing this Marquez, among other things, gives a sense of circulatory to the one hundred years of history in Macondo. It is interesting to note that Hyder uses this technique nearly ten years before Marquez. One might argue that Hyder's use of names, beginning with their use to hold two millennia of human history together, is much more complex and epistemologically

crucial to her novel than Marquez's use of names in his novel."[6] Such an experiment with the technique in the novel was unprecedented in Urdu literary circles. Urdu literature did not experiment with form in the way Hyder did and became an avant-garde of such artistic endeavors. Kum Kum Sangari in her appreciation of the narrative structure of the novel states that "the four eras are more readily grasped as a single constellation, as an individual attempt to apprehend a civilization."[7]

Through the interaction between the historical and the political, Hyder brings forth Fredric Jameson's assertion about texts that depict the 'story of the private individual destiny and the embattled situation of culture and society'.[8] This is not a historical novel since it does not use certain 'facts' and trace the linear progress of time and events rather it desacralizes the notion of 'definite history' and the notion of the 'sacredness' of nation. This novel differs from what is normally recognised as a historical novel since the form is non linear and Hyder uses selected historical events to further her story line. The events in the novel flow from fourth century BCE to Mughal times leaving entire periods in between. This fractured/selective

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[6] Nikhat Taj, "A Study of Organising Principles in Quratulain Hyder's River of Fire", *Indian Literature*, Vol 53(July/August 2009), pp 195-213.

[7] Kum Kum Sangari ,"The Configural Mode in Aag Ka Darya" in Rakshanda Jalil (ed) *Quratulain Hyder and River of Fire: The Meaning, Scope and Significance of her Legacy*, New Delhi, Aakar Books, 2011.

[8] Jameson in his essay *Third World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism* says this in reference to third world texts being like national allegories. He argues, "There is now an obsessive return of national situation itself, the name of the country that returns again and again like a gong, the collective attention to "us" and what we have to do and how we have to do it, to what we can't do and what we do better than this or that nationality, our unique characteristics, in short, to the level of the 'people'…This placeless individuality, this structural idealism which affords us luxury of Sartrean blink, offers a welcome escape from the nightmare of history, but at the same time it condemns our culture to Pyschologism and the 'projections' of private subjectivity. *All of this is denied to the third world cultures, which must be situational and materialistic despite itself.* All of this is denied to third world culture, which must account for the allegorical nature of third world culture where the telling of the individual story and the individual experience cannot but ultimately involve the whole laborious telling of the experience of the collectivity itself." See Fredric Jameson, "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism", *Social Text*, No. 15 (Autumn, 1986), pp. 65-88.

representation of the history of the subcontinent lends the text open to questions of historiography and writing of history using the elements of the past.

We need to aware ourselves of the fact that *Aag ka Darya* is not a history text, it is a fictional narrative based on historical events. In the introduction to the second edition of their book Ann Curthoys and John Docker in *Is History Fiction?* state how there are various opinions about relationship between history and fiction where some historians see history as fiction's antithesis, "where writers of fiction are free to imagine and create characters, events, places, even whole countries, and to set their stories in imagined times, the future as much as past, historians are not. Historians are tied inescapably to their records, whether these are documents, images, objects, sounds recordings, or buildings, a variety of textual, visual and material residue from the past. They search for and through these records minutely and meticulously, but if vital information is missing, they cannot fill the gaps, cannot construct an imagined past and call it history."[9] This emphasis on the freedom of the writer to use imagination to fill the gaps where there is no evidence available if need be is also stated by Lionel Gossman ; "those historians who have been most willing to recognize the role of imagination in the writing of history or the proximity of history and fiction have also, understandably been most concerned to distinguish between the two, and to establish the specificity of history…that the historian unlike the novelist must localize his story in time and place; that all history must be consistent with itself, since there is only one historical world, whereas fictional universes, being autonomous, need not

[9] Ann Curthoys and John Docker, *Is History Fiction?*, University of South Wales Press Ltd, First Edition,2006,p.VIII.

agree, and cannot clash; and that the historical imagination is not completely free but is bound to work from evidence."[10]

In both the perspectives stated above there is an emphasis on the 'evidence' to make history plausible and objective/truthful.[11] History writing is beyond the exercise of *imagining* and has to be coherent, linear and plausible devoid of any element that cannot be justified by evidence. Hyder in her writing hints at the skepticism about this very notion of writing history which is unquestionable due to the incorporation of 'evidence' and while remaining situated in the history by way of using it as loci to situate her characters, goes beyond it to tell the story that is incoherent, non linear and fragmented. The large gaps between two eras that depict the history of the subcontinent are woven with discontinuity and yet hold the narrative together. The episodic and fragmented narrative technique is mythical in its nature. The recurrence of characters with similar names and somewhat similar struggles in different eras also produces a cyclic notion of time which is realised in the last section of the novel when Gautam and Hari indulge in the same discussion and questions that Gautam Nilambar had begun in the fourth century. The novel begins with Gautam Nilambar's quest for freedom, for solace and for the search for truth. The section ends when Gautam jumps into the Saryu river. In the last section of the novel, another Gautam, who is in many ways the same Gautam, is seen looking into the currents of river Saryu and asking the same questions about existence and purpose of life.

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[10] Lionel Gossman, *Between History and Literature*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990, p.248.

[11] The notion of 'objectivity' in history has been subject of debate for long now with the assertion that there isn't history, but histories and her-stories. With postmodern debates about questioning the 'objective' nature of history and asserting the non viability of a single truth, the debate about what constitutes history has been a tedious one. For post modernists there cannot be single truth rather a series of truths and the sources used that constitute history are flexible and interpretations of past debatable. In such an approach then literature become an important source of offering alternative stories.

This circularity is further emphasized by how the nature of the struggle of the characters remains more or less similar. Each deals with the kind of questions that their namesakes dealt with in the eras preceding them. When Abdul Mansur Kamaal-ud-Din had come to India he had assimilated himself completely and immersed himself in the spiritual and cultural ethos of the *Hind*:

> "Jai ho, Jai ho, Kamaal was spell bound as he let himself flow with the sounds of this (naat)[12] before he could realize it he was singing along with the singers…He was thousand miles away from Baghdad now…he kept on saying, jai ho jai ho…. He loved the language and he felt it was his own language, he spoke the language with ease now".[13]

At a later stage when times change and Abdul Mansur Kamal-ud-Din is hunted for being a foreigner and not loyal, Hyder writes:

> But now the days of peace were over. No one knew Abdul Mansur Kamal-ud-Din whose hair had turned grey under the Champa tree where he was singing and chanting dohas of Kabir and writing stories in the language that he now called his own…now it was not his *watan*.[14]

The Kamaal of colonial times goes through a similar struggle where he has to leave his country because he no longer worships the same God as the majority of people do. Gautam Nilambar sits on the banks of Saryu river and contemplates the same questions that Gautam of fourth century had asked but only that he does not know of the existence of that Gautam and hence also does not know the significance of his own quest. It is only the reader who knows of the similarity and thus the circularity of

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[12]The world *naat* is often used for songs in praise of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and Hyder's use of this word to refer to the songs in praise of Hindu deities seems deliberate to convey the meaning of the oneness of all faiths and similar purpose that they serve. This way of employing words in the text is also a strategy to emphasize her assertion of dismissing exclusionary politics based on religion.

[13] Hyder, *Aag Ka Darya*, p. 119.

[14] Ibid., p.365.

the cosmos that throws individuals into similar situations at different times. It is the responsibility of the reader to see the four stories of four eras getting repeated and establish connections between the parts. There is no causal connection between four eras that the text weaves, it is the reader who has to establish the mythic connections and see the similarity and flow between the four stories of four eras. Since there is not a single character or era that dominates the plot like the hero of the epic novel the reader is more powerful than the characters in the novel since s/he has the knowledge that the characters do not have. Liyanage Amarakeerthi is his assessment of the novel to the similar effect says that "history makes the individual life an insignificant dot of colour in the fabric of history, which has multiple colours and layers of colour…Hyder does it so wonderfully that it doesn't alienate those individual lives from the river of time and history but rather depicts the dynamic and dialectical relationship between history and the individual. Here we see the river of history flowing through individual lives, but is never allowed to flow over the individual and create a single, monolithic meaning for human life. The novel achieves this simply by being different from history – i.e., different from history as a narrative of what happened."[15]

The text incorporates irrational within the rational in order to disrupt the perception of linearity and continuity of history. Hyder defies "the attempt by nationalist discourses persistently to produce the idea of the nation as a continuous narrative of national progress, the narcissism of self-generation, the primeval present of the *Volk*."[16] The ambivalence about the process of nation that emerges from her writing is an evidence

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[15] Liyanage Amarakeerthi, "River of Fire: Critiquing the ideology of History", *The Annual of Urdu Studies*, Volume 18, 2003, pp. 25-44.

[16] See the Introduction of Homi.K.Bhaba, *Nation and Narration*, (ed), London: Routledge, 1990, pp. 1-7.

of the 'transitional' nature of reality. She challenges the exclusionary claims made on the basis of politics that leads to formation of identity on the basis of religion. By way of the narrative technique the counter-canonical transience that does not make any period take control of the narrative, Hyder writes against any linear conception of nation. The fractures and disruptions in the narrative bring forth the fallacy of constructing a nation on the basis of selective past. Hyder brings forth such formulations through the use of magic realism[17] in the emplotment. Luis Leal in his work on magic realism in Spanish American literature opines that "magic realism cannot be identified either with fantastic literature or with psychological literature, or with the surrealist or hermetic literature. Unlike super-realism, magical realism does not use dream motifs; neither does it distort reality or create imagined worlds, as writers of fantastic literature or science fiction do; nor does it emphasize psychological analysis of characters, since it doesn't try to find reasons for their actions or their inability to express themselves…Its aim unlike that of magic is to express emotions, not to evoke them. Magic realism is more than anything else , an attitude towards reality that can be expressed in popular or cultured forms, in elaborate or rustic styles, in closed or open structures…The writer tries to confront reality and tries to untangle it, to discover what is mysterious in things, in life, in human acts."[18]How does Hyder incorporate magic realism in her work and through that defy the practice of writing histories about the past? In *Aag Ka Darya* the plot is full of 'myths' and 'facts' and the interjections of couplets, dohas, shlokas, songs,

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[17] Franz Roh was the first person to use the term Magic Realism in order to refer to the post expressionist period that began around 1920s. *Magischer Realismus* was the tendency in art to merge fantastical with real to represent certain inexplicable facets of art and by extension life. It was the Cuban writer Alego Carpentier who later called it Real Maravilloso or the marvelous realism in Latin American culture where myth and reality seemed intertwined.

[18] Luis Leal,"Magic Realism in Spanish American Fiction" in Lois Parkinson Zamora, Wendy B.Faris,(eds), *Magic Realism: Theory, History, Community*, Duke University Press, Durham and London, 1995,p.121.

epics, sufi stories, Bhakti philosophies and poems. In one of the sections of the novel Hyder in order to depict the transfer of power from Sirajud-Daulah to Admiral Watson does not do so through proposing the facts of the historical event but rather she employs the fascinating story of Prophet Suleiman and his struggle to come out of the belly of the big fish that swallowed him:

> European traders had been coming to Bengal and it was flourishing with trade. Akbar's empire extended to far away distances. With the decline of the Mughals, the Nawab Nazims of Bengal wanted to be autonomous. Prophet Suleiman was a very powerful person for he could talk to birds and understand their language. He could converse with jinns, fairies and had supernatural powers. He beseeched Allah to allow him to throw a feast so he could invite all the creatures to the dinner. At dinner a single fish finished all the food and Suleiman was left thinking! God's voice said, O Suleiman only I have the power to feed the entire creation…A whale called Watson rose out of water and swallowed Sirajud-Daulah![19]

This story about the political events in Bengal starts with certain facts but ends with a parable. This juxtaposition of myth and fact helps the reader understand the retrieval of history and the complex ways in which stories are given meaning. In the same paragraph the author depicts the shifting of power from Mughals to the British. With the imposition of God in the narrative, two epistemologically different narratives are located beside each other. The juxtaposition of 'fact' and 'parable' is a strategy to challenge the regular history that insists on evidence. At another place Hyder merges sufi Kamal-ud-Din's death and his coming back after two hundred fifty years, and coming of Cyril Ashley to India in the same paragraph:

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[19] Hyder, *Aag ka Darya*, p.426.

"The farmer of Bengal, Abdul Mansur Kamalud-Din is alive and will stay alive. He is sitting in his boat facing the ferocious waves… it is very dark and the boat is shaking from the underneath currents … A storm seems very near but the poor hungry farmer seems to be at peace sitting on the edge of his canoe because death has been a friend for a long time now.. After some time when the winds became strong and fierce, Cyril lifts his lamp and asks 'Peter, are we in Danger? No, Relax! It is going to be fine… But please tell this black pig to stop humming and focus on rowing fast".[20]

This swift transition from one era to another is done in such a fluid manner that the reader does not realize the leap that the author takes. In no time the reader is carried from one era to another.[21] The characters of the novel reappear in all the periods with different names and different roles although the essential qualities that they possess in each era remain somewhat similar. They meet and separate in all the eras and through them Hyder makes us participate in the years of imagined history and shows how the forces of time bring about a change in person. They are very much in love with life, with their dreams and hopes, confusions and concerns but are made to make choices that they had never envisioned. The river takes all of them in, subsumes them, brings them back. It flows with them in all the periods of time, birth after birth, century after century creating canvas of an epic scale. Because of the strong markings of time, the 'river' (*darya*) has frequently been interpreted as being the river of time. Another possibility is to see it as river of words: an ever-widening stream that becomes larger, stronger and more fearsome as more and more narratives are poured into it. In the

[20] Ibid.,p.456.

[21] Liyanage Amarakeerthi in his study of the novel states that Hyder could have used this technique more vigorously as the canvas of the novel provided scope to do so but as she was writing in the 1950s, that time this kind of literary device was still in its initial and experimentative form.

swift current, texts become disengaged from their foundations, flowing freely and intermingling, becoming a flood that no one can control[22].

Hyder interrogates these divisions of time, race and gender through the metaphor of river which also contributes to the narrative technique that weaves the centuries together and holds the plot. The idea of flowing of the river is symbolic of the flow of time and change of human consciousness. The narrative continues with the flowing ruptures and conflicting interests.

Edourdo Glissant in his work on Carribean literature emphasises the significance of mythical elements in order to recuperate the history and to underpin the interaction and relation of history with myth and literature.[23] Mythical stories in relation to history help one understand the cultural episteme of the community. This technique of using myth, tropes of space, time in which four stories merge into one opens the novel to questions of impact of political events on the lives of individuals and formation of their identity. As Nikhat Taj remarks "through her technique Hyder presents a non conformist treatment of history…with the help of imaginative recounting transcends the crucial limits of history to refurbish and refashion it. To do this the fictional strategies of polyphony, teleological shifts, ontological distancing, indeterminacy etc thereby lending the novel a distinctive feature hitherto unwitnessed in the Urdu novels. She has constructed a different story, a competing narrative of origins that would produce a different identity."[24]

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[22] Taj, *A Study of Organising Principles in Quratulain Hyder's River of Fire*, pp.195-213.

[23] Edouard Glissant, "Cross Cultural Poetics: National Literatures," *The Princeton Sourcebook of Comparative Literature*(ed) David Damrosch, Mbongiseni Buthelezi and Natalie Melas, Princeton University Press, 2009.

[24] Taj, *A Study of Organising Principles in Quratulain Hyder's River of Fire*, 195-213.

Imagining the Nation: Against Nationalism

(S)he regards it as her task to brush history against the grain.

(Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations.)*

Priyamvada Gopal with reference to the silences around Partition argues that "in the face of horror, the unspeakable cruelties, writers retreated into what seemed to be a stunned silence, as though unable to bear witness to the unimaginable….it would be twenty odd years before longer narrative forms in any language of the subcontinent would address the topic of the stained dawn commemorated in Faiz Ahmed Faiz's famous poem…Where the Partition is concerned the novel on the subcontinent is now beginning to find the way to do this and a place of collectedness from which to do it."[25] It is short stories that were considered to be representing Partition more than the genre of novel because of the immediacy of the narrative and the ability of the genre to articulate immediate reactions about Partition. With reference to Urdu short stories and Partition it is said that "in Partition Urdu short story had found its most enduring and obsessively rewritten subject. Perhaps unsurprisingly then it is the increasing self reflexivity and at times, opacity of the Urdu short story from the 1950s onwards that most distinguishes its treatment of Partition among South Asian literatures…Decades before historians had noticed the missed lexis of Partition in the founding narrative of the nation, the Urdu Partition short story had begun to articulate the absent spaces where words night have been."[26] This reference to short story and novel is to bring home the point that though short stories did articulate the experience of Partition more than the novel did, especially the immediate reactions and changes in subjectivities,

[25] Priyamvada Gopal, *The Indian English Novel: Nation, History, and Narration*, Oxford University Press, 2009, p.70.

[26] Alex Padamsee, "Times are Different Now: The Ends of Partition in the Contemporaray Udu Short" story in Maggie Awadalla, Paul March Russell, (eds), *The Postcolonial Short Story: Contemporary Essays*, Palgrave, Macmillan, 2013, pp. 11-12.

but it was novel that the ideology of the nation unfolded in. With novel there is always freedom to combine many genres, and many forms within one form. Also, the rise of novel and emergence of modern nation state is considered to be linked for it was through novel that the nation state was constructed especially culturally if not politically to begin with.[27]

As discussed already *Aag Ka Darya* is structured in such a way that decenters the dominant representation of the history of the subcontinent especially in the 1950s, the time after Partition when India had been divided and Pakistan was going through a period of generating histories that would justify her existence. The act of imaging history and deconstructing the other narratives as Hyder does is in itself an act of resistance in the face of reshaping and partitioning the minds of people on the lines of exclusionary politics. Through the approach of diving into analyzing the micro events through their interaction with macro events of the time, she unpacks the tension between historical and personal. The silences are brought to the fore very subtly in a complex fashion. Hyder's aim and one of the underlying subtexts of the novel as I read it is to explicate through literature the complexities of nation formation.

The plot of the book is so vast and dense that fitting it into a single critical paradigm is not easy. It moves beyond the categories of analysis which we apply to a Partition novel[28]. This text escapes and moves away from paradigm of certain given critical spheres. Although it does lend itself to various categorizations in terms of gender and politics but what it brings forth is not so much an easy classification of these

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[27] See Patrick Parrinder, *The English Novel from its Origin to the Present Day*, Oxford University Press, 2006.

[28] Partition Literature is a separate body of literature in itself owing to the similarity of themes that it works on. The tropes, motifs, and the central focus of such literature remains on the explicit trauma caused by the division of the subcontinent. Communal killings, violence against women, bodily trauma form the major thematic concerns of such literary production.

categories but also the dangers of reducing such narratives into simple and reductive analysis. With many daunting questions at the onset of the text one gets cautious of not tripping into already existing definite frames. In her analysis of *Aag Ka Darya* Sukrita Paul Kumar opines that it "has been evidenced how application of metaphor of separate spheres inevitably leads to reductive and sometime even seductive, categories such as the cult of domesticity, the cult of true womanhood…*Aag ka Darya* enfolds within itself both private and public space for men and women with a dual rather than a binary vision."[29] I share Kumar's insights about the text and believe that this finds resonance in the authors political philosophy also where she critiques division of people into just Hindu or Muslim on the basis of one facet of their life, that is religion. In one of her interviews with an Urdu magazine, *Naqoosh,* Hyder reveals how she put herself to this project of writing a novel about two thousand five hundred years. Her niece once asked her, *'amma basant kya hoti hai.'* (amma, *what is Basant*?). She was saddened by this amnesia of the generation and wrote a hefty novel in response to her question. While her reconstruction is imaginative and fictitious we need to remember that most of her ideas have their foundation in history**.** "By capturing the inner currents of the evolution of the dynamic culture, Quratulain Hyder endeavors to clear the cobwebs of cultural harmony. The bonding that is evolved over centuries between Muslims and Hindus begins to crack through the politics of Partition, generated deviously by the British rule."[30]Hyder was confounded by the manner in which Partition had erased all the history of composite times, of shared festivals, shared language and the shared culture or '*mushtarqa tehzeeb'*. Champa Ahmed of *Aag Ka Darya* who decides to stay back in Moradabad after coming from

[29] Sukrita Paul Kumar, "Beyond Partition: Turns of Centuries in Aag ka Darya", *India International Centre Quarterly*, Vol 29, No 2, Monsoon 2002, pp. 87-94.

[30] Ibid.,p.89.

London is close to the author's experience who migrated back to India after having lived in Pakistan and London[31].This text stresses on the need to appreciate continuities rather than ruptures. The vision of Hindu Muslim unity invoked in the novel weaves a socio-political and cultural mosaic of the subcontinent. By denying ones heritage one cannot build an identity devoid of one's past. Kumar argues that the novel does not resort to sentimentality or moralistic dictates. It unravels the past in a creative way so that the past "inevitably lives in the present just as the present finds its seed in the past. But, for realization an alertness about the essential flow of time rather than an amnesiac state of mind is required. A creatively selected memory explores the warp and woof of the complex cultural weave of this region with its disruptive tears as well as knots."[32]

Much of the anxiety shared by the characters in the novel stems from author's own anxiety for she had to migrate to Pakistan after Partition[33]. Her personal forced exile helps her understand and appreciate the position that her characters like Kamaal and Champa are put into. While Kamaal is exiled physically, Champa deciding not to relocate is exiled psychologically. Even when she stays behind and decides not to go to Pakistan she is repeatedly reminded of not being in the right place at the wrong time. The ending of the novel with Gautam climbing up to the peak of *Gauri Shankar* mountain wading through water, glaciers and looking down where nothing seems different when he is out of the scheme feeds into this realisation of the futility of

[31] This is purely my insight as the author in question has not spoken about this in any of her interviews.

[32] Kumar, *Beyond Partition: Turns of Centuries in* '*Aag ka Darya*', pp 87-94.

[33] I owe this insight to the fact that the writer did not migrate to Pakistan as per her wishes but under compulsion. Also, her continuous shifting of place from Pakistan to England to India also contributes to such an insight. In a recent article published in one the Pakistani news papers *Dawn,* it was stated that Hyder migrated to India because of the sinister campaign against her which started with the publication of *Aag Ka Darya.* "In Pakistan, Qurratulain Hyder's decision to leave Pakistan and settle in India has just one explanation: *Aag ka Darya* had caused it. But Hyder remained tight-lipped over the issue and nothing ever came out of her pen either. She has left not a single public comment, spoken or written, on her return to India" http://www.dawn.com/news/1210454 .Accessed on October 5, 2015.

existence . The river of life seems to flow uninterrupted and the question that he began with in 4th century, 'Who am I' seem to be answered through this vision when he smiles after beholding the scene when he looks down from the peak into the endless space:

Janey walon ko jana mubarak ho, kanoon ka prachaar Mubarak ho, sangh mai aman Mubarak ho, in logon ki riyasat mubarak ho, jinhe shanty mayaasar aagayi hai.[34]

[felicitations to those who left, felicitations for upholding the law, felicitations for the harmony and for the kingdom, for those who are at peace!]

When *Aag Ka Darya* was published in 1959, it upset various circles in Pakistan because like a 'representative' post Partition novel[35] it did not toe the line of celebrating the creation of a new nation state and hailing the freedom for Muslims from Hindus. Rather it wrote against the very practices of such nation building and celebrated the composite culture of the subcontinent. Many writers in Pakistan criticized Hyder for writing the novel based on her imagination and evading certain political realities which had resulted in the creation of Pakistan. Siraj Rizvi wrote a novel called *Sangam* in response to *Aag Ka Darya*. Qudratullah Shahab who also wrote many novel and stories about Partition published a diatribe in the newspaper against Hyder and her vision[36]. Dipesh Chakrabarthy says about such writing practices that "these other constructions while documentable in themselves, will never enjoy the privilege of providing the metanarratives or teleologies (assuming that there

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[34] Hyder, *Aag Ka Darya*, p.642.

[35] In the landscape of the cultural production of Pakistan which was grappling with justifying its existence literature was scrutinized seriously for defying the statist position. Many progressive writers were imprisoned for their radical views that were considered anti-national.

[36] See Rayees Hussain, "Aag ka Darya aur Quratulain Hyder" in *Nigare Urdu*, Vol 23, No, 11-12February -March, 2009.

cannot be a narrative without at least an implicit teleology) of our histories. This is so partly because these narratives often themselves speak an antihistorical consciousness; that is, they entail subject positions and configurations of memory that challenge and undermine the subject that speaks in the name of history. History is precisely the site where the struggle goes on to appropriate, on behalf of the modern, these other collocations of memory."[37]

Aag Ka Darya is not considered as a representative post Partition novel owing to the framework through which it approaches certain issues. A typical postcolonial novel or in this context a post Partition novel is expected to use certain symbolic tropes[38] which Hyder doesn't employ in her work. It does not delineate the experience of Partition as the defining traumatic event but keeps moving backwards and forward to critique the idea of nation-state. For example when Kamaal is forced to leave India for Pakistan, the narrator interjects and takes us back to Abdul Mansur Kamaludin who had come to India through central Asia in search of Sufis and integrated so well with them and adopted their culture, but now he is forced to give it up by the forces beyond his control.

The representation of violence and trauma which is also central to such narratives is not done in the manner that is considered representative of such texts. Ananya Jahanara Kabir suggests that novels written around Partition act as testimonies much like testimonies of holocaust survivors. The function of the novel to do this does not resonate in Hyder's novel for she does not make violence and the very moment of its

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[37] Dipesh Chakrabarty, "Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for India Pasts?, *Representations*, No. 37, Special Issue: Imperial Fantasies and Postcolonial Histories (Winter, 1992), pp. 1-26.

[38] As mentioned elsewhere, a representative Partition novel adopts the tropes and aesthetics of generating patriotism, or representing violence, communal tension, or celebration of independence or formation of Pakistan.

occurrence the subject of her novel but looks beyond this moment and the manifestations of such ruptures. Kabir opines that the aspects of somatically marked cultural identity are intrinsic to Partition and the violence that one associates with this event[39]. Hyder does not attempt to bring this kind of trauma to her canvas. Her approach is to unravel deep philosophical burdens that an event of such magnitude made people go through. Her characters were deeply invested in the composite culture and unity of India but their lives were caught in the political imagination of those who were far away from their own borders of cultural imaginary. The manifestation of trauma in her work does not deal with the landscape of body but with the landscape of mind manifested in the familial world. For one to critique Hyder's work for being not 'being representative of Partition trauma owing to 'weak and timid or invalid'[40]would be an injustice to her vision of venturing beyond established critical parameters of postcolonial texts.

To Hyder's defense one could turn to role of narrative fiction which is seen to offer an alternative to representation in terms of how it engages with the particular event keeping in mind the difference between the two genres of writing. The lines between history and literature are expected to blur in the times of uncertainty with distinctions largely demolished and made fluid. Although a novelist does not need to focus on the "retelling of the great historical events but concentrate on the poetic reawakening of people who figured in those events"[41] Hyder eschews from the traditional representation in order to remind the reader about the subjective nature of the art of

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[39] Ananya Jahanara Kabir, "Gender, Memory, Trauma: Women's Novels on the Partition of India", *Comparative studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*,25.1, 2005, pp.177-190.

[40] Masood Ashraf Raja, "Quratulain's River of Fire: The Novel and the Politics of Writing Beyond the Nation State", *Interactions: Aegean Journal of English and American Studies*, Vol, 15(2), No 2, 2006, pp.49-60.

[41] Naziya Majid, "History Versus Fiction: Historical and Literary Representations of Partition", *The Criterion: An International Journal in English*, Vol 4, issue III, June, 2013, pp.1-11.

the novelist. The representation of trauma thus is introspective and deals with the deep awakening of people with the loss of their self as a result of sudden uprooting. Drawing a parallel between the memorialization of holocaust compared to the slavery atrocities in the United States, Susan Santog states that the selective representation where in one chooses to foreground a certain aspect and not the other is also a reflection of national identity.[42] Understanding representation of Partition trauma from this framework, one reaches the conclusion that Hyder chose to delineate the Partition trauma the way she did in order to highlight what Partition as an event did to individual hearts and minds, to the relationships and ideas that people held close to them. She uses this silent trauma, which she expresses through the space that her characters are situated in as a method to delineate the complex processes of nation formation. Her expression of trauma is not in the sense of expressing it in palpable or bodily terms but rather through the mind or the psychological state of her characters. She does not use body as the site of traumatic experience but rather she uses mind as the site of trauma**.** Ron Eyerman's work on role of trauma in shaping African American community opens up the ways trauma is situated in one's mind even if it has not been a personal experience. He postulates that memory and concept of generations plays a significant role in representing one's identity. He argues that cultural trauma is experienced through (and entails) loss of identity and community violence.[43]Similarly Kai Erikson has argued that the fabric of community when met with violence can be destroyed as much as the body on which trauma is inscribed[44]. Such traumatic experiences do not claim to have a physicality but the breaks and

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[42] See Susan Santog, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, New York, Picador, 2003.

[43]See Ron Eyerman, *Cultural Trauma: Slavery and the Formation of African-American Identity*, Cambridge University Press, 2002.

[44] Kai Erikson, "Notes on Trauma and Community," *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*(ed). Cathy Caruth. London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995, pp.183-199.

crevices that it creates are in the mind. It takes time to register as "the traumatic experience is processed a moment too late and one is not fully conscious during the experience itself. This results in latency within experience; a time when the effects of the experience are not apparent…The return of the experience then is the mind's attempt to grasp what it could not grasp at the actual time of occurrence."[45] This is the theory of trauma that Hyder works with and her characters experience. Champa's trauma is not her bodily violation but much like Tehmina, Talat, Kamal, Gautam and Hari Shankar it is the violation of her ideas that were dear to her and how she finds it difficult to see them tear apart in the manner they did.

Considering that the novel was published in 1959, the sophisticated critique of the politics of the nation state is an attempt far ahead of its times. "In a way exactly when the Urdu novel is taking a nationalistic turn, Hyder's *Aag ka Darya* attempts to critique the nation-state and highlights the importance of the artificiality of Indian national divide itself: the novel thus becomes a moving critique of the nation-state".[46] When the transcreation of the book appeared in 1998 for the wider audience, the book did not somehow enjoy the popularity that it was expected to. Masood Raja states that the blame rests on the metropolitan critics in how it did not seem to interest them because it defies the very logic of a postcolonial novel and does not possess certain attributes that seem to be critical to be accepted as a postcolonial novel and privileged in the metropolitan academy. Raja sites that the invoking of the 'nation' in *Aag ka Darya* is far away from the conventional tropes used in postcolonial texts. In this context Aijaz Ahmed according to whom a texts needs to articulate the form of nation in a certain manner for it to be accepted as a postcolonial novel says that "the essential

[45] Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*, JHU Press, 2010. See the Introduction , P 1-10.

[46] Raja, *Quratulain's River of Fire*, pp.49-60.

task of a third world novel is to give appropriate *form* to the national experience. The range of questions that may be asked of the texts which are currently in the process of being canonized within this categorical counter-canon must predominantly refer, then in one way or another, to representations of colonialism, nationhood, postcoloniality, the typology of rulers, their powers, corruptions and so forth."[47]

Aag Ka Darya does have these tropes in its huge story line and vast canvas, however it does not lend the reader to understand Partition through these specific tropes. It moves beyond these spheres and questions the very method by which we understand and make enquiry into an event with these tropes as an entry point. It compels the reader to understand the interaction between political processes and psychological conditions of people who witness an event beyond their control. The usage of myths and folklores in the text is indicative of accepting the cultural nationalism that unites people and rejecting the political nationalism that divides people. When Kamaal and Pandit Gaur are both mesmerized by '*maya mori*' song the British poet travelling with them in the boat comments that this is the secret language that both of them share and no one can understand why they are both overwhelmed by this song. The trope of shared culture and heritage is through what Hyder wants us to enter her text and understand the journey of her characters and ask if the politics is mightier than the culture that both the communities have shared and cherished. To explain this further one can see that the character of Cyril Ashley who embodies the colonial project is insignificant as compared to other characters. He does not become an agent of history but a mere victim of it. Through his character Hyder "acknowledges the colonial while removing it from the centre of reference, as it must be in any postcolonial endeavour. To take these arguments to a possible conclusion, rather than being a

[47] Aijaz Ahmed*: In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures*, New York, Verso, 1992, p.124.

postcolonial novel, Hyder's work could be seen as a non-colonial novel, one that is expanding into a new and less familiar sort of territory."[48] With reference to the deviation from accepted standards of a postcolonial novel and the muted review to such literary masterpiece Anna C.Oldfield contributes to the discussion by expressing her concern on the exclusion of such novel which was mentioned by J.M.G.Clezo in his Nobel Prize speech as confounding. She argues that it is not the difficulty or the huge epic style canvas of the novel that could be a deterrent for it to be identified with world literature because 'it is impossible to imagine that the difficulty of the novel would be a factor in a academy that embraces Woolf, Robbe-Grillet and Calvino…The invisibility of this path breaking experimental novel that took on Indian-British colonial intersubjectivity before the field was even invented is especially puzzling."[49]

While the expectation of postcoloniality in the text could be a factor for the muted reception of the book, some critics believe that the narrative technique could be a factor in how it is limited in its emotional scale. In his review of the translated version Thomas Palakeel states that it fails to "sustain narrative pleasures of reading as it progresses it limits the personal and historical conflict"[50].Oldfield resonates with this concern when she states that her students found it difficult to engage emotionally with the characters "who die and are recreated' without any resolution to important issues such as romance of Gautam and Champa. "While it may to some extent reflect literary taste it is also possible that the absence of answers to Talat's questions (*I don't know which characters are more important. Where did the story start? What was the*

[48] Anna C, Oldfield, "Confusion in the Universe: Conflict and Narrative in Quratulain Hyder's River of Fire", *Annuals of Urdu Literature*, No, 25, pp.28-41.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Thomas Palakeel, "Experimental Novel and the Problems of Imagined History" (A review Article), *Annuals of Urdu Literature*, Number. 14, 1999, 293-302.

climax? Who was the heroine?) shortcircuited the experience of reading"[51] My explanation towards this concern would be that it was Hyder's purpose to not let any one character or any one era take preponderance so that the message that was also in a way the subtext of the novel could be appreciated. Her aim is not to give a defining meaning to any one event but to make her readers understand the importance of bits of history and how history progresses as these bits get connected and woven into each other. She does not fit into the rigorous realism and narrative discipline that Palakeel is espousing for her technique is expansive and vast. It is "uneven , shifting, fluid and full of loose ends and unresolved issues; a novel of historically epic proportions that completely eschews the form of historical novel…Proceeding in episodes, mixing oral and written literary references, flowing off into odd tangents, and stopping occasionally for an emotion infused *ghazal*, it does not rest in any genre, plot or character. There is no attempt to balance the variations; the historical narratives are of unequal length, flowing briskly through the first three time periods and then branching slowly into number of tributaries. Not controlled by firm authorial banks this restless river rises, falls , plunges over waterfalls, absorbs incoming streams, and sometimes overflows its banks."[52] Drawing from this one could say that the novel is more on the lines of *Daastan-goi*(storytelling) as the story teller digresses often times keeping his/her audience in mind. Thus *Aag Ka Darya* does not follow the narrative linearity of a novel but digresses often to introduce characters, their situation, their times and their different language. Musharaf Farooqi puts this onus on the reader to some extent when he says that this relationship is imaginative and a lot rests on the interpretative power of the reader to grasp the context and the content. Farooqi points out that "in the course of an oral narration, the mind continuously explores situations.

[51] Oldfield, *Confusion in the Universe*, p.30.

[52] Ibid.

Every time a detail is mentioned, it produces a host of possibilities. But the narrator can make only once choice, if he desires the narrative to produce. As he moves on with the narrative he leaves in his wake all the unexplored possibilities, presently another narrator comes by happens upon one of them"[53]. What Farooqi is saying finds resonance with Hyder's narrative in how she forms a host of interconnections and digressions creating space for multiple narrators. When Gautam drowns in water of *Saryu* and his narrative stream ends, Abdul Mansur Kamaludin is found on river bank galloping on his horse. Narrative shits from Buddhist era to the times of Lodhi, here the digression and the pause serve the continuity of the plot. This is fictional too where the responsibility is on the reader to create the connection because the character who are reborn do not know of it but the reader who is invested in the reading finds it on his own. When Talat says 'I do not know who the important characters are and where the story began' she is in fact making the reader cautious of the sea of possibilities that the text offers and also gives the reader power to understand the story through his/her own prism of analysis. While I maintain that it does not lend itself so easily to be classified as a novel of certain genre but the possibility that it offers to do so is always up to the choice of the reader. Kum Kum Sangari in her analysis brings forth the many facets of this text she says: "This novel spans so much of the history of the novel "a researched historical novel, a mutiny novel, a regional novel(an antidote to Raj fantasies), a regional novel in the *shahr-ashob* tradition (lamenting the repeated decline and destruction of Awadh) a political discussion novel(which evolved from the dialogues in reformist polemical treatises), a historical romance, an inter-racial romance, an urban Lucknow centred college story, fictionalized female

[53] Musharaf Farooqi, "The Simourg- Feather Guide to the Poetics of Dastane Amir Hamza Sahibqiran", *The Annuals of Urdu Literature*, Number 15, 2000, p. 119-167.

autobiography, a cosmopolitan novel (on émigrés and expatriates)"[54].This novel invokes many elements of *dasstaan-goi*, myth, legend, epic, songs, ghazals. Kamal's lament in *Aag ka Darya* that 'the universe is full of confusions and many more perplexities that we imagined' echoes with the tensions in the text, the conflict of narrative and the interaction of the characters with one another. To this effect Oldfield points: "The confusion of the text and the frequency with which characters invoke, reinterpret and crash into them is one of the most productive areas of interaction and tension in the novel. From the very beginning, Gautam Nilambar of the Forest University of Sharavasti is already in a world awash in narratives contending with a vast kingdom of thought where two systems already flourished. The Vedas and the Upanishads with their centuries of commentaries, oral and written texts of Buddhism, the Panchatantra, hymns, songs, poems, and constant references to texts in conversation and performance give a density to Gautam's mental landscape. Looking to narratives for answers, definitions, and solace he uses them to interact with the constantly shifting circumstances of life. The texts he leans on for assistance, however, are not stable, and shift in different directions, from solemn to comic to tragic and back. Every text that floats through the work is a mutable fragment, and yet they are crucial in defining characters and how they relate to each other"[55]

The field of contemporary theory and Urdu literature rarely intersect. Theory is an established canon itself and Urdu has been left foreign to the Euro-American cultural studies programmes. G.M.Sahota in his review of Amir Mufti's *Enlightenment in the Jewish Colony* states that it is not very surprising or uncommon to see students of comparative literature never heard of writers like Hyder. Urdu has still to gain weight

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[54] Sangari, *The Configural Mode in 'Aag Ka Darya.'*p.197.

[55] Oldfield, *Confusion in the Universe*, p.35.

and substance in such academic circles of critical theory. Commenting on the need and significance of Mufti's Urdu scholarship Sahota brings forth the need to establish a contact zone between social and conceptual spaces of Urdu literature and Western audiences[56]. This concern is raised by Oldfield as well in how a phenomenal work like *Aag Ka Darya* has gone unnoticed in the western academy :"A possible hidden reason for this work's marginalization in the western academy is the sheer impossibility of explaining it all: it is a rare American student who is familiar with Chandragupta or the Lodi Dynasty, and one student even suggested that a course in Indian history, philosophy and literature be built around the novel to explain it…Hyder reminds us that there are areas the mono-English –speaking reader cannot access. Not everything, the work reminds us is or should be pointed towards an English centre of reference; Non-colonial, non-novel, non-translation."[57] This is exemplified by Cyril who is made to stand outside that realm of comprehension or shared understanding that Gautam and Kammal have with each other. Cyril's inability to comprehend India stands in marked contrast to Kamaal. Kamaludin first appears as a sixteen century Iranian adventurer who like Cyril has come to India to make his fortune and gets assimilated in the culture of the subcontinent. He marries a shudra woman and has children and dies in Hindustan. "This was his country, his children had been born here. His dear wife lay buried here. He had put all his energy into making these fields bloom, spent years beautifying the language these men were speaking…No one had the right to call him an outsider"[58]

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[56] G.M Sahota, "The Persistence of Identity (Review Article)", Aamir Mufti, *Enlightenment in the Colony: The Jewish Question and the Crisis of Postcolonial Culture,* Princeton University Press, 2007. Pp. 351-366.

[57] Oldfield, *Confusion in the Universe*, p.36.

[58] Hyder, *Aag Ka Darya*, 2013,p. 543.

In contrast Cyril is someone who is not able to assimilate. He sleeps with women, finds them exotic but is unable to marry one form 'here'. He gets a wife from England to give him an heir, "showing a strong adherence to colonial narratives of racial difference—narratives he cannot escape in the twentieth century. In contrast the twentieth century Kamaal is a native speaker of the 'secret language' of culture, so much so that his crisis in leaving India for Pakistan becomes the emotional centerpiece of the final section of the book. By contrasting Cyril's experience with Kamal's Hyder sets British colonialism apart from other types of influence and marks the qualities of love/hate, fear/desire that give colonialism its pathological character in contrast to a healthy cultural merging."[59]

Hyder in her work defies the cultural logic and does not surrender to the expectation of conforming to certain parameters of articulating the nation. She does not indulge in the competing narratives of crisis of the nation but demands a rethinking of the tropes and frameworks that dominated the landscape of Partition novels. She punctuates the discourse of establishing of boundaries on religious basis by sharing a past where such boundaries did not matter. Transcending such predetermined critical signifiers Hyder creates her own categories to articulate the experience of nation building and refuses to territorialize her work. It has all the signifiers of history- Vedic period, Muslim arrival, Colonialism and Partition but it does not let any one event be the defining experience in the formation of the nation. Although the last part of the work does deal with the trauma of coping with Partition but as mentioned earlier it does so through not going into the violence of the event but how the identities were transformed with the redrawing of the boundaries. Theorists of Indian nationalism unpack the critical debates about how the idea of a distinct Muslim nation came to the

[59] Oldfield, *Confusion in the Universe*, p.37.

minds of the people through the already existing differences between two communities. This is what the text defies by expressing not these objective differences but the times of coherence and a shared past.

Rewriting History: Women at the Centre of the Narrative

The Female characters in the novel are also positioned in such a way that they contribute to the argument of how Hyder questions the notions of received History. All the women characters in the novel have significant roles to play that contribute to the furthering of the story line. The women characters are not on the margins but at the centre of the story line and it is the engagement of men with women that shapes the history as delineated in the novel. From the very beginning of the story in the Buddhist era Hyder positions women at the critical places of the story. Also, the narrator of the last part of the novel is Talat, a female character from whose perspective the story is told. This shift from an omniscient but non-visible narrator to a conspicuous female narrator who is also a character is the novel seems intentional on the part of the author. Through Talat, the specificities of the experiences of women are foregrounded and the narrative of Partition is questioned and refashioned. It is through her women characters that Hyder underscores the assertion about bringing women to the centre and reinterpreting and reinterrogating the accepted notions. Also the women in the novel do not appear as victims, but rather as agents of change and significant subjects of history who are both trapped and liberated. Women in *Aag Ka Darya* hold the narrative together and let it flow seamlessly which also insinuates to the fact that women have an equally significant role to play in the history of time. Inscribing women in her story and making them significant to the theme of

the novel is Hyder's expression of a conscious attempt to put women back into the fold of history and read the history through their role.

The first woman character that we are introduced to is Champak, who is the beautiful friend of princess Nirmala. When Gautam beholds Champak for the first time he invokes a hymn of goddess of forest. Champak or Champa is vulnerable to the treatment of the narrative of the text and through her Hyder shows how women get caught in the narratives that can circumscribe their lives and how they are treated. It is Gautam who initially resorts to philosophy to describe her essence and it is this set up that will continue to haunt Champa till the very end of the text. She is somehow caught in how her character is delineated amidst contradictions and assimilations. Through Champak/Champavati/Champa Jan/ Champa Hyder also foregrounds the role of women as not just victims but also observers and participants of history.

Gautam is caught in a trance upon seeing Champa and is reminded of his sage's words to his disciple Ananda:

> what should we do if we see women… you should not talk to them…what if they want to talk to us…You should not be friends with women because they are like wolves… women are foolish, jealous… women are evil minded… save yourself from women…save yourself from women.[60]

Gautam muses on about the philosophies related to women. From Gandhari whose husband was blind and thus refused to see the beauties of the world and blindfolded herself to Anushya who was so 'faithful' to her husband that she took him to his mistress's place. From what Manu had said about women and from what Ananda was told about women. It is these contradictory characters of women from being envious

[60] Hyder, *Aag Ka Darya*, p.87.

to evil, to sacrificing to enticing, being the origin of sin and being the redeemer that Gautam ascribes to Champak/Champa who lives all these contradictions throughout the text.

Champak is the beautiful and famous daughter of the royal priest. She is intelligent and discusses arts, music and philosophy with men. She indulges in prolonged discussions with Gautam on the purpose of life. However when time strikes its hand, history changes the course that Champak was on. Champak comes to life again after the invasion of Chandragupta when Gautam is seeking solace in music and wandering to stage performances to spread his message of peace. Champak is no longer the beautiful dazzling woman, the inspiration or the muse that she was to Gautam but has turned into an old woman who marries a Brahmin much older to her and against her will. Princess Nirmala had turned to a nun and become a Buddhist. This transition of Champak and Nirmala from the dwellers of palace of Sharavasti to the modest setting is to reinforce the dilemmas of the individual who is caught in the forces of time beyond her control;

> She was no longer the exquisite dancer spreading her wings and lecturing men and women on the philosophy of the renunciation of life, of happiness, of the world. But she had to bow her head and accept her fate… It was her duty to serve her husband like his many other wives were doing… She was no longer a woman with vision and dreams but just a woman with a baby in her lap.[61]

Forces of time change again and Champak is introduced in the narrative again as Champawati, a Brahmin woman. This time she is more powerful and has a voice of her own for unlike earlier Champak who was obliged to marry a Brahmin, this

[61] Hyder, *Aag Ka Darya*, ,p.512.

Champawati falls in love with a Muslim man and chooses to stay with him. The power that history had snatched from her is given back to her again. The time is middle ages, when Abdul Mansur Kamaal-ud-Din comes to India as part of the confluence of Indo-Islamic culture. He falls in love with her and offers to marry her:

> Marry me Champwati...Will you give yourself to me?
>
> She laughs and says, I have been married to you!
>
> How? We are not married… You will not comprehend it… But I have given myself to you…You are my husband.[62]

The narrative lets Champawati have the freedom to decide her fate. She marries a Muslim man and is buried in the village where waiting on her grave Abdul Mansur Kamaal-ud-Din is later killed.

In the third section of the novel Champawati is Champa Bai, loitering in the brothels of Lucknow and entertaining the officers of the Raj. It is here she is introduced to Cyril Ashley who much as he coerces her to be with fails in his attempts. Champa Bai like her earlier avatars is not stationed and positioned securely but rather remains elusive, free spirited and decadent in her behaviour. It is here that the glory of Lucknow, of its Nawabs and the high culture of Lucknow is opened for readers. This is where much of the nostalgia is generated that becomes a theme in the later part of the novel. [This theme will be discussed in the later part of the chapter]. Champa Bai is again caught in the clutches of time and she is devoid of any power to decide her journey. Although she is free and remains elusive but she is free not for herself, her identity in the feudal society of Lucknow as free woman sustains only as a prostitute. She becomes caught in the repressive and regressive side of the high and not so

[62] Ibid.

pristine world of the Nawabs of Lucknow. The world of courtesans and their role in the history is again brought to the fore. Hyder in the vein of Chugtai brings forth the sexual exploitation of women by the feudal lords and the double standards within the Muslim culture. Gautam who is sent to Lucknow by Ashley Cyrli's wife to ask Champa Bai to stay away from her husband is himself enamoured by her beauty but the thought of her being a prostitute repels him. Although Champa Bai makes advances towards him, he never yields. He muses to himself, "Woman is like a Goddess, she is Laxmi, she is the mother she is the sister, wife, daughter but she should not be a prostitute…. But this Champa Bai, what is she doing by igniting passions of men and destroying them while she continues to be decadent"[63]. In her scathing tone Hyder writes:

> In the world of lords and feudal Nawabs, it was only prostitution that gave women the freedom. She is respected and gets wealth and fame which gives her license to be part of the literary events and cultural gatherings. She will have no identity if she does not become a part of this culture. But Gautam was unable to comprehend this side of the Muslim landlords because he had become part of the middle class which had begun to rise with time and because they had to construct an identity separate from the feudal class, they were great moralists as well.[64]

Champa Bai bids goodbye to Gautam and says that when someone bids goodbye to Lucknow he is bid farewell with the traditional way of Lucknow; "*Khuda Ghame Hussain ke Siwa Koi Gham Na dey*"!(May you never know any sorrow except the sorrow of Hussain).

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[63] Ibid.

[64] Ibid., p.316.

The tide of time turns again and Champa Bai, the queen of the brothels of Lucknow who had priests, and Brahmins visiting her dazzling inn is left helpless and old. Gautam Dutt, the officer of the British Empire on his official visit to Lucknow is told about a mad woman who sits at the railway station waiting for someone to come from Calcutta. The old woman approaches every carriage and begs for money from people. When Gautam reaches the station, he beholds an old toothless woman and when he gets near her, she extends her hand for some money. She does not recognize Gautam who looked much younger and refined because life had been kind to him. Gautam is overcome by a shock and he takes out some coins from his pockets he hears the familiar prayer: May you never know any sorrow except the sorrow of Hussain! Gautam thinks about her standing in the balcony and the *nazm* playing in the background: *Muhabbat aur roshni aur nagme ko tumhari talash hai*! (love, light and the song are all seeking you!)

Champa Bai's death gives birth to Champa Ahmed of the twentieth century who is friends with Talat, Tehmina, Amir, Gautam, Hari, Nirmala but is the only one who does not fit because she comes from a small town of Benaras and does not share the legacy of the bohemian culture that they are all part of. Her constant struggle is to reinvent herself and fit into the world that seems to be ever elusive to her. Her entry into their world is through Amir Raza, her object of affection who initially takes interest in her but is unable to sustain it. Champa Ahmed in this part becomes the embodiment of the dilemma of Muslims in India with the Partition seeming imminent. Champa's story is the story of the existential and material crisis of Muslims at the time of political flux. Champa is not given the freedom to choose but is caught in the narrative to become what she does not want to become. It is towards the very end that she finds herself, let's go the force of narrative and decides to go against what she was

expected to be. She returns from London and does not like others decide to go to Pakistan but stays back in the chocked alleys of Moradabad. At this juncture she announces her freedom as a woman who decides against what she is expected/dictated to do. "While readers may be left unsatisfied when after two millennia of attraction Gautam and Champa simply drift away from each other in the end, Champa's peace is dependent upon her escape from the complex of narratives which she had been expected to fulfill. Her self-destructive drive in the final section seems to rise from the will to be in a different story, to be anything but a middle class girl from Moradabad. It is only when she accepts the real and unromantic scenario in which she had been born that she escapes, telling Kamaal that she had found the magic key…Champa surprises not only Kamaal but also the reader, challenging both to rethink the types of texts they had wrapped around her".[65]

Also as an important addition to history Hyder brings forth the stories of women who should not be forgotten in the landscape of history that is laden with memories and heroic acts of men. In his chronicles of India, Abdul Mansur Kamal-ud-Din mentions Raziya Sultan, the glorious female monarch who decided to lift the obligation on Hindus to pay taxes. In his book on the chronicles of his travels in India, he mentions Raziya Sultan, who had refused to be called by the name Sultana and insisted on calling her Sultan, title of a male ruler:

> This woman, Razia Sultan was marvelous and exceptional in her courage to rule over such a vast empire. She belonged to the Turko- Iranian tradition of female monarchs who were known to be brave and just, but now the world seems to have forgotten them.[66]

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[65] Oldfield, *Confusion in the Universe*, p.35.

[66] Hyder, *Aag Ka Darya*, p.243.

The world seems to have forgotten them sums up Hyder's goal to bring women back into the fold of history that had made them invisible and tell their stories. The story of a female Sultan and another queen Bibi Raji who had participated in war and killed his own son for saving her kingdom is a testimony to Hyder's effort to retrieve history of women and underscore the point about the significance of understanding how silences about women creates gaps in the historical narrative. Bibi Raji loves music and arts and intervenes in the stately affairs in her own ways. Also the women if they do not have an important role to play in the novel, their positioning in the narrative also challenges the male centric narratives by providing the alternate views. The portrayal of Bano who is related to the king is critical of his violent adventures and questions his policies of resorting to violent measures. In their own domain these women participate in the history.

Commenting on how Quratulain Hyder questions the regular history through her story Liyanage Amarakeerthi argues that the "women stand in the way of the dominant history in a different and extremely important sense as well. That is when they challenge the orientalist history of India and Indian women…The women appear in each era and have their own ideological and material conditions… At one level these women are aware of the fact that the men are engaged in matters which historical conditions, political developments, and fate itself have forced them to be involved in. That awareness signifies the fact that these women are not excluded from what is happening."[67]

Through the women characters in her novel, Hyder stands in opposition to the kind of history that was being generated at the time of Partition. Her effort to weave a long

[67] Liyanage Amarakeerthi,, *Critiquing the Ideology of History*, pp.25-44.

narrative using women produces a strong critique of the process of constructing nations on the basis of religion and gender, as was happening at the time of Partition with so many revised histories about the distinctive history of India and Pakistan.

Old Order and the Syncretic Culture:

> When the great famine ravaged havoc from Bengal to Awadh, Asaf-ud-Daulah built a big *imamabara* to give employment to people and the construction work was done only at night so that people were not ashamed to be seen as labourers …The Nawaab Vazir of Awadh had banned the killing of monkeys to show respect to monkey God Hanuman. Holi and Dussehra were celebrated in Nawab's family and were declared official holidays in Lucknow ...Nawab's mother would travel from Faizabad to Awadh to be with her son on the occasion of Holi. Raj mata, the fifth Nawab Vazir's mother built a big Hanuman temple with a crescent at the top.[68]

Muslims and Hindus lived together for centuries and shared the song of life together. Through Radhey Charan's character Hyder shows that the fissures were not deep seated throughout the interreligious community as was being portrayed. People hung to the memories of times when they lived together, the time when Kamaal felt that Hari was his 'second self'. These sentiments are expressed in conversations of Radhey Charan and Sir Ashley when he asks him about his loyalty towards Muslim rulers:

> How could you be loyal towards someone who denigrate you and call you Kafir, asked Cyril Ashley.
>
> "They didn't call us kafir. They treated us like their equals, we shared one culture. Aliwardi Khan played Holi with us for seven days. He would fill his tanks with colored water to celebrate the festival….. You call us heathens and treat us like lesser beings."

[68] Hyder , *Aag ka Darya*, p.221.

How did it happen that Muslims ruled you for seven hundred years? Is it because India succumbs to authority and is unable to rule?

There were a lot of Hindu ministers in his army,

But then Hindu Zamindars left him and became our allies… They left him because of the high taxes that he levied on them…isn't it?

Aliwardy Khan had to levy taxes in order to fight the Marathas… You have even taxed our weddings, Sir.[69]

India in the imagination of the writer is not represented as a country inhabited by people who lived there but it as an idea, an idea lived by even those who did not belong to the place. Thus Abdul Mansur Kamaludin who comes to India to explore and write his book on India reflects how the Hindu means black in Persian and what was the significance of this black for him; "In his famous couplet, the renowned poet of Shiraz, Hafiz says *Ba-Khaal-i-hinduash bakhsham Samarkan-o-Bokhara*, (I will give away Samarkand and Bokhara for the black mole on her cheek)"[70] Hindustan was a home for the knowledge seekers and Muslims from other countries would often come here and make the place their home. The articulation of such sentiments is vividly and beautifully seen in the text when Kamaludin narrates his observations as:

I find it insulting that Prophet enjoined upon every Muslim man and woman to go to China to seek knowledge, when India is enroute…One sunny day I was taken to Jannat Mahal by my Persian mentor. His majesty was grandly placed on a *masnand* with a Tamboura by his side. One couldn't imagine that how such a gentle and fragile looking musician could have subjugated Orissa and Gwalior … His people looked happy with enough time to indulge in one of their great passions—religion. The Sufi and Bhakti cult were growing together and

[69] Ibid.

[70] Ibid.

flourishing. This elegant city of Jaunpur is called Shiraze-Hind. It has a large number of colleges and schools and sees thousands of theologians throng to various houses of religion.[71]

Hyder builds on this peaceful assimilation of outsiders and the alliances between the two communities to question the cultural amnesia that led to the demand for separate nations based on religion. In setting her characters in Lucknow she insists on the ethos that witnessed a culture which was not made over differences but transcended beyond the linguistic and religious affiliation of the people. Lucknow was the most culturally diverse city in the kingdom of Awadh and through it Hyder successfully imagines a past which had been rendered impossible to imagine at the point where differences between communities were made irreconcilable. Lucknow was very close to Hyder's spirit. She wrote an article *Lucknow: Shaehre Aarzoo*[72] (Lucknow: city of wishes/desires) as she was saddened by the erasures of its glorious past which she revered so much. In a way Lucknow in all its glamour and grandeur reflected her own cosmopolitan spirit.

Capturing the spirit of Hindu-Muslim relationships based not on hegemony or oppression but on deep cultural understanding of each others' culture, Hyder foregrounds the relationship between Muslim Nawab's and their subjects through the character of Nawab Vajid Ali Shah:

Viajid Ali Shah, the tenth ruler of Awadh became a legend in his life time. People used to call him Akhtar Piya or Jane-Alam- life of the world- out of love. He was an accomplished musician like Hussain Shah Nayak of Jaunpar and Sultan Baz Bahadur of Malwa. He composed *thumris* and *dadras*, commissioned perfection of *kathak* dance and danced as

[71] Hyder , *Aag ka Darya*,p.165.

[72] Rayees Hussain, "Aag ka Darya aur Quratulain Hyder" in *Nigare Urdu*, volume 23, no, 11-12February –March, 2009.

> Krishna in ballet that he himself created and called *Raslila*…On his way back from Calcutta Janey- Alam stopped in Banaras to see Naresh Maharaja Inshwari Prasad. The Maharaja spread rose petals on the path and walked alongside the king to his palace and presented the customary *Nazar* to the king.[73]

Begum Hazrat Mahal had pure women of high caste high born spinsters to look after her *Imambara*. Hyder to make her point of composite and syncretic culture also talks about the religious alliances that were formed to defeat the British. This is a reminder of how both the communities even shared their suffering. When the queen summoned her aids to discuss the strategy to fight Raja Debi Baksh Singh of Gonda, Raja Sukh Darshan, Lal Madho Singh of Amethi, Rana Beni Madho Singh Bahadur of Beswara, Raja Man Singh of Shahgun all came as if the sun and moon had descended on earth. Nawab Kamman in conversation with Gautam proudly says:

> The Begum came to the war field on elephant and palki. Our men fought very bravely and gloriously. On the 25th of February 1858, in the battle of Alam Bagh, the Begum once again rode on her magnificent elephant and fought bravely. Raja Man Singh fought with such valour that Begum Hazrat Mahal gifted him her own dupatta along with a robe of honour.[74]

This alliance is not merely for material gains but is based on respect, honour and dignity. The Hindus were part of Begums alliance not because they were forced but because there was a deep understanding and appreciation for each other and a commitment towards peace and maintaining a syncretic culture. If Muslims and Hindus had irreconcilable differences then alliances like these would have never happened especially with Muslim power on a decline. By recreating this aspect of the history of the subcontinent Hyder is imagining and rearticulating a past which has

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[73] Hyder , *Aag ka Darya*, p.225.

[74] Ibid.

been conveniently forgotten to give way to portraying Muslim and Hindu communities as having diametrically opposite cultures with no chances of accommodating each other. She articulates through this work that if history plays a role in articulating nation, then forgetting ones history should certainly not be done. This depiction can easily be dismissed as elitist and limited but my concern here is to understand the world of the text and the limited world that it portrays and within which it operates and what it depicts. It is not to locate patrician-plebian binaries but to understand writers' concern of cultural imaginary. Rajeshwari SunderRajan touches upon this limitation of such an analysis: "Hyder does not embrace the past uncritically nor is her absorption in the present an attempt to preserve the status quo against any kind of change. In recording her society and her times she is keenly aware of the privileges of rank, the hypocrisies of the class system, and the cultural superstructures built on the labours of the serving poor' However dismissive her protagonist might be of these wide spread political struggles, Hyder is aware that the alternative values represented by the 'chosen few'—liberalism, secular tolerance, noblesse oblige—are in the final analysis limited, elitist and for the most part ineffectual"[75] She has addressed these concerns through introducing characters like Champa and Syed Iftikhar who represent the contrasting viewpoint.

Nostalgia: Fragmented Social Order

> With the arrival of Autumn, yellow leaves went sailing in the wind. Days became colourless and nights became unbearable…change was palpable in the mood of people. Country seemed to be awakened to a new political change, boys and girls of rival political parties fought each other through magazines, newspapers, went campaigning for elections in villages to decide

[75] Rajeshwari S Rajan, "Zeitgeist and the Literary Text: India, 1947 in Quratulain Hyder's My temples Too and Salman Rushdie's Midnight's Children", *Critical Inquiry*, Vol40, No, 4, 2014.

> the fate of their country in the coming elections. Loudspeakers blared out only propaganda messages in the historic grounds of Aminabad Park, which was famous only for celebrations and gaiety... Symposiums about poetry, music and literature were replaced by political meeting in the Silver pavilion of Qaiser Bagh and Ganga Prasad Memorial Hall… Protests, agitations, picketing, negotiations, deadlocks was all that one would hear around. The country was gripped by hysteria.[76]

Mere Bhi Sanam Khane along with portraying the world of Nawabs and life of feudal lords caught in the times gives voice to those commons who questioned this life and questioned the ideals of such nationalist Muslims. Set in Lucknow around the nawabi culture and young enthusiastic people who are deeply committed to their country and would not see India divided at any cost. This text much like *Aag Ka Darya* revolves around the anxieties of changing times beyond ones control. The story starts with the end of the world war where the Partition of India was an imminent reality. The novel is set in the estates of *Amberpur* and *Karwaha Raj* but most of the plot unfolds in Lucknow and the happenings around that place. *Gufran Manzil* in Lucknow is the place for all sorts of activities, cultural, political, and aesthetic. The head Nawab is steeped in tradition and feudal values: "Kunwar adored tradition. He valued old customs and old traditions, he did not want to accept that the two communities were drifting apart. In his cosy bedrooms he shut himself up reading Urdu poetry with his Hindu Taluqdar friends"[77]. Gufran Manzil is always teemed with elite people of high sensibilities who are modern in their tastes and lifestyle. It is always full of people who are "revolutionaries with dreams, scholars, musicians, left leaning dreamers. They envision new life, new values, new societies…They would dress in handloom

[76] Quratulain Hyder, *Mere Bhi Sanam Khane*, Sangemeel Publications. Lahore, 2009.p.4.

[77] Ibid.. p.14.

cotton and listen to Tagore and discuss realism in literature… They were anti-British and deeply believed in oneness of India and Hindu-Muslim unity"[78].

The story comes to us through the protagonist Rajkumari Rakshanda of *Karwaha Raj* and her brother, Peechu, and friends Ginnie, Christabel, Vimal, Nirmala and Diamond. *Gufran Manzil* is preparing for arranging alliances of Peechu and Rakshanada. Peechu is invited to *Amberpur* to be betrothed to the only daughter of Raja of *Amberpur*, who is very reluctant to accept the invitation as later we get to know he is in love with his friend's wife, Christabel. Rajkumari Rakshanda is to be married to the only son of Jehangir Qadar, an officer in the Indian navy. With the Independence and Partition imminent, the feudal order starts collapsing slowly and steadily and throws the lives of the Gufran Manzil people everywhere. They young people appreciate their composite culture but at the same time cannot escape the anxieties that the times invited.

The world of Nawabs as Hyder portrays was exactly opposite to the world of those young men who were forced to live in a world that they hated, they felt bereft of the opportunities that others had. Sitting in the cafes of Calcutta, Bombay and Lahore, discussing how to bring about a revolution that would give them their due rights, they were all Muslim League sympathizers. They were critical of the 'high culture' of some girls who danced and 'demonstrated their decadence'. For them Rakhshanda was a bourgeois minded woman whose activism was disconnected from what the problems of the masses were. This camp was represented by Syed Iftikhar who declares to Rakshanda:

[78] Ibid.

> The political party that you support and the magazine that carries your high ideals will come down soon any moment …Your land, your father's property, his influence on the council, everything will be over before you even know it. Muslims are enlightened now and they understand their destiny and will shape it themselves. We will not be fooled by few nationalist like you.[79]

The old order was slowly crumbling with the cries of *Inquilab Zindabad* heard from everywhere. Walls were scrawled with slogans of freedom and demand for Pakistan. In both the texts this anxiety is discussed where the dilemma and angst of Muslims living in India is represented. Kamaal feels the pain of something dangerous to happen to all that he had held so close to his heart. The sense of loss loomed large on him. Talat refuses to go back to India but Kamaal being the proud son of the soil, descendent of Syed Mansur Kamaludin who had come to India from Persia and made it his home never thought of staying apart from his beloved country that was his home. He sits on the stairs listening to "*kaya ek gharonda hai*", body is a house of clay. He thinks to himself about all the Muslims in the film industry and their contribution in making Indian cinema where it had reached. Muslim families had managed and sustained the classic music *gharanas* for so long. He looked at the arts and crafts around him and looked at the exquisite tapestry that was made by Muslim artisans. The thought of dividing such sensibilities into Hindu and Muslim was beyond him. When the Muslim Slogans of "you have begged for too long, join the League to get what you deserve.. Join the Muslim League if you are a true Muslim"[80] are heard everywhere, Kamaal reminisces about the time when he would witness the illuminations of Moharam and how Hindu soldiers would dismount as a mark of

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[79] Ibid.,p.113.

[80] Hyder, *Aag ka Darya*,p.409.

respect to Imam Hussain. The political happenings of the time seemed surreal to Kamaal like Rakshanda in *Mere Bhi Sanam Khane* who is equally amazed to see people turn against each other with such sheer brutality. Sitting in her room she thinks how man was capable of harbouring so much hate and destroying and killing each other when once they loved like friends. She starts thinking about her 'culture' which she always thought of as splendid, being murdered by the rioting hooligans. She thinks about Rajasthan's *Garba*, Uttar Pradesh's *Kathak* and how all of this is falling face downwards in the pool of blood that has covered Bengal, Bihar and Punjab. When Rakshanda visits Manethar with her father she also realizes that reality was not her Gulfishan manzil and its comforts but the overflowing rivers of blood and columns of refugees who increased with each passing day… The world was not *Lala Rukh* and *Dilkusha* and *Chatter Manzil* but it was these fields and vultures who sat nibbling at the corpse of her beautiful country that she so loved and was despondent to see it fall apart.

Peechu in *Mere Bhi Sanam Khane* is torn between comprehending the burdens of the situation and not being able to understand how he did not belong to the country that he was once at the centre of for he was Rajkumar of *Karwaha Raj*. Sitting in his office and listening to the conversation of his colleagues about politics he is stunned to know that he has like Kamaal become stateless. He had been a staunch nationalist and opposed the idea of dividing India but that did not matter. All that mattered was that Peechu was a Muslim: "Lahore is safe for you, you should leave at the earliest. Delhi is for us, we are Indians, it belongs to us. We speak Hindi, you speak Urdu, you are beef eaters … you belong to Pakistan."[81] Kamaal has similar experiences travelling with fellow Indians on a boat when the discussion shifts to E.M.Forster's novel,

[81] Ibid.

Passage to India, "Muslims are not Indians anymore, they are Pakistanis. Dr. Aziz is not an Indian now…now Kamaal will not be recognized as a typical Indian, it is Pandit Gaur who will be called an Indian"[82]. This hits Kamaal very hard who realizes that he had become stateless, even if he chose not to leave India for Pakistan he will never be considered an Indian like he was before. In the background plays a song , *"Mayya mori mai nahi makhan khayo, bhor bhai gayan ke peeche Madhuban mohe Pathayo, mayya mori"*. Kamaal thought of how he always thought this culture, its music, its poetry always belonged to him and how can he ever get rid of what he thought he was made of. This culture was dear to him, the language of this culture was sacred to him. He had grown up on Kabir, Tagore and today he was told that he did not belong here.

When all the property of Muslim nawabs is confiscated Peechu is asked to look for a job by his mother for whom in the happier times government job was a disgrace:

> You need a letter of recommendation from someone influential to get a job here"
>
> Why is that needed? I am qualified enough
>
> Yes. But you belong to the wrong community now.[83]

He still hangs on to his affiliations and writes to his sister in London to not join the Pakistani people but stick with the Indians. While going for a job hunt to Delhi he meets Tom, a fellow traveler with whom he had travelled from England who scoffs at him for his failure at getting a job by saying "well Muslims need to pay for the Partition of this country" to which Peechu retorts "yes like Jews need to pay for

[82] Ibid.

[83] Hyder, *Mere Bhi Sanam Khane*, p.197.

crucifying Jesus Christ"[84]. Tom was a Jew and he stays quite upon hearing his retort. Peechu like Kamaal sticks to his country and refuses to leave India but pays the price for it. He gets killed in the riots:

> He lay there in his own warm blood…flashed to the valley of death in no time. The bullets had made his body like sieve, his hands and arms were cut and his feet were severed too.[85]

It was Peechu's fate that pushes Kamaal to run away and go to Pakistan. Torn between love for his country and the safety of his life, he muses to himself, 'you are a coward Kamaal, you are a rat, what happened to your nationalism…Why would you forsake this country". He loses to his fear and travels to Pakistan with his parents. In a letter to his friend from Karachi he writes, "India divided cannot be united again, it is foolish to think like that. The map of the world changes after every war. It changed after 1947 too."[86]

The legacy of Partition does not end with the creating of borders but passes on to become a part of the lives of the people who witnessed it. It did not sour inter community relations but even relations with the people of same community. When Kamaal and Champa have a conversation before Partition is announced, one can get a sense of how politics impinged on the private relations of people and changed their equations. Kamaal was a staunch supporter of united India and Champa was more inclined to Muslim League in her early years of initiation in politics. Here Hyder also hints at the interests of the feudal class that clashed with the middle class people who had different anxieties:

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[84] Ibid.

[85] Hyder, *Mere Bhi Sanam Khane*, p. 287.

[86] Hyder , *Aag ka Darya*, p.522.

Champa Baji, are you a League supporter, I hear some people talk about your interest in the politics of the League.

No, Kamaal ... it is just to do with some confused feelings that I have. When I was a student at a school in Banaras, I heard about Jinah and Sawarkar. I would often be told that I could not talk about Kashi because I did not wear a caste mark on my forehead, that I was a Muslim and did not worship Lord Shiva. They questioned my loyalties, Kamaal. But they were ignorant and perhaps they had not heard of Ghalib's beautiful ode to the temple city of Banaras…

Honestly Kamaal, I have been confused more than ever with this politics.

I don't want religion, Champa Baji, I want peace…we want peace to prevail in our country

You are a staunch nationalist, my dear Kamal

Yes, I am …what is wrong in loving one's country with honesty and yes you should also know that all the great Muslim intellectuals were nationalists, many scholars and theologians were nationalists.[87]

Ironically it is Champa who stays behind in India and not Kamaal, who is forced to go to Pakistan. Champa's dilemma is expressed in how she is treated as different by her very own friends who were her allies at once. At a Bengali wedding she is asked why was she left behind by Jinah who left for Karachi. She is taken aback by such statements and realizes that this is her reality in India where she is going to be treated as the 'other' by the very community who she grew up with dreaming the same dreams and singing the same songs. Champa's experience is emblematic of the suffering and tragedy of those Muslims who decided against joining Pakistan and staying committed to their own country.

Masood Raja comments that Hyder places her view of nation and nationalism between two view points, one expressed by Ambedkar for whom the "the tarnished

[87] Ibid., p. 448.

history of Hindus and Muslims makes it impossible for them to reconcile their differences and live as one nation, hence the creation of Pakistan is inevitable and Durrani for whom "Hindus and Muslims had maintained a non antagonistic relations for a very long time and this practice became contaminated by the interference of British and their divisive colonial policies."[88] This view is expressed by professor Banerjee in the novel who laments that Hindu Muslim riots were unheard of before Partition. Through Champa Hyder articulates her view of the lives of people who were caught between these two extremes. The legacy of Partition does not end with the redrawing of the boundaries but becomes a part of the lives of people who witnessed it. When the group of Gufishan meets in London the anxieties and discomfort that different loyalties created in their lives is palpable in their daily conversations as well as how their relationships continue. When Talat and her gang meet Amir Raza in London the group does not get along as they did when they were in Gulfishan *Manzil*. The new identities disrupt their relationships since the burden of confirming to their loyalties seems to be part of their existence. Roshan Ara who is a Pakistani is often scolded by Amir for being friends with Indians. Unlike Amir, who had migrated to Pakistan Roshan had always been in Pakistan. Amir's dilemmas often confound her for she is not able to make the sense of the pressure of the acquired new identity like Amir Reza. When Amir leaves in a hurry after seeing the Indians having a conversation Roshan asks Talat:

What happened to Amir? ...Why did he not stay here with us?

look Roshan baji, Amir bhaijan is Pakistani and we are Indians. He serves the Pakistani army and can't be around us much.

Why should that be a problem? He is your cousin.

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[88] Masood Ashraf Raja, "Quratulain's River of Fire: The Novel and the Politics of Writing Beyond the Nation State", *Interactions: Aegean Journal of English and American Studies*, Vol, 15(2), No 2, 2006, pp.49-60.

Do you have divided family, Roshan aapa?

No, I have always lived in Lahore.

That is why you won't understand this.[89]

The legacy of Partition and trauma of the divided families is expressed by this incident. The Muslims of both India and Pakistan were compelled to perform their nationalities in every sphere. For those who left for Pakistan they had to show their loyalty by staying away from the country of their origin and for those who stayed behind had to be careful for not being suspected as traitors. On his journey from Pakistan to India after Partition Kamaal feels acutely miserable for entering India where he was not welcome:

The train began its journey…

Burdwan…Anasol..Patna..Mughalsarai…Banaras…Allahabad….moving through a strange land. A year ago Kamaal belonged to this place, he was born here, raised here, the land of his forefathers… Today he was a foreigner here. He felt people were looking at him suspiciously 'you are a Pakistani…a Pakistani…a spy…a Muslim…a Traitor…come to the police station…traitor…spy…spy…Muslim…![90]

Alighting from the Train and beholding his beloved Lucknow he is chocked with emotions, 'Oh my beloved country, why did you forsake me'. After checking in to the police station which was customary for every Pakistani who would enter or exit India, he goes to his native place which looked deserted with no signs of habitation, there was no one around. He calls out to Qadeer, Qamrun, Hussaini but no one answers. On his visit to see Champa who decides to stay in Moradabad, he again reminisces those times when he would pass through Moradabad on his way to Dehradun with so many

[89] Hyder , *Aag ka Darya*,p.576.

[90] Ibid., p. 609.

servants waiting on him on every station. Getting down from the tonga he witnesses people speaking to each other in colloquial Urdu, many Muslims were still around although Hindu sign boards in the market had become more. There were posters for mushairas, saints' festivals written in beautiful Urdu calligraphy. He thinks to himself, 'how did Partition change the lives of these Muslims, did it really impact them materially, did it solve the problems that Muslims faced?"[91] Getting inside the cottage where Champa stays Kamal sees a pomegranate tree and again muses, 'from Andalusia to Bihar, Muslims everywhere plant a pomegranate tree, what is the significance of this for Muslims?'. Champa interrupts his musing:

Kamal, good lord! What a surprise… let's go to Abba's place… we don't wear burqas here…just the good old chaddar.

In conversation with Champa's Abba about the distress of war and migration Kamaal feels how Partition created more problems for the Muslim community:

"Kamal beta, we UP Muslims have suffered a lot because of Pakistan

Why is this place so quiet? Where have people gone?

They have left…over there, where you have gone![92]

Kamal used to think that Champa was left behind and he forged ahead, "who would come to my door now Kamal… you must be wondering ... But Kamaal I think I have been much luckier than you. I have found the magic key." Kamaal thought to himself that indeed "he was the one who was receding and Champa was moving forward". She was surrounded by her people while Kamaal had to leave everything behind against his wishes. He was India's lost generation. The glorious world that his parents

[91] Hyder , *Aag ka Darya*, p.604.

[92] Ibid., p. 614.

had spread for him, the dreams of socialism that he had dreamt for his beloved country were all snatched away from him. He becomes stateless in the end:

I am in Pakistan. I have come from India. UP Muslim. Refugee. Muhajir. Refugee. Displaced…Exiled…Muslim. Homeless.[93]

Conclusion:

In this chapter I attempted to explicate how Quratulain Hyder through her work provides an alternative perspective to the political history of Partition and how her work can be read as a fictional history of non teleological nature. It challenges the ideologies of exclusionary politics and generates a critique of the process of nationalism and nation building. The critique is evident at two levels: one is narratology that feeds into the perception that the reader gets from the texts and other is the positioning of the characters and where they are located. In such fictional history multiple narratives arising from different positionalities question the notion of linear history. Although her work is located in history, it should not be read as history because the tools of fiction are epistemologically different from history. The purpose of such fictional history is not to supplement the history but rather to challenge the history and create spaces of interrogation. "Historians analyse events, movements and social transformations but in doing so miss out on the very essence of those times, for chronicles of past tend to overlook the quality of the times, the feel of the times. The sense of verisimilitude may appear as trifling details but taken together help to build a real picture of the times past as they really were, the discussions they had , the clothes

[93] ibid.p.635.

they wore, the houses they lived in, the gardens they walked in. The universe of the novel knows no boundaries."[94]

Hyder's conscious effort to step away from a conventional frame work of a Partition novel stems from and is a testimony to her defiance towards such creative ventures. What we gather from the above discussion is how the culture of assimilation of the subcontinent makes a journey to the point where it stands fragmented and identities stand fractured. The practice of writing against the nation, by not celebrating it but critiquing it through a two thousand five hundred year history of the subcontinent woven imaginatively states the need to rethink the paradigms with which we attempt to understand and make sense of Partition as an event and religious nationalism as a solution for resolving crisis. It is only through a shift in understanding that the perspectives that have been rendered invisible shall come to the fore and develop our idea of Partition and its processes.

In the following chapter, I shall discuss how these ideas of nation and nationalism traveled inside the homes and how they impinged on the familial relationships. If Quratulain Hyder's broad canvas provokes us to look at the Partition differently, Khatija mastoor takes us to the inner courtyards of the Muslim home and invites us to perceive the ruptures and fissures that the pre-partition times and the Partition created.

[94] Taj, *A Study of Organising Principles in Quratulain Hyder's River of Fire*, 195-213.

Chapter III

Home as a non Neutral Space: Family as Nation, Nation as Family

"Both home and the outside, then, are categories that are mutual ly constitutive and contingent, lacking a content that can be fixed or known in advance of their manipulation in a specific discourse"[1].

This chapter has a discussion on the political nature of home as a site of struggle and as a site of control. What I want to bring forth in this chapter is the interface between national and domestic (nation and home) and the fluid boundaries between public and private at the time of political and social crises. My concern in this chapter is to elucidate how in the times of political upheaval colonialism was getting challenged outside as well as inside, inside through patriarchal attributes by controlling and 'disciplining' women. The discussion foregrounds the nature of a Muslim home not as an a-political but as a politically charged space where some of the ideals of British colonialism were being challenged through maintaining a specific notion of 'Muslim womanhood'. The struggle to make home correspond to its traditional meaning and the male anxiety of constructing a specific 'Muslim feminity' to regain some control snatched from them by the colonizer will also be discussed here; how home becomes the site of control to resist the control of the larger nation/ territory. I aim to shine light on how the project of imperialism and nationalism remain essentially patriarchal in how their concern with territory also gets manifested in their control of women. Also, I bring out the semiotic impact of war on the minds and lives of women in their small confined territories. I attempt to show how the struggle to resist such patriarchal control and to be actively connected to the outside is manifested inside the space

[1] Aparajita Sagar, "Homes and Postcoloniality", *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies,* Volume 6, Number 2, Fall, 1997, p. 237.

called home. Muslim home is my textual canvas here and within that arena, how were Muslim women experiencing the political upheaval in their daily lives is what I intend to discuss here. I discuss the ruptures and fissures in the identity, relationships, affect, love and subject-hood of women and the manifestation of the same through daily 'rituals' of living.. The major part of analysis will be based on Khatija Mastoor's *Aangan*, with significant insights from *Aag Ka Darya* and *Mere Bhi Sanam Khane*.

Familial Disruption amidst Political Chaos

Khatija Mastoor's *Aangan* was written in the year 1962, close to decade and a half after the partition of the Indian subcontinent. The novel is set in pre-Partition Lucknow when the struggle for freedom of India was at its peak with all the political parties wrestling to fight the British Empire. A story of a Muslim family and how the political occupation of the family members impinges on the relationships and creates disruption in the family, *Aangan* brings forth the silent stories of people who do not figure in the political history of the event. The novel is divided into two parts: *Mazi* (past) and *Haal* (present). Story revolves around a Muslim family with Aaliya, the daughter of the family being at the centre of the plot. Aaliya's father is a devoted Indian National Congress party worker and cannot think of anything beyond the political freedom of India. He is always away from home and even when he is home, he sits in a different room where he is always surrounded by party workers discussing political issues. Her mother is a bitter woman and because of her brother, a civil servant married to a European woman, is loyal to the British and doesn't see much of the meaning in what her husband considers so significant. Aaliya's sister Tehmina is in love with her cousin Safdar who stays with them since both his parents are dead. His mother married against the wishes of her family to a man who was of a lower

social rank. She was disowned by her father and could never visit her family. Safdar is never treated as an equal in the family and is considered as a constant reminder of the scandal that ruined the family name. For his political activism, Aaliya's father is imprisoned and she and her mother shift to her elder uncle Bade Chacha's house. He is also a devoted Congress worker and is committed to his country. Much like his brother Bade Chacha is equally disconnected from his family who find it difficult to make the ends meet. He has two sons Jameel and Shakeel who struggle to get education because the family does not have money. Aaliya has one more uncle who after the death of his wife remarried and left his daughter Chammi at Bade Chacha's house. Chammi is in love with Jameel and a staunch supporter of Muslim League. She gathers the children of the locality and keeps hailing Muslim League which upsets Aaliya's uncle who cannot conceive the partition of the country. Chammi and Bade Chacha are always at daggers drawn with each other. Aaliya's aunt Najma Poofi is an M.A English and looks down upon everyone because the rest of the family has studied in Urdu medium schools and do not know English. A very independent and strong woman, she doesn't care much for the family and is always busy with her books.

Violence erupts and partition of the country happens. Aaliya and her mother shift to Pakistan. On reaching Pakistan, Aaliya's uncle who had opted for his services in Pakistan helps them get a house. They simply break into a house of a Hindu family who was forced to leave their place. Her mother clears the house of all the idols but Aaliya feels the guilt pangs and keeps the idols safe in her suitcase. A letter from India tells her about her Uncle who was shot on his way to his meeting with Nehru. Aaliya keeps herself busy by teaching at a local school and offering her service at Walton camp, the biggest refugee camp in Pakistan. Although it upsets her mother

who cannot see any value in such services, she continues to defy her and work at the camp. One day when Aaliya is back from the camp she finds a visitor on her balcony. After some time she recognizes the visitor. It is Safdar, her cousin and her sister's lover. Her conversations with Safdar convince her to marry him but Safdar is confronted by Aaliya's mother who shouts at him for being of a lower rank. He convinces Aaliya's mother that he came to Pakistan not because of any conviction but because he saw opportunity of making money. On hearing this Aaliya changes her mind and decides to never marry him or anybody.

The story on the surface seems very simple which is only because Mastoor's diction is not complex and intense like some other writers who were also influenced by the Progressive Writers Association especially Quratulain Hyder. The absence of conceit in the text and making it seemingly about non-political events could also be attributed to the novelist's eschewing from any controversies associated with Progressive Writers Association. As discussed at length in the chapter I there was a crackdown by the Pakistani State on those writers who questioned and criticized the state of Pakistan. These writers were termed as the enemies of the State. Tarun. K. Saint mentions that "the few novels that addressed the issue of dislocation and violence had to negotiate the mine field of nationalist sentiment and find indirect ways to articulate dissenting views." [2] Mastoor was part of '*Savera*,' [3] a well known Pakistani Progressive Writers group and hence one of the writer groups that was targeted by the government. The technique that she employs in *Aangan* served the purpose of

[2] Tarun.K.Saint, *Witnessing Partition: Memory, History, Fiction*, Routledge, Taylor and Francis, London, New York, New Delhi, 2010, p. 90.

[3]With the internal fissures in the Progressive Writers Association in terms of the ideology of how literature should be used, various writers were disillusioned and separated themselves from the association by creating many subgroups like *Savera* and *Naqoosh*. It was Saadat Hassan Manto who led the group of dissidents followed by various other Urdu writers.

escaping the imprisonment or condemnation of the book[4]. The text that seems like a story of a Muslim family within the confines of four walls is a critique of the formation of Pakistan on Islamic principles. It has in fact the subtext of delineating the tensions and anxieties of the people during Partition and how the dynamics of the inner private space changed with the events happening outside of its confines. The political events happening outside changed the intimate relationships inside the Muslim home. As Tahira Naqvi states:

There is very little in Mastoor's work that fails to leave a mark on the reader's consciousness. She writes about difficult subjects and yet makes it seem simple. That is a sign of her remarkable power as a storyteller. The narrative takes us in and keeps us absorbed. Mastoor's fiction flows as pure narrative, a river of events and emotions in which the reader is hurled along. She knows how to tell an engrossing story, and the reader laps it up. One of the most endearing aspects of Mastoor's work is her realistic portrayal of women's lives. She center stages women's thoughts, women's feelings, and women's experiences in a way that does not happen in works by male writers…Her portrayal provides a corrective to these male (mis)representations of Pakistani women.[5]

Through her seemingly simple narrative that does not entail complex plot techniques she brings forth the lived experience of men and women in day to day lives with disruption in the background. Mastoor moves beyond the realms of public space and delves into the private spaces of Muslim household. Unlike Hyder, her subject in not the upper class world of Nawabs but the lower middle class and the middle class

[4] Mastoor does not criticize the formation of state overtly but brings forth the cost of realization of the Muslim homeland through the trope of domestic and familial. By foregrounding the inner and the private she seeks to disrupt the notions of calm and resolved domestic sphere and uniformity of the Muslim opinion about the existence of Pakistan.

[5]Arun.P.Mukerjee, "Drinking at Khatija Mastoor' s Well", (Review) Tahira Naqvi, *Cool, Sweet Water: Selected Stories.* Series Editor, Mohammad Umar Menon, Karachi: Oxford University Press, Pakistan Writers Series, New Delhi,1999. pp. 1-27.

landowning Muslim household in decline. She explores the vulnerability of this class and their changing situation with the change in political establishment. Her focus is not so much on the direct violence, disruption and disintegration of the nation, but the infringement of political on the domestic and how political does domestic become at such times. It is through this framework that the reader is able to see the impact of the competing nationalist forces and how in a way it gets replayed inside the domestic sphere. The (re)arrangement inside the domestic sphere in the midst of social and political forces shapes and reshapes the notions of self of the inhabitants of the house especially women who remain confined in the house. Mastoor moves her gaze away from the brutality on the outside and the threat from the 'other' and takes us through the corridors of intimate spaces of a Muslim home struggling with the consequences of the political disruption.

The metaphor of the '*aangan'* (courtyard) however is not just the story of one courtyard but the story of the subcontinent, where family issues, matters outside home, the consequences of their interaction are vividly described.[6] This point is brought home by Arun.P .Mukherjee in the review of the novel wherein he vividly shares his thoughts of how well the novel portrayed the lives of those who were caught in the politics of Partition. To understand the impact and the significance of the novel in terms of closely delineating the experience of people during Partition, it is imperative to quote Mukherjee at length to get the sense of his analysis. He writes:

"*Aangan* deals with Partition not at the ground zero level of mass slaughter, but at the breakup of families and the leaving of homelands. That these wounds continue to fester was brought home to me by a vivid dream I had after reading Mastoor's Partition-related texts: I dreamed about the home my family had been allotted in Tikamgarh. The home had been abandoned by

[6] Aslam Azad, *Urdu Novel Azadi ke Baad*, Sahanat Prakash, New Delhi, 1993.

a Muslim family that had quietly left for Pakistan. When we went to see it before deciding whether to rent it (my father had refused to buy it from the custodian), we found the kitchen cupboards full, clothes were hanging in the closets, and the rooms and furniture looked as though the family was going to return any moment. Before we moved in my father demanded that the administration take out all the possessions of the previous occupants/owners. I lived in that house for five years. It was demolished years ago and yet, from time to time, less and less often, my sleeping brain takes me back to this house of my childhood. Mastoor's stories of rapes, killings and uprootings, of the terror of survivors, revived my memories of a refugee childhood. I kept mulling over the intensity of that vivid dream, which made me wake up very tired in the morning. What do these memories mean? Especially to my young son who does not share them, so different is his life experience from mine. Perhaps the point I am making is that Mastoor's ability to depict that period of our history in a

stark, truthful manner is masterful. She not only helps us grasp the agony and helplessness of the ordinary people who were caught in that catastrophe, she also speculates about the causes."[7]

The beginning of the novel *Aangan* alerts the reader to the underlying tension in the text and the possibility of instability. The novel begins with a fuscous tone:

> Winter nights fall silent very early. The sky has been overcast since evening. The street lamppost has been beaming silently. The incomplete school building covered by the tree branches is house to the owls that are hooting ominously. The sounds of hooting are making the night seem dark and somber…Aaliya wasn't able to sleep. Sleepless nights are painful and they are more painful if the place is new and unfamiliar. Perhaps the first night at a new place is like this-dreamless![8]

[7]Mukherjee, *Drinking at Khatija Mastoor's Well*, p.8.

[8] Khatija Mastoor, *Aangan*, Educational Book House, Aligarh,(edition 2010), p.6.

The story begins with a flash back –*Maazi* where Aaliya is thinking about all that has been lost and found. Feeling restless at the change in her life due to the political forces beyond her, Aaliya, daughter of a land owning Muslim family in decline experiences "the great political forces of time, the Congress, the Muslim League and the Communist Party largely within the household… "Her family is caught between the decayed mores of moribund class and a whirlwind variant of national politics".[9] The family has been seeing a decline in their fortune due to the political events and abolishment of Zamindari system. With the new system in place, the family has lost land and other comforts associated with it. When Aaliya's mother narrates the story to her daughter about the happy and fortunate days, she says:

> Your grandfather had many men work on his land and at times they would share the household work as well…your grandfather was very strict with them. If they failed in delivering their duty, he would tie them to a pole and lash them with his whip… Ah, those days of glory! Where ever we would go, people would bow their heads….The women in the family were never given a voice and all the alliances were arranged by the head of the family. Your other aunts were not treated with dignity like I was because my brother was in England… Your grandmother is a strong woman, even with declining fortune and losing a son to the political upheaval, she never cried a tear…He left for Turkey and never returned…she stayed tough.[10]

The decline in fortune and the changing times meant a great deal for the family that was trying to keep its traditions alive in the times where change was inevitable and imminent. However it was through women and maintaining their location within home that was considered significant to resist change. 'Home' is considered to be the

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[9] Aiajz Ahmed quoted in Tarun.K.Saint, *Witnessing Partition: Memory, History, Fiction*, Routledge, Taylor and Francis, London, New York, new Delhi, 2010, p. 90.

[10] Mastoor,*Aangan*, p.16-17.

protected environ where women stay 'safe' but Mastoor brings forth the dynamics of home and reconfiguration within to make us rethink the notion of home and its assumed imperviousness to the outside events. She does not articulate home within conventional terms as she debunks this notion of apolitical nature of the home. The construction of home is also relevant to understanding the notion of self of the women living within its boundaries. In the novel the women in the family are never shown to step outside of the home. There is not a single scene when Aaliya, Chammi or Tehmina are depicted stepping outside to do something. There are no scenes in school, college or the outside world. Unlike Rakhshanda in *Mere Bhi Sanam Khaney*, Aaliya's education, her disillusionment, her change and growth is all a result of the change in the dynamics of family relations. Her education is contingent upon finding a local school that does not teach British values. Her mother, who is opposed to her husband for being a loyal nationalist, wants her daughter to seek education at a missionary school:

> I know you are against the British and you won't let your daughter study at one of their schools. Huh! You only want your nephew and your sister to seek education. You have ruined one of the daughters by keeping her illiterate and now you want to sacrifice this one because of your enmity with the British.[11]

Aaliya's father is immersed in the politics and work of the party to the extent that the family begins to crack. He is so loyal and committed to the freedom struggle that he forgets that he has a family to take care of. Although he cares for Aaliya's education he is strictly against her joining a nearby missionary school. The anxiety of keeping the values of the colonizer out of the home is evident. Upon his wife's insistence to send the daughter to a school he responds:

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[11] Ibid.,p.24.

I will look around for a school. In these missionary schools they teach English and preach Christianity. I am strictly against these British schools…I hate missionary schools. I would rather let my daughter stay *Jahil* than send her to such a school.[12]

This attitude of Aliya's father is representative of the anxiety shared by Muslims during the colonial period especially with regard to the measures undertaken by British to 'reform' the society. Home was the centre of struggle between the colonialists and the nationalists. The control over the body and the behavior of woman inside the home became central to overcome the 'colonial shame.'[13] The domestic sphere was to be resisted from letting the colonizer use it a 'civilizing prop' to serve the purpose of colonial domination[14]. The superiority of the colonizing culture had to be confronted and fought with by holding steadfastly to the traditional values. The Muslim Woman had to remain unexposed to the modernizing missions and thus made the subject of the advice literature that was being circulated rigorously to counter the missionary educationists.

Mohanalaxmi Rajakumar in her work on how women writers engaged with the nationalist discourses in the context of India and Algeria discusses while the British reformist focused on the Hindu customs and traditions like Sati, widow remarriage etc and made them the rationale to continue their presence in the subcontinent, the Muslim reformers felt the need to start the internal 'reform' inside the Muslim household. It was an attempt on part of the community to regain control over

[12] Ibid.,p.26.

[13] Mohanalaxmi Rajakumar, *Haram in the Harem: Domestic Narratives in India and Algeria*, Peterlang Publishing Inc, First New Edition, 2009.

[14] Karen Tranburg Hansen, *African Encounters with Domesticity*, Rutgers University Press, New jersey, 1992.

women.[15] It is this ideology and anxiety that forces Aliya's father to create hurdles in the way of his daughter's education. Aliya, if she has to step outside has to remain away from the corrupting influence of the 'other'. This imposition of difference between home and outside by the male members of the family is a strategy to subvert the mission of the colonizer and to keep away his influence. What Mastoor is also subtly offering the reader is also how the space within Muslim home was made intrinsic to the identity formation of women and nation. Protecting the home was in itself seen as a battle against the colonizers. To further elaborate on this a discussion on how the Muslim womanhood was constructed to protect the Muslim home from modernizing and thus corrupting influences will be discussed in the next section.

Construction of Muslim Womanhood

Ilmi magrib padkar hongi aesi khudsar biwiyan, biwiyan shouhar banegin aur shauhar biwiyan,

kya batwawun kya kareingi ilm padkar biwiyan, hongi sub deputy se lekar governor biwyan,

han magar ta'leem se yeh faida hoga zaroor, hongi isayi mission mai jakar nauka rbiwiyan ,

haan magar taleem unko chahiye itni zaroor, ki mard ki gumkhwar ho, bachon ki rehbar biwiyan

Western education will make the women headstrong, the wives will turn husbands and husbands wives,

what will education grant them, ranging from posts of deputies to governors

Yes, the benefits of western education will make our women servants of the Christians

The education they need is all that makes them compassionate wives and guiding mothers[16].

[15] Rajakumar, *Haram in the Harem,* 2009.

[16] Akbar Alhabadi wrote poetry exhorting the Muslim men to follow their customs and religion and not to succumb to the western models of learning. His poetry is representative of the anxieties of Muslim men during the colonial rule.

When the British reform was underway the Muslims felt the pressure of struggling to keep their identity, culture, religion and their moral codes preserved and away from the 'corrupting' reformist influence of the colonizers. In such an exercise Muslim home and Muslim woman became the signifiers of the culture. The preservation of a distinct cultural identity was seen as an answer to political invasion by the colonizer. When the reformists were building missionary schools and advocating women's education, the Muslim reformers turned their gaze to the interiors and conservation of their culture. The threat of the colonial state closing on to the private corridors of their subjects was felt imminently. This desire to hide the private wherein resided the secrets of the colonized his "aggressive sexuality, his notorious reproductive capacities, his penchant for mystery, deceit and intrigue, had to be rendered transparent to the gaze of the colonizer for it was in this dark, deep and mysterious sphere that resistance to colonial rule could be potentially formented."[17] Inderpal Grewal states that it is an attempt by the colonizer to make transparent what it feels is threatening and can prove detrimental to its progress.[18] Thus for the British colonizer, the entry into the private homes was as important as it was for their subjects to erect barricades for them. The more efforts the colonizer made to encroach the more assiduously did the colonial subjects work towards protecting their 'sacred' and private spaces. As stated elsewhere, the best manifestation of this anxiety of the Muslim men was expressed in guide books for women and enunciations which urged women to stay away from such endeavors of the British to educate them. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan,was known as a modernist and reformist but when it came to women's education surprisingly he did not have much different opinions. He advocated

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[17] Rubina Saigol , *The Pakistan Project: A Feminist Perspective on Nation and identity*, Women Unlimited, Delhi, 2013.p.50.

[18] Inderpal Grewal, *Home and Harem: Nation, Gender, and the cultures of Travel*, Duke University Press, 2006.

traditional education and appealed the elite Muslims classes to prevent their daughters from imbibing western education and its values. In one of his speeches in 1888, he says:

I cannot approve of the modern system of education devised for the education of women. Developing institutions for women's education and fashioning them along the lines of European women's institutions is inappropriate for contemporary conditions in India. Therefore I strongly oppose these measures. I am also not in favour of the kind of knowledge being imparted to women as it does not suit our conditions and our women do not need this knowledge for centuries to come.[19]

In another of his speeches in Jallandar in1894 he expresses his concerns as:

There is no doubt that I strongly disapprove of the building of common schools for girls where they go without the *chador* or *burqa* and without any regard to the family to which they belong…I say with complete conviction that respectable families should get together and arrange for their daughters an education which reflects the teachings of the past…women's education should be directed towards creating a good moral character, virtue, domestic expertise, respect for elders, love of the husband, upbringing of the children, and the knowledge of religious injunctions. I support such an education. I am wary of any other type of education.[20]

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[19]Qouted in Rubina Saigol, *The Pakistan Project*, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan's speech delivered in Lahore in 1888, *Khutbaate-e-sir Syed*, comp.by S.M.I. Panipati, (Lahore:Majilis-e-Taraqqi-e-Adab, 1973), p.61.

[20] Ibid. It is important to mention here that Sir Syed's position vis-a- vi women's education changed. He became an advocate of the right of women to education. Muslim reformers started almost after eighty years after the Hindu reformers. Sir Syed Khan convinced Muslims about the inevitability of Western education. Later he started the Mohamadan Anglo oriental College. In 1906 a separate wing for women was inaugurated and later many other colleges encouraged women's participation. Some of Sir Syed's disciples started journals like Khatoon that advocated female literacy. He along with his wife made donations to many educational institutions to promote education for Muslim women. Thus Sir Syed in a shift from his earlier position played an instrumental role in initiating Muslims towards Western education. See Hajira Kumar's 'Education Among Muslim Women: A Situational Analysis' in Anjali Gandhi (ed), *Women's Work, health and Empowerment*, Aakar Books, Delhi, 2006.

The aim to quote Syeed's speeches is to show the fears within even the progressive Muslims of the potential of getting their 'identity' diluted and losing their 'culture'. Also this fear is an extension of the anxiety of losing one's home to the colonizer when the land, territory has already been lost. The control of home is the control over women and the realization that once they step out that control will be no more. The women need to be kept inside 'protected' from the gaze of the colonizer in the public which has already been taken. The private space and the women within belong to the native and should be kept far away from the gaze of the outsider. The control of private space is also the control of female sexuality and the control of any possibility of relations with men of other religions, nations, or races as it carried within it fears of Muslim annihilation.[21]

For Aliya's father sending her to a Christian school would be a betrayal towards his own nation. It would tantamount to giving access to the colonizer to the spaces that they should not be able to conquer. This for the national project to succeed it is the patriarchal project that needs to be strengthened.

To enrich this discussion I would take a bit of a diversion here to further this point of how imperial projects, national projects were also patriarchal projects by discussing the other side of the story; The English housewife in India.[22] Rosemary George

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[21] See Saigol, *The Pakistan Project*, pp.47-75.

[22] In her review of George's work, Aprajita Sarkar highlights the importance of studying the colonial and imperial cultures together. She argues that the reconfiguration of the field can throw up insights otherwise avoided. I take cue from her and present here both the situations, British and Indian and their attempts of interplaying domestic and political. She writes "Clearly, there is no danger of exhausting the field or of producing studies that simply replicate each other: the fields and discourses in which colonizer and colonized are mutually imbricated are inexhaustible and rife with scholarly possibilities. For future postcolonial cultural scholarship, however, the question remains whether the task of rereading imperial cultures is as pressing and urgent as the task of examining subaltern practices. To the potential objection that it might not be possible to study either imperial or colonized cultures in isolation from each other, I would respond that the act of bringing them in the same frame does not automatically obligate us to devote equal attention to each. See Aparajita Sagar, Homes and

Marangoly in her study discusses how home in the colonial occupation was the arena where the English woman gained her 'authoritative self' essential in the modern female subject. Through a study of guide books and novels for English woman to conduct themselves for the prosperity of the Empire, George argues that the assumption was created that the successful running of the household by the British women had an impact on the functioning of the empire. Drawing from Nancy Armstrong's assertion that 'modern individual was first and foremost a female', George argues that modern woman was first an imperialist too. In the initial days women's contribution to the nation building was through reproduction, to contribute healthy individuals to the nation as the quality of motherhood was related to quality of children and thus the 'vigor of the imperial race'. With the establishment of homes in the colonies the contribution of English women to the imperial project changed exclusively from that of motherhood to contributing to the enterprise through domesticity. With the establishment of English home "outside England there was a physical repositioning of the hitherto private into what had been considered the most public of the realms, The British Empire…This process of reconstitution which began with the advent of imperial women to the colonies, resulted in a dramatic reconfiguration of England as home country and women as national subjects."[23]This construction of women was essential for the national/imperial project since it extended women into the 'public sphere from the social sphere but in opposition to the political sphere which was men's arena. It was the move away from "fixing and

Postcoloniality, *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*, Volume 6, Number 2, Fall, 1997, pp 237-251 (Review).

[23] Rosemary Marangoly George, "Homes in the Empire, Empires in the Home", *Cultural Critique*, No, 26. (Winter 1993-1994), pp. 95-127.

freezing of women as mothers and nothing more than mothers"[24] and reassertion of domesticity as central to nation building. Thus colonialism was significant in reshaping identities of women as objects and agents of reform while at the same time keeping them away from politics. What was essential to this construction was 'service', sacrifice, faithful, culture and dedication towards preserving the British nation. Denise Riley states that such a construction of women made them realize their significance in the scheme of upholding imperial project while in fact they were located outside of that project. This position gave such women a chance to work on more 'damaged' women who were in need for reform. The English woman thus facilitated the building of nation away from the violence of imperialism. This space where women could come in contact with public but still remain in the private was palatable to the British because it did not interfere with the political and such women were seen as no threat.[25]

From the mid nineteenth century there were many guide books written for English women who stayed in the colonies. These guide books were essentially addressed to the women and convince them of their significance in the furthering of the imperial project. These books were mostly written by those men and women who had served in the colonies and were now sharing their experiences with the fellow imperialists. These novels and guide books "created a new and 'selfproclaimedly' modern female figure; the energetic, smart and benevolent partner in the imperial mission."[26] The guide books urged women to take their duties of maintaining the 'home' seriously for

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[24] Wendy Webster, *Imagining Home: Gender, race and national Identity 1945-64*, Routledge, London, New York, 1998 , p. X.

[25]Unlike the suffragette movement where women were out on roads demanding their due and share of public space and thus threatening the normative social and political order, these women within the confines of home were seen generating no such anxiety and hence faced no resistance in their mission to educate the colonial subjects.

[26] George, *Homes in the Empire*, p.102.

it is the work of 'woman with brain and heart' to assist in the constant civilizing mission (as the imperial expansion was referred to) and contribute her services in upholding the interests of the nation. Thus the thrust was on 'home' and by extension women's conduct on which the imperial project rested apart from the repressive political policies. For the English woman then, responsibility lied with her to control the domestic territory and civilize those she comes in contact with in her compound, her servants and subjects. The domestic replicates the public and needs as much control. Woman's contribution to her nation then is to "replicate the Empire on a domestic scale — a benevolent much supervised terrain where discipline and punishment is meted out with an unwavering hand."[27] In her discussion of *My Indian Family: a Story of East and West within an Indian Home*, George illustrates the attempts of the English to get into the private arenas of the colonized through their women. The civilizing mission was the duty of such women who had to alter the 'regressive practices within the Indian household' and enlighten the Indians and make them amenable to change which can come through when they let in the 'sunshine and fresh air of Western comprehension'. It was emphasized in such books that the only way to change the Indian way was to change their women. Also, in continuation with the imperial interest English women also had to convince the Indian women about the futility of joining the independence struggle and convince them about not aspiring for any larger public space.

Thus what we see here is the imperial and national project coalesced in how women were ascribed the duty of upholding traditions, English and Indian respectively. One was to uphold and provide her services to colonialism and the other had to resist any such attempts to endanger the nation. It is this anxiety of preserving the private home

[27] Ibid., p.108.

that initiated a reform within Muslim community to protect their homes, to 'protect' their women from any component of the imperialistic project. To rule out such a possibility Muslim reformers urged women to turn to traditional education that would make them better mothers, daughters and housewives. Muslim community could not have let itself be completely divorced from seeking education and attempts at modernizing. To alleviate such threats of losing their tradition and morals, the alternative was to give women and men different education. For men it was scientific education and for women it was traditional and religious education that would reinforce in them the values and 'morality' that was being attacked by the British education system[28]. This way the community could claim that their women were seeking education while being comfortable with what they were being taught. This control over education meant control over their sexuality and containment within the bounds of tradition and religion. The imparting of moral education to women was an answer to the anxieties of finding women's bodies as an arena of ideological conflict. The debates around women's education reveal how "anxious both sides were to capture women and imprison them within their own worldview…women's bodies within or without purdah were the signifiers of how triumphant each side was; women in purdah representing the victory of the nationalists and women those outside it marking colonial conquest. Both patriarchies, the imperial and the nationalists, could prove masculinity and power by the extent to which women bodies had been regulated in specific ways."[29] In the case of Muslim community, the ability to hide *their* women from the colonialist was an expression of Muslim masculinity and assertion of the control that they still possessed. Muslim men viewed women's

[28] Safdar Ahmed, *Reform and Modernity in Muslims: The Philosophical, Cultural and Political Discourses Among Muslim Reformers,* IB Tauras, Palgrave Macmillan, London, New York, 2013.

[29] Saigol, *The Pakistan Project*, p. 58.

education as an expression of power by the colonizers. The only answer that the Muslim man had to his de-masculinization by his colonizer was to carve out boundaries for his women. The failure to do so would be seen as a sort of castration by the colonizer and lay bare the interiors of the sacred inside.

When the reformers capitulated to the demand of education, they did so by inserting a caveat of deferring the education for women. The logic in that was that once men are educated and the task of nation building is over, women could consolidate that further by strengthening the inner sanctum of home by the moral education that they will be provided. The emphasis was also on educating men before women could be educated. It was to use the tools of the colonizer to fight the colonizer while retaining the power to determine the course of the community. The rays of the 'sun do not come from below, but from above' was the logic that was provided to seek scientific education for men and then they could educate *their* women in *their* way. Woman becomes the Earth and man becomes the sun from which the rays have to fall down. This is the linking of women with earth/land, the connection which is often established between women and land, motherland. Land is the "mother, the beloved and an erotic relationship is formed with the motherland"[30] with the woman being at the centre of this construction. These measures were taken to preserve the 'Muslim Feminity' and in turn 'Muslim Masculinity'.

For Muslims the call for education for women came with an added threat of sense of loss that the community had already been experiencing. Having not been able to fight the colonial master outside in the public space, this intrusion if successful, meant giving up entirely to the demands of the outsider. This intensified the fear of

[30] Ibid.,p. 59.

annihilation and loss of Muslim masculinity too. To fight this gendered education was the only answer that reformers could come up with at that particular period in time. For reformers like Sir Syeed Khan who had to fight their impulse of supporting modernity and progress but at the same time continue to support the community in preserving its fabric it was a challenge. The aim was to give education to women only to come to the rescue of Muslim feminity rather than destruction of it. Such traditional education for women was meant to strengthen the patriarchal culture within the society. Thus the answer to the political aggression of the imperial state was the cultural nationalism which rested on the women of the community.

Disrupting the Stereotypical Image of Muslim Women

As mentioned in the above section that as a form of resistance to colonial influence there was a lot of emphasis on preserving Muslim Womanhood. Many scholars perceiving the 'threat' of modern British education came forward with manuals for a good Muslim woman. Mualana Ashraf Ali Thanvi's *Bihisti Zevar* (Heavenly Ornaments) is one of the most widely circulated text about proper behavior of Muslim women. Nazir Ahmed wrote *Miratul-Urus* (Mirror of the Bride), a treatise on the need to make women better citizens so that they can become better wives. Mostly literature of this nature was addressed to making women more rooted in their 'traditions' and resisting any change that would give them more freedom and liberty."These texts became vehicles for ideas on domesticity and women's roles. Handbooks and novels were filled with suggestions for household management and advice on relating to one's in-laws. The publishing of these manuals from the late nineteenth century onward confirmed the Muslim community's need to regain influence over daily life in the face of colonial encroachment. As the seeds for a separatist Muslim state were

being planted in such institutions, a different set of identity politics for the improvement of Muslim women emerged. The Muslim home became a socio-political space where India's largest sub-community could preserve a unique sense of cultural specificity. At the centre of this home was the figure of the Muslim housewife. The Muslim housewife was the perpetuator of cultural values and tradition, and the visible marker of difference through the practice of veiling and gender segregation."[31]This literature was in a way used as a tool to shape the subjectivities of women by feeding them with a forced identity. It was the women who had to continue being the repositories of cultural values and customs so that the male members would feel that their resistance to the colonial practices of 'reforming' had been successful.[32]

As briefly referred to in the first chapter the discussion on various prescriptive writings for women, I shall have a detailed discussion here about the reform within the Muslim home by male writers and see how Mastoor's characterization of women defied such constructions. As discussed above there was an emphasis of the construction of the British woman and her critical skills to maintain a systematic home. Some Muslim reformers like Deputy Nazir Ahmed who while being traditionalists and believers in upholding the moral fabric of the society also were influenced by the skills of colonialists in maintaining their homes in a systematic manner. Nazir Ahmed appreciated the disciplined system but what he did not appreciate was the freedom that it promised for women. He looked at home as a state

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[31] Judith E.Walsh. *Domesticity in Colonial India: What Women Learnt When Men Gave Them Advice*, Lanham, MD: Rowan and Little Field Publishers, 2004, p.52.

[32] Although it was writers like Ismat Chugtai who responded to such literature through her writing and discussing the intimate issues of domesticity by putting the agency of women at the centre. Her writing contested the so called 'good Muslim woman' behavior and brought forth the issues of intimacy, desire, sex and freewill that women did exercise within the private sphere of home. This disrupting of the notion of 'pure sexless Muslim woman' was taken ahead by various other writers like Khatija Mastoor who also portrayed how women resisted these didactic harangues of the men of the community. The control of body through controlling the physical movement of women is very subtly portrayed in *Aangan*.

and believed that the best way to run its affairs was to run it like a state is run; with control, discipline, organization and order. Since the public was under the control of British, private had to be reclaimed and kept under control. The onus of organizing and running the home systematically while upholding tradition was on the woman of the house. She was responsible for managing of the private space with regularity. She was responsible for keeping the Muslim culture alive and preserve the Muslim identity. Any failure on her part to do so will result in discord and lead to erasure of Muslim culture, identity and loss of civilizational identity.[33] Shahida Lateef argues that although Muslim consciousness in India was not monolithic considering the practices differed regionally, it was imperative to construct one single image in order to feed into the image of a common identity that cuts across. For this construction Islam was important since religion also was an organising principle in Muslim nationalism as articulated in two nation theory, women's insertion into this was essential. "Notions such as the Muslim identity, Muslim society, Muslim culture and Muslim feminity are obviously nationalist essentialisms designed to homogenize diverse communities and erase the difference that was now being perceived as a threat to the emerging Muslim nationalism based on religion…women's insertion into the newly emergent Indian Muslim nationalism was problematic and riddled with contradictions. They had to be allowed to be nationals or citizen of the Muslim nation or state but their roles had to be kept apart from those of male nationals and citizens, otherwise the differences between Muslim women and those of the colonizing or Hindu women would disappear thereby dissolving the boundaries and distinctions so central to the nationalist project."[34]

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[33]Saigol , *The Pakistan Project*, pp.47-75.

[34] Shahida Lateef, *Muslim Women in India, Political and Private Realities, 1890s-1980s*, New Delhi, Kali for Women, 1990, pp 17-18.

Thus the relation between home and nation and women being its guardians was set very clearly. For this purpose Muslim women had to be taught the art of preserving the sacred space of home away from the gaze of outsiders for the Muslim nation and identity to hold together at all costs. For this purpose, reformers came up with guide books. Nazir Ahmed's *Miratu-ul-Urus*[35] demands some space here to put in the textual concerns in context and elucidate how Khatija Mastoor gave voice to women who defied such imposition. The central character of the novel, Aghari, is an embodiment of middle class values who walks into a family after her marriage and changes the family entirely by making it get rid of undesirable habits and qualities that its inhabitants possessed. She comes across a woman who takes the affairs of the home in her own hands and makes sure that the family stays well knit. Her sister Akbari is the opposite of Asghari, a 'home breaker' and a disorderly woman who whose life stays unhappy unlike her sister who enjoys 'marital bliss'. The tone of the novel is throughout moralizing with emphasis on how Asghari's moral education saves the family. Asghari is an example of a good mother, daughter, wife who possesses the 'female virtues' of subservience, patience, docility, chastity, love, care, respect for elders and above all as someone who honours her husband and never argues or quarrels with him. The wife has to respect the husband and never make the mistake of considering herself his equal. The disregard for husband is the end of marital bliss and beginning of misery for a woman and for her home. Husband has no role to play when it comes to initiating the discord, it is only the woman who is responsible for any disorder in the home so she needs to be wary of any such influences that take her way from respecting order. This split binary image of "woman as goddess/whore, Eve/Mary, mother /prostitute that seems to form a part of all

[35] Nazir Ahmed, *The Bride's Mirror: a Tale of Life in Delhi a Hundred Years Ago* ,New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2004, p. 72.

patriarchal societies appears in *Meerat-ul-Uroos* as Akbari the destroyer and Asghari the creator…The breaking of home is social, cultural, and national disruption, disunity and discord; the making of the home is the making of the strong, united and single nation."[36]

For Muslim reformers the emphasis on marriage and accepting the choices by the family was considered important for the family to function. The 'true Muslim woman' was one who shared this responsibility and accepted the moral codes of self control and obedience. Women who listened to their heart and not their mind were the ideal women since 'mind is related to masculinity.'[37] The feelings of love, romance as adjunct to marriage and any emergence of liking towards new idea of family was considered a serious breach.

While the male reformers were constructing specific Muslim identity, Muslim female writers were exploring woman's subjectivity through their writings and giving voice to contrasting images of women who contested, avoided or reconfigured the image of a good Muslim woman. These writings were a space for female desire and a voice to altering desires as well. Marriage and the choice of avoiding marriage occupy a significant position in *Aangan* as well. There is a deep normative practice related to marriages however in this novel it seems to be challenged especially by the female characters. Tehmina's mother is strictly against marriage of her daughter with Safdar even when they are deeply in love:

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[36] Saigol, *The Pakistan Project*, p.74.

[37] Susan M. Cruea, "Changing Ideals of Womanhood During the Nineteenth Century Woman Movement", *General Studies Writing Faculty Publications*, Paper 1, 2005.

This lowly Safdar's father was a farmer's son. His father and grandfather worked on your grandfather's land. They would also do household work here. Although your grandfather was known for his Zamindari arrogance, he was always polite to Safdar's father…Safdar will come to this house as a groom only over my dead body.[38]

This also highlights a significant aspect of how Muslim families were clinging on to some semblance of 'order' and that order had to be kept through not letting the hierarchies within collapse. Even when the freedom struggle espoused values like rights and dignity, inside the home the struggle to maintain the power within certain quarters was also going on. The order within meant to cling to old patterns of social exclusion and social discrimination. Tehmina's mother is a contradiction in terms because she supports the British and her brother who is married to an English woman, but at the same time in her house she wants things to be according to the tradition. For her, Safdar's presence is antithesis of tradition and his marriage with her daughter would be an end to the order in her home.

At a later stage after Tehmina's death when Safdar proposes Aaliya, her mother reacts in a similar fashion humiliating Safdar and reminding him of his lowly origins; "How dare you come here? Why have you come here? Stop following us. Everything is over now, what do you want now?"[39] Aaliya responds to her mother with rage and determination that she had decided that she would marry Safdar and no one could stop her. This particular scene is very significant in terms of the evolution of Aaliya's character. Aaliya unlike Champa from *Aag ka Darya* who is also a middle class Muslim woman does not experiment with life or evolve into something else through her interaction with the outside world. The dynamics of life is exclusively contingent

[38] Mastoor, *Aangan*, p.46.

[39] Ibid.,p. 350.

upon her interaction with her family members. Champa's emancipation towards the end comes when she finds herself back in the world of her family members. She feels she belongs in the narrow alleys and corridors of Lucknow where she could live her life without pretending to be what she is not. The character of Aaliya on the other hand goes through the opposite. From the beginning she is constructed as someone who understands the ruptures and feels how things are falling apart, but she never finds her voice to speak against these practices. Towards the very end of the novel, she finally speaks out against her mother who she never stood against. Her decision to marry Safdar and then not to marry him is an evidence of her independence and freedom from the pressures of conformity. The 'freedom' for India brings about her freedom as well. Her sacrificing nature of putting up with struggles inside the family was not needed anymore. Partition was done, their family was divided. It had fallen apart and she had nothing to lose now. She is able to assert herself once the confines of the home break away around her. Partition becomes empowering for her in how she is able to step outside and follow her heart. She volunteers at the refugee camp for her services against the wishes of her mother who is still steeped deep in feudal snobbery and doesn't want Aaliya to work. Aaliya also rejects the marriage proposal of a doctor at the camp and decides to never marry. Her emancipation comes from the ruptures of family once she is free from the 'social and familial expectations'.[40]

Chammi, the rabble-rouser of the house is in a way the opposite of Aaliya. She has never had formal education nor lived the life of comfort that Aaliya once had lived before the political turmoil started. She lived at her uncle's place because her mother had expired and her father had married three times and lived with his third wife. Her

[40] Bodh Prakash, *Writing partition: Aesthetics and Ideology in Hindi and Urdu Literature*, Pearson Education India, 2009.

tough life had made her bitter but resilient She was a woman of her own and did not fear to speak out. Although she is exploited at the hands of Najma pufi, who mistreats her

because she is illiterate, Chammi understands the importance of living one's life on one's own terms. Although she is married off in a far away village to keep her away from the political engagements, towards the very end she again expresses her agency when she refuses to leave India and go to Pakistan with her husband. Chammi's forced marriage is an evidence of how marriage is used to control choice, in her case it was controlling her political choice, and snatching away her agency to express her opinion. Chammi's uncle acts as the patriarch who is responsible for the discipline within the family and if the women of the family try to break the regime and question the patriarch, they need to be stopped. Men are not the nurturers of the family, that role is with the woman and that is why when she tries to step away from that role and step into a territory that is out of bounds for her, she is thrust back into the nurturing territory by way of marrying her into one. The women belong to the 'inner sanctum' and any move towards challenging this accommodation needs to be addressed and eradicated.[41]

Najma Bua's character stands out in her courage to resist the normative definitions of marriage and the constraints the family tries to impose on her. An M.A English Literature from Aligarh University she doesn't engage with the family and is always busy reading. When it comes to marriage, she doesn't let them decide for her. In fact,

[41] Deniz Kandiyoti in her work on Muslim women argues that Muslim societies had to grapple with the emergence of formation of new nation states and within that framework women's position and their rights became debatable and cultural nationalism increased. See Deniz kandiyoti, 'Women, Islam and the State', *Middle East Report*, No. 173, Gender and Politics (Nov. - Dec., 1991), pp. 9-14

one day she casually announces that she has found a match for her. After announcing she casually walks away with her book.

> Where is Badey Bhaya? … He is the guest room… you want me to call him?...Yes Bade Bhaya… I want to tell you that I have chosen a life partner for myself…I just wanted to inform you. (Saying this she walks away while the rest of them are stunned)

When Badi Chachi says she will start the arrangements for her wedding, Najma Bua retorts:

> What arrangements are you talking about? Do you think I am Chammi, you would call women to sing and dance and arrange my dowry... I am my own dowry, I am educated… I will do the nikah in summer and go and stay in Shimla![42]

Deniz Kandiyoti in her work on marriage and motherhood in Muslim society discusses how under classic patriarchy "girls are given away in marriage into households headed by their husbands or fathers. There they are subordinate not only to all men but also to the more senior women, especially their mother-in-law…These patriarchal bargains exert a powerful influence on the shaping of women's gendered subjectivity and determine the nature of gender ideology in different contexts. They also influence both the potential for and specific forms of women's active or passive resistance in the face of their oppression. Moreover, patriarchal bargains are not timeless or immutable entities, but are susceptible to historical transformations that open up new areas of struggle and renegotiation of the relations between genders."[43]The characters like Najma in these novel expose such practices and resist patriarchal control of women's bodies, desires and choices in significant socio-historical moments. Also with so much of resistance against the English on part of

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[42] Mastoor, *Aangan*, p.151.

[43] Deniz Kandiyoti , "Bargaining with Patriarchy." *Gender and Society*, Vol 2.No 3, Special Issue to Honour Jessie Bernard (September,1988) .p.275.

certain Muslim reformers, what the novel also exposes is the hypocrisy of the patriarchal moral system where the focus was and still is only on the so called reformation of Muslim women.

Boundaries Within: Broken Relations

This intrusion of politics into the lives of people and their homes brings forth the permeability and interplay of national and domestic, the interaction of national question and the personal lives of people. It foregrounds the blurring of the boundary between public and private and also a tussle to strive for those boundaries to remain intact. Thus it is not just a war on borders far away from the serenity that home is supposed to provide but countless borders that are drawn inside of the homes. Home then becomes a site of producing and reproducing subject positions and ideologies. These ideologies get expressed through personal relationship and the ruptures in these relations. Through the framework of family and home what gets highlighted is the fact that the political battles are fought not just on the outside but intimately within the private and 'safe' space of home. In the private home portrayed in the text the relationships are very much a result of the political process outside of the home. The members of the family are divided according to their political affiliations. Home then doesn't just stay a place providing safety, shelter and love but translates into a space, a space that is constantly shifting, expanding and shrinking.[44]

Aaliya's parents have difficulty getting along because of their different political loyalties. While her mother never gets tired of praising her *foreign bhabhi*, her father is strongly averse towards all such relationships that she tries to forge. One incident

[44]Rosemary Marangoly George asks a significant question about the alliance of nation and home and the circumstances under which home shrinks to denote the private territory and expands to denote the larger nation. I draw from her argument and state that the shrinking and expanding has a bearing on the personal relationships inside the home and that is where ideologies emerge.

explicitly foregrounds the cracks in their relationship. One day when she invites her sister-in-law over tea she expects her husband to be present there but he deliberately misses the occasion:

> Now you are back? Don't you think that she did not understand that you remained away on purpose…She came to our house despite being a White woman and you…look at you! You don't seem to care…you will be set right once she reports that you disrespected her… I tell you this one last time, like I say repeatedly…There are no better rulers but English, if it were up to our own people they would have butchered each other for their gains.
>
> Gone are the times when one would shiver at the mention of a White officer… Well, if I can't resist them physically, can't I even hate them? ...Not just these traders (Referring to East India company), I hate their entire race… I want them out of here… I would have smashed her face if it were up to me[45].

The conversation between husband and wife brings forth two things; the political sides that both have chosen are permeating into the personal relationship and the consequent cracks in the relationship due to the varying ideological stances of the husband and the wife. The personal boundaries get redrawn and people themselves become sites of conflicting positions and ideologies.

Hearing the conversation of her parents and realizing the consequence of such tension between their parents Tehmina, Aaliya's sister breaks down and starts crying:"Why don't they understand it affects us…I don't want to hear this all the time…why do they fight so much?"As the days go by the things change slowly and dramatically. Aaliya's father gets more engrossed in the political life, forgetting totally about his family. The guest room which had an entry from outside of the house becomes his abode:

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[45] Mastoor, *Aangan*, p.37.

> Abba would spend his evenings and nights in the *baithak*, his friends would keep dropping in and their discussions would never end… mother would be tired of passing endless flasks of tea and keep talking to herself in anger and desperation…Aaliya often out of curiousity would take a peek at the people in *baithak* …Nehru, Jinah, Gandhi etc was all that she would hear...They would all speak against the British occupation. When Abba would see her standing near the door, he would motion her to go from there and she would feel sad and leave the place and get nostalgic about their old house which had birds and farm and peace.[46]

Aaliya's mother would wait for her husband for hours before going to bed but he would never care for her. After his political meetings with his friends, he would dash to some other friend's place to discuss matters that he considered more important. She would while away her time by cursing herself and praising her brother who according to her made the right choice by accepting and not fighting the British. He represented for her a realistic approach towards life while as her husband was an idealist to her, who was only bringing doom to the family by compromising their life over the life of his nation.

The relationship of husband and wife had one more reason to go sour. Safdar, the son of a 'lowly' farmer and Aaliya's aunt is never treated as an equal in the family. He is constantly reminded of his peasantry lineage and mistreated especially by Aaliya's mother. She keeps humiliating him for no fault of his. When he is sent to Aligarh for seeking education, she gets further angry at her husband and their relationship becomes even bitterer:

> Instead of throwing him out of this place he is sending him off to get education and make him independent. This lowly bastard should have been thrown away long back… Now he wants to

[46] Ibid., p.43.

empower him by educating him…May he never return to this house… he is a blotch on the escutcheon of this family!

He is my sister's son and he is not lowly… what about your brother who married a white woman. He spat on our entire nation… You never know, what are the chances that your sister-in-law is not from a lowly peasant family?…May be she is a *Bhangi*!

She has the power to send you to prison!

That *Bhangi* will send me to prison.[47]

The Husband and wife stopped talking to each other after this incident and Abba would spend more time outside with his friends. The relationship of husband and wife was determined by the affiliations that they had. Abba valued his commitment for his nation and gave no importance to the matters of his family. Their disagreements regarding loyalty to different kinds of politics and desire for different things in life suggests that relationships inside of home are not bound by love, as is presumed, but depend on the political choices that people make. Home is not a neutral and an apolitical space. Rosemary George comments that the relationships within home are "learnt, built, rebuilt, created and forgotten".[48] Political disjuncture disrupts these seemingly connections and creates borders between people. The domestic sphere is not safe from the external threats. Although the women of the house never leave the walls of the house but each of them is affected in myriad ways by the interaction of political affiliations of the members. Tehmina is deeply disturbed by the constant fighting between her parents over matters that she thinks are insignificant. She does not understand why being British or Indian would create a cleavage in the relationship of her parents:

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[47] Ibid.,p.37.

[48]Rosemary Marangoly George, *The Politics of Home: Postcolonial Relocations and Twentieth Century Fiction*, University of California Press, 1999. pp.11-34.

Aapa's face was getting pale and she was looking very somber. As the days passed she became more serious. Her love for her father was abundant but it would upset her immensely that her parents were drifting apart.

"Abba you don't come home often, and when you do you, you don't speak to us much

Your mother made me drift away… you know everything

Your mother never understood me… she never supported me in anything… only if I were strong like my brother I would have changed everything… I am helpless though.

Abba you are neck deep in hating the English and have forgotten your family, you don't understand love anymore. You only understand politics; your politics has separated you from your family.[49]

Aaliya's father is imprisoned and charged with a life sentence when he attacks a British officer. Aaliya along with her mother goes to their uncle's place. Her uncle's place is not different from her own home in terms of how she witnesses the same deep divisions and same bitterness between the members of the family. Much like Aaliya's father, her uncle is also deep in political activity and the relationships inside the home are determined in accordance with the political affiliations of the members. The relationship between Aaliya's uncle and aunt is not different from her parents. Her uncle is always away and the family finds it difficult to hold it together. He does not acknowledge the problems and difficulties of the family and every time he would say, 'When we get freedom, everything will be settled'. To him life revolved around his work for the Congress party;

Badey Chacha lived in his own world… He was so deeply committed to the ideology of Congress that even a gathering of only Muslims would infuriate him. To him everyone who did not subscribe to ideology of Congress was a traitor. He married off his daughter to a very

[49]Mastoor, *Aangan*, p.72.

ordinary Congress worker, just because he was in agreement with his ideas. Since then she has been making dung cakes with her four children in that house. The alliance was made purely on the basis of political ideology with no attention to the meager resources that the family had… Bade Chahcha was too occupied to look around for a decent guy for his daughter. To him there could have never been a better person that one who upholds the ideology of the national congress. ..However now he did not care for his daughter or visited her since her husband stopped working for the political party and got too occupied with his family. *Badey Chacha* has forgotten his daughter.[50]

Badey Chacha is a devoted nationalist to the extent that his son Jameel who has a government job does not get along with his father. The tension between father and son illustrates the gap between the two generations of past and present. While Bade Chacha is steeped deep in the memory of a unified nation and the glory of the past, Jamil is more of a practical person with a desire to change his life for good. He hopes for the creation of Pakistan to lead a better life although towards the end he decides against migrating. Jameel and his father do not look eye to eye with each other. For Jameel his father is a naïve sentimentalist who is unable to notice the discrimination that the Muslims face and the suspicion with which they are seen. He is conscious of the identity conflict of Muslims within the society and wants his father to leave working for the Congress. For his father Congress is his religion and he swears by secularism and upholding the interests of the country ahead of everything else. He despises people, even his close kin as well who do not subscribe to his political ideology.

Bade Chacha had made it clear that he will get his food cooked separately and not with the ration that Jameel gets… Jameel has accepted being a slave by taking up a job with the

[50] Ibid.,p.95.

government. I would not even let him spend a single penny on me… I had no idea that Jamil, my blood, my own son would be my enemy.[51]

Mastoor also brings forth the hypocrisy of the Muslim society by highlighting the practice of keeping mistresses by Muslim landlords. Aaliya's grandfather had an illegitimate son, Asrar who stayed with the family and took care of the shop that Bade Chacha owned. Asrar mian, as he was called is always treated like dirt by the family so much so that even the maid servant of the family does not acknowledge his existence. His position is like Safdar's who was treated as an outcaste by Aaliya's mother. Safdar found an escape by going to Aligarh but 'Asrar mian' had no such escape. The feudal culture where hierarchies were rigid and sexist practices were unquestioned is very subtly illustrated through the characters of Asrar and Safdar. When Aaliya's mother keeps cursing her aunt for marrying a farmer, it perturbs Aaliya. Her grandfather was never criticized for keeping a mistress and raising an illegitimate son in his home. She asks her mother:

"Why do they blame women… why don't they ever blame these men who equally commit wrong with these women…That is how it is, Aaliya! Men like women only if they are like puppets…Men are not blamed, now don't ask me questions![52]

Aaliya does not resist or rebel like Chammi who is very vocal about the choices that she wants to make. She loves her uncle but also realizes the miserable position that he had put his family into. She is emblematic of those women who stood up and exercised their agency and made their choices despite being silenced. Chammi is an illiterate woman and has had no education at all. She has been ill treated in the family. Her education has happened inside the family through her interactions with people

[51] Mastoor, *Aangan*, p.110.

[52] Ibid.,p. 297.

inside the house. Her subjectivity evolves inside the confines of her home and she vociferously fights for her position to be appreciated. In contrast to Aliya, who never speaks but just ponders and waits for things to change Chammi makes an effort to work for the changes that she wants to see:

> Aliya loved all the characters in these books. She had admiration for all the sacrifices that they had made for the country but she feared them too. She strongly believed that such people can never love anyone ... these people get married, have children and ruin them forever. They do not belong to their home… they do not think of their family members as human, they are like thorns that make them bleed. Amma, Badi Chachi, Tehmina, Kusum Aapa were all an example in front of her…her childhood had passed away far too quickly since her fears and sadness had made her mature before time.[53]

What is also demonstrated in the text is the constant expectation from women to behave in a traditional manner even when the social and political forces were altering. It articulates how Muslim women resisted or accepted the constraints placed on them by their families and communities. Ann McClintock's reading of family as an organizing social principle contributes to this discussion. She discusses about how the family offered an "indispensable figure for sanctioning social hierarchy within a putative organic unity of interests. Since the subordination of woman to man and child to adult was deemed natural fact, other forms of social hierarchy could be depicted in familial terms to guarantee social difference as a category of nature. The family image was thus drawn on to the figure hierarchy within unity as an organic element of

[53] Ibid.,p. 170.

historical progress and thereby became indispensable for legitimizing exclusion and hierarchy within non-familial (affiliative) social formations such as nationalism"[54].

Sexist and paternalistic attitude of Bade Chahcha towards Chammi explicates this point. He indulges in politics but does not allow Chammi to express her political choices. Chammi, a strong supporter of Muslim League is often humiliated and hated by most of the family members for being so vocal about her choices. The writer also sheds light on how families fall apart because of the political engagements of the family heads who were supposed to take care of their family. Mastoor is also hinting upon the failure of patriarchal society to provide for their families. Bade Chahcha cannot stand Chammi's support for the Muslim League. In her conversation with Aliya Chaami says:

"Baji, we are organizing a protest demonstration on behalf of Muslim League, please do come.

But Badey Chacha will not like it, Chammi, don't annoy him. You can stay a supporter of the League without being so vocal about it.

Who is he to get annoyed? It is my choice, do I stop him from supporting those Kafirs (congress).

But how does your Muslim League supporter end your problems?

It is not that Baji, I am a Muslim and it is my duty to support the League… I will give my life for the League, baji! He is not even ashamed of himself, he supports these *kafirs* like Nehru and Gandhi and then observes the holy month of Ramazan too![55]

One day when Chammi is busy shouting slogans against the Congress, *Badey Chacha* comes out and scolds her. He even resorts to physical assault;

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[54] A McClintock, "Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism and the Family", *Feminist Review*, No, 44, 1993,pp.61-80.

[55] Mastoor, *Aangan*, p.103.

"*Kashi mai Tulsi boi, sub bakriyan char gayi/ Gandhi Nehru Matam karo, Kashi ki mayya mar gayi*!

Please ask her to shut up. There are men sitting in the *baithak*, what would they think? Why is he bothered, I am singing in my own room, this is my *territory*…. And yes, if they hear it, it is good they should know that all the people in this house are not *kafir*.

(At this point badey chacha comes out of the room fuming and slaps Chammi)

You *Jahi*l, just because I don't say anything, you take undue advantage of this *freedom*.[56]

When she does not relent she is forcefully married off in a faraway village. Using marriage as a way to control and hinder choices of Chammi is illustrative of defying and oppressing women who challenge the normative definition of womanhood. Marriage and familial reproduction become the ways by which women are constrained from the behavior which seems to violate taboos and moral codes of the community. The hypocrisy of men who fought for freedom outside the home and denied the very same freedom to their women is explicated by this incident This incident also highlights how men think of themselves as "responsible for maintaining political and public order – to overwrite chaos – so females are responsible for echoing this in the home, providing refuge from the perceived struggles of the marketplace in a space of harmony and rigid organization."[57]

Also, Jameel's confrontation with his father post this incident brings out the double standards of those men who wanted their women to observe *pardah* and remain within the confines of home while they were shouting for liberty and freedom:

"But why did you slap her? You could have tried to talk to her, you could have ignored her insolent behavior! But how could you slap her for expressing her opinions.

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[56] Ibid.,p.148.

[57] Sara Upstone, *Spatial Politics in the Postcolonial Novel*, Ashgate Books, UK, 2009.p.118.

When you people can't even give other people the freedom to think, how would you free this country from the shackles of occupation? And even if you succeed what sort of freedom would it be for other people who do not agree with your views?

Sahib zadey, you don't mix family matters with politics. *This is very personal* and has nothing to do with the freedom of my beloved country! Don't be too arrogant about your wisdom and intellect!

Abba, you don't talk about my intellect. If it were up to you I would have been a *jahil*...You have always been too busy with your political engagements…Please tell me if you can't handle this one small family and provide for it, how would you manage an entire country!...*Wah*! Isn't it amazing that you are running this one home for establishing many other homes of this country![58]

For Abba family is very personal in terms of maintaining control over it. It does not interact with his political matters which he believes to be public. In fact Abba's attitude is evidence of how home turns into an Empire itself in terms of replicating the same regimes of discipline and demands of loyalty to the ruler. With home and outside so "readily exchanging positions, each site can potentially borrow from the disciplinary regime of the other, its systems of coercion and blandishment, punishment and reward."[59] In her work on Home as a functional socio literary concept Rosemary George states that imagining a Home is as political as imagining a nation. She insists that literature looking at home should not think of it as an exclusively private space but as imagined in fiction home is a desire that is fulfilled or denied in varying measure to the subjects constructed by the narrative. As such 'home moves on several axes. She further says that "the basic organizing principle around which the notion of 'home' is built is a pattern of select inclusions and exclusions. Home is a

[58]Mastoor,*Aangan*, p.150.

[59] Aparajita Sagar, Homes and Postcoloniality, *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*, Volume 6, Number 2, Fall, 1997, pp 237-251 (Review)

way of establishing difference. Homes and home-countries are exclusive. Home, along with gender/ sexuality, race and class, acts as an ideological determinant of the subject…Home is built on select inclusions grounded in a learned sense of kinship that is extended to those who are perceived as sharing the same blood, race, class, gender or religion. Membership is maintained by love, fear, power, desire and control."[60]

This novel subtly brings forth the perceptions of freedom and its meaning for men and women. Freedom did not mean similar things to everyone. It wasn't just the freedom from the political oppression but also the freedom to lead normal lives. Aaliya keeps thinking about freedom of India only how it would help her family lead a normal life:

"She keeps praying in her heart… God let this country be free so that Bade Chacha comes back to his home and lies beside Badi Chachi every night and talks to her, asks about Chammi's wellbeing, writes to Sajida aapa to invite her home.. Finds a bride for Jameel bhaya and find Shakeel and get him home"[61]

At other places Aaliya thinks :

How do ambitions overpower a person so much that he forgets everything even his family…Bade Chacha is nobody's father, nobody's husband… He sent Chammi to Lanka with Ravan and Sajida aapa left this Haveli to make cow dung cakes… Shakeel has left the family and Jameel setting the fire in her mother's chest has gone to put out the fire of fascism.[62]

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[60] George, *The Politics of* Home, p.2.

[61] Mastoor, *Aangan*, p.174.

[62] Ibid.p.242.

Home and Nation; National and Familial

Beth Baron in her work discusses the writing of nationalism, and the relationship between gendered images of nation and the politics of women nationalists. Nationalist narratives she says have been mostly written by elites who portray the history of nation with a 'shared understanding of past' with no fractures or differences between various groups or identities who were participants in that process. In such exercise forgetting becomes crucial and deliberate since any narrative that expresses dissent or is contrary to what the elite nationalist historians want to project is suppressed to give an image of uniform collectivity with similar interests. Baron argues that most of the narratives about nation building are done neatly than the actual event itself. It is to promote unity that the counter narratives are silenced and marginalized. The narratives that are silenced are often those that belong to underrepresented groups, lower class, minorities and women.[63]

The character of Kusum in *Aangan* brings forth one significant question about the relationship of women and nation building. Her husband leaves to fight for the country for the sake of his 'motherland' and for her '*izzat*'. He willingly sacrifices his family for the greater family that is his country and his 'motherland'. He feels greater responsibility towards the country than his own family:

> When I got married I was around fourteen or fifteen. Only three months into the new relationship, my husband went to Amritsar. He wanted to take part in Jaliawala Bagh protest. His parents stopped him but he only laughed at them… I couldn't say a word. I could only see the movement of his feet from under my *ghoonghat*. He would often say that he loved me a

[63] Beth Baron, *Egypt as Woman: Nationalism, Gender and Politics*, University of California Press, 2005.

lot but when he made his decision to go, he never asked my opinion. ..He left with a smile on his face and never returned. I got tired waiting for him.

If he loved me, would he have left me like this...Where would I go now with all this love in my heart for him? He never loved me…He only loved his country!

Kaun gali gayo sham, batadey koi/kasha dhoonda , Bnhandra doonda/

gokul mai ho gayi sham, batadey koi/kaun gali gayo sham, batadey koi

(Where did my Sham go, someone tell me/ I searched in Kashi and Bandhra

I wandered in Gokul. Someone tell me where is my Shaam)[64]

Through Kusum, Mastoor questions the idea of uniformity of love for nation and the images of sacrificing mothers and wives who give away their sons and husbands happily for the nation building[65]. Women like Kusum have no agency in such decisions and stay at the fringes of the narratives that hail contribution of women towards their nation. The practice of away giving sons and sacrificing husbands at the altar of nationalism that so much literature is devoted to is brought to question by portraying such experiences. In fact the uniformity is created to hide such cracks that women like Kusum represent. When the independence is announced, Jamil's mother laments in a similar fashion;

You got your freedom, people got their Pakistan …now please bring my sons back to me, save my family from this ruin.[66]

The trope of family and kinship idioms is rampant throughout nationalist narratives across cultures of the world. The use of family idiom conveys the 'emotive power' of

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[64]Ibid.,p.57.

[65]As literature about nation building often discusses women's responsibility as bearing children for making the nation strong and contributing to it. These mothers, wives are often portrayed as proud and sacrificing their won for the greater good of the nation. The classic mother India would even kill her son for her nation.

[66] Mastoor, *Aangan*, p.305.

nationalism. By invoking the familial bonds and relations across ethnicity, nationalism created a feeling of a connection or a relation between people who were otherwise not connected to each other. The nation becomes a family, a household comprising of large numbers of family members where each member was a part of the bigger family but not necessarily in control of the family, since a very few elites were at the helm of affairs. "The nation, according to its proponents, was one family descended from the same roots with shared blood. Young men, the foot soldiers of the nation, were its 'sons' and young girls became its 'daughters'. At the head of the nationalist movement generally loomed a dominating 'father' figure or group of 'founding fathers'. Along with family, the image of nation as mother was prevalent in such discourses. Literatures about nations and nationalism profusely use this mother imagery to invoke passions and loyalty of the people. Women also use this image to make their entry into the political circles of the country. Indira Gandhi, Winnie Mandela and Safiya Zaghlul became the mothers of India, South Africa and Egypt respectively"[67].

'Mothers of nation' are biological and cultural reproducers of nation while men became the protectors of these 'mothers'. Discussions about family idioms and maternal imagery are a universal component of discourses around nationalism and cut across movements, whether anti-colonial or indigenous movements. Beth Baron cautions us to understand the uniform message that the use of familial idiom would send across cultures since the notion of family and family structure varied inside and across the cultures of Egypt. However in cultures like Indian subcontinent where the modern notion of family is based on heterosexual relationship, such idioms end up further reinforcing the hierarchy and gender difference: "Familial metaphors could be

[67]Baron, Egypt as a Woman, p. 5.

used to reinforce, or undermine, family hierarchies based on age and gender. Maternal, paternal and fraternal jargon had different echoes in households of varying sizes and shapes. Members of household made up of multiple wives or concubines, a few generations, and grown siblings would have understood the meaning of family differently by men and women".[68] Ann McClintock shares a similar perspective about the usage of familial idiom and states that "the family trope is important in at least two ways. First, the family offers a 'natural' figure for sanctioning social *hierarchy* within a putative organic *unity* of interests. Second, it offers a 'natural' trope for figuring historical *time*…The 'family' offered an indispensable metaphoric figure by which hierarchical (and one might add, often contradictory) social distinctions could be shaped into single *historical* genesis…The family as a metaphor offered a single genesis narrative for national history, while at the same time, the family as an institution became void of history"[69]. Neluka Silva in her discussions on constructs of the nation shares a similar concern about the process of unification across differences that nationalism tries to dissolve. "On the one hand, in its utopian form, nationalism strives towards the liberationist and progressive ideals of the Enlightenment to evolve a collective identity within communities or cultural systems which share certain commonalities. On the other hand, it's overwhelming desire to unify people can lead to such extreme forms of hegemony as xenophobia, ethnic chauvinism and, at the extreme end of continuum genocide. The legitimating meta-narrative of the Nation conflates ethnic, gender, class and caste contours. This

[68] Ibid.

[69]Anne McClintock, "No Longer in a Future Heaven: Gender, Race and Nationalism" *in Dangerous Liasons*: *Gender, Nation and Postcolonial Perspectives*, (eds)Anne AcClintock, Aamir Mufti, Ella Shohat, University of Minnesota Press, Fourth Edition,2004, P.91.

legitimization involves the imposition of over-determining marker, or a dominant set of markers, which render the Nation tenable at any given historical moment"[70].

For women like Kusum then nationalism represents one thing; loss of her husband and end of a normal life for her. When she speaks to Tehmina she exhorts, 'Why did he not think about me? What is this family called nation?" Her question before she commits suicide in exemplifies the concern that how nationalism is not unitary and often at such times when nation, family, sacrifice for the motherland, such tropes are invoked many different experiences and questions are not woven into it [71]. For women then such nationalism becomes a burden, a burden in some cases like Kusum's too much to bear.

Love in the Times of Wars

In the backdrop of the looming violence and uncertainty the canvas of these texts is filled with stories of love, requited and unrequited. In *Aangan* many love stories unfold in the closed walls of a Muslim household. Through this kind of fiction the writer is trying to create a space for personal desires in the times of political crisis. Such stories "actively sought to disentangle the language of sexual relations from the language of politics and, in doing so, introduced a new form of political power."[72] Such stories take the narrative away from the political world run by men. The authority that these novels give to women shapes a space to explore women's subjectivity though within a confined domain. Through the domain of desire and

[70]Neluka Silva, *The Gendered Nation: Contemporary Writings from South Asia*, Sage Publications, New Delhi/Thousand Oaks/London, 2004.

[71] Neil Lazarus, Postcolonialism and the Dilema of Nationalism: Aijaz ahmed's Critique of Third Worldism. *Diaspora : A Journal of Transnational Studies*, Volume 2, Number 3, Winter,1993

[72] Nancy Armstrong, " Introduction: The Politics of Domesticating Culture Then and Now" in *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1987.

courtship, the reigns of power and kinship are put into question which metaphorically questions the larger politics of deciding the fate of a population with them on the fringes of the decision making. The political history is put in focus by representation of changing household and the relevance of women to historical moments .This kind of fiction "concentrates on conflicts within the female character, between her innate desires and the role she was destined to occupy. Contained within a field where gender assumed priority over the signs of one's region, religious sect, and political faction, the domestic woman and her demonic "other" posed a psychological opposition." [73]

The fist love story that we encounter is of Tehmina and Safdar. The *Heena* tree that Tehmina waters everyday is the symbol of her desire for Safdar. Both are in love with each other and have the support of Tehmina's father but Tehmina's mother is dead against the match for Safdar does not come from grand lineage. The story has a tragic end when Tehimna's marriage is arranged and Safdar is sent to Aligarh. On the day of wedding he sends a letter to the family wherein he states that even if Tehmina is married to someone else, she would always belong to him. This turns out to be a scandal in the family and when Tehmina gets to know about how Safdar professed his love for her, she is unable to resist the pain and commits suicide. Thus Safdar and Tehmina do not realize their ideal of love. Tehmina's dead body within the house becomes a metaphorical extension of the language that she could not speak through words. Her extreme step to take away her life was symbolic of her resistance and unwillingness to adhere to procedures thrust upon her in order to preserve the clerical mentality (of religious leaders) of her family especially her mother. She takes her life

[73] Ibid.,p.253.

to contest how her desirability was not understood because she did not aspire for fortune or family name.

While Tehmina dies of love for a 'lowly peasant' who is not approved by her mother, Rakshanda in *Mere bhi Sanam Khane* faces a different struggle where she cannot decide between her cousin, Khursheed who loves her and Anwar who does not agree with her politics. She is torn between choosing to forget Khursheed who had revolutionary ideas and her cousin Anwar who is desired by many but is supposed to be engaged to her. Khursheed was known as Comrade Khursheed for his work with people living in slums and poor areas. He was paid a meager amount by the party for his work and he would often come to Gufran Manzil to convert his relatives and take them out from the decadent life style. One day he comes by to meet Rakhsnada:

> He looked as if was weary, tired and had not slept for years. Rakshanda was startled to see him like that…Rakshanda you are going to lose all of this very soon…you and your gang might bully me always but this time I am right, Rakshanda…This land, this grand house everything will be gone Roshi…Tell me anything because you know I will do what you want, I love you Roshi.[74]

Anwar Azam was the man with a bohemian style and lust for the luxuries of life. She desires him but is put into a state of perpetual strife to come to terms with his drifting away from her especially when Shehla Rehman enters the scene. Shehla Rehman is a newcomer who is introduced to Rakshanda by Kiran and wanted her poems to be published in the *magazine New Era* run by Rakshanda. After Rakshanda sort of breaks up with Anwar Azam she fancies Dr Salim who was Peechu's friend:

[74] Hyder, *Mere Bhi Sanam Khane,* p.70.

After Kiran and Vimal left for office, she was left alone with Salim. They were somehow feeling very uncomfortable in each other's company because there was so much to say to each other but the walls of pride were high around them…. It was the feeling of loneliness even in the company of the loved one… she felt as if he could see through her …what was most dreadful was that she knew that he knew that she was in love with him.[75]

Rakshanda's story is like Jameel's and Aliya's. When Aaliya shifts to her uncle's house, Jameel and Chammi are very close. Infact Chammi is in love with Jameel, she even spends her little pocket money that she gets from her father on Jameel. When Aaliya starts living there, Jameel develops a liking for her. She was Chammi's opposite. While Chammi was vocal and unsophisticated, Aaliya was quiet and cultured, Jameel drifts towards her but Aaliya never reciprocates because she always felt the burden of holding the interests of the family ahead of her own desires:

Jameel had taken up a small job to feed his family and rest of his time was spent in advocating the cause of Muslim League. But his love for Aaliya was growing with each day… Aaliya would try her best to even stay away from his shadow but even the shadows were getting longer.

Aliya, why are you doing this? You are making fun of my love!

(When Jameel holds her close to him and almost kisses her she is frightened and pushes him back)

Now you can take your leave, Mr. Jameel...Go and befool someone else…My Name is Aaliya, if you do not leave instantly, I will shout loudly and …

Aaliya! (Jameel who was reclining against a wall shouts back) You are a witch … you can never fall in love with anyone… you really are a witch!

(When Jameel exists the room, Aaliya breaks down)

[75] Ibid., p.76.

Jameel you have pricked my body with some magical needles, now who will cure me. ..(*kaun shehzada aayega*)![76]

Aaliya like Rakshanda chooses to hide her affection because for both of these women this kind of love was transitory and somewhat binding. Both chose to stay unmarried till the end of the story. While Jameel is unable to comprehend Aaliya's reluctance and terms her as a '*dayan*' devoid of the faculty to understand human emotions, Salim wonders about Rakshanda's denial;

I want love; I don't want her social position, just her love, unconditional love! Why doesn't she behave differently with me, I wonder…why can't she treat me differently from the other members of gang…I wish someday she would come and say, 'I know we are both attracted to each other, let's not pretend anymore that we are intellectuals and busy with the liberation movement… lets accept that we find each other desirable"…why can't she say it…what is it?..I wonder![77]

When Chammi realizes that Jameel was drifting towards Aaliya she shifts her focus to Manzoor, a neighbor who was also a worker with Muslim League. Her conversation with Aaliya unfolds the different perspective of love in the female psyche. While Aaliya wants to see the family get back together, sit together and eat together, Chammi wants to realize a relationship out of the bounds of the household and family life. She is very critical of how the patriarchs within the family control the desires of women even when they are fighting for liberation of a population.

Peechu in *Mere Bhi Sanam Khane* much like Jameel is enamoured by Cristabel who is married to his friend Hafeez. When Rakshanda gets to know about his affection for

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[76] Mastoor,*Aangan*, p.196.

[77] Hyder, *Mere Bhi Sanam Khane*, p.57.

Christabel, the first objection she raises is that the time was ripe for revolution and not for falling in love and desiring impossible. Although she herself is torn between Anwar who keeps getting away from her, Saleem and Khursheed who had left because of her, she thinks that Peechu chose a bad timing to fall in love:

> Kiran bhaya, Peechu has become so quiet for past few weeks. In Mussorie also he did not engage with us much. He remained aloof in his room, lost in his dreams and reveries. Now even when he is home with us, he keeps to himself, doesn't even talk to father or go to his room to convey regards…Falling in love with a married woman is unacceptable, Kiran bhaya that too at this juncture! Why has he become so irresponsible? What has this love done to him?[78]

Aliya, upon seeing her sister, Tehmina always lost in reveries thinks about the similar question. What does love do to people? When Tehmina speaks to her in a seemingly half drunk state, Aaliya thinks to herself about this intoxication of love for she is unable to comprehend it and its power over people:

> I had sown the Henna tree for this occasion… I will get my hands colored with his love… The tree is so tall now, I want to lie beside it and soak in the fragrance … this mehandi is strange, it smells of love, it is like cool breeze of one's lover and you know the color of Henna will tell you of someone's dreams have been murdered…What are you saying, aapa? Are you drunk with all those fairytale stories that you read in those story books given by Safdar baijan![79]

Sara Upstone in her discussion about the home states how home becomes like an unspoken text which is supposed to stand as a contrast to the fiasco outside the

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[78] Ibid.,p. 176.

[79] Khatija Mastoor,*Aangan*, p.65.

boundaries[80]. The home that Mastoor portrays becomes a reversal of the expected representation of home. It is not presented as in denial of any politics but as an extension of and explicitly political. Such homes and their representation is in actuality subversion of the order of the political narrative. In such representations home becomes a metaphor and through the reading of the personal spaces one gets the sense of politics within the domestic arena. Upstone states that the significant things about representation of colonial home is their rejection of assumptions that domesticity is the arena of women and the implications of politics do not just affect men but women equally. "For all, the home becomes tied to colonial power relations, and the subversion of these interests is a shared aim, whether that subversion would ultimately lead to a concomitant dissolution of domestic patriarchy or, ironically, even a reinforcement of patriarchy in a new nationalist form…Thus as harmony and order are removed from the home, the overwriting of its political nature is stripped away to reveal a space of power negotiations, hierarchies, and tensions. In removing the codes and patterns signifying conventional domestic space, favouring instead the turmoil and tensions that the colonial ideal obscures, the postcolonial home functions differently to its colonial predecessor. Filled with disorder and chaos, the postcolonial representation of the home challenges the colonial ideal of domestic space, and powerfully interrogates its status as haven, or location of order."[81]

Mastoor expresses not the events but the consequences of the events and the trauma that it entailed. Her stories are told in the backdrop of a violent event and foreground the consequences of such an event. Mastoor's intent is not to "create a master narrative by which Partition experiences could be understood. Instead she frames the

[80] Sara Upstone, *Spatial Politics in the Postcolonial Novel*, Ashgate Books, UK, 2009.p.119.

[81] Ibid.

emotional and moral responses to unspeakable tragedy in a manner that moves past numerical summaries of violence. She raises questions of ethical human behavior on the level of individual".[82] With the women characters at the centre she breaks away the silence surrounding the lives of women. Depicting these women in motion presents a picture that resists the version of history presented in official documents that do not capture the complexity of their daily lives. While the nations were turned outward and focused on the encroachment of colonial power, these writers turned inward to uncover the home as a site of complex power negotiations.[83]Alok Bhalla states; "One turns to a historian or a novelist, not to learn how to add sorrow, but to hear in unqualified horror of despair the more difficult cadence of tragedy. The best of the fiction writers about the Partition are not concerned with merely telling stories of violence, but with making a profoundly troubled inquiry about survival of people"[84] Mastoor supplies a lot of information with a few strokes of her pen. And her words serve multiple functions: they paint the scene, provide vital narrative information and convey how the characters live and suffer.[85]

Conclusion

In this chapter I attempted to show how politics impinges on the domestic and Mastoor's critique of home as a safe place where people love each other unconditionally. There are conditions and terms upon which the members have to agree to form relationships. The relationships within the walls of home are not found on unconditional love devoid of interference of any political matters, but instead it is

[82] Rajkumar, *Haram in the Harem*, P. 82.

[83] Jill Dijur, *Unsettling Partition: Literature, Gender, Memory*. University of Toronto Press, 2008.

[84] Alok Bhalla, "Memory, History and Fictional Representations of the Partition." *Economic and Political Weekly* Special Articles, 1999, pp. 3119-3127.

[85] Tahira Naqvi, *Cool, Sweet Water: Selected Stories*. Series Editor, Mohammad Umar Menon, Karachi: Oxford University Press, Pakistan Writers Series, 1999. New Delhi.

the politics outside that defines the functioning of home inside. The image of a Muslim household as a safe haven for its dwellers especially women since they are confined inside all the time is revealed to be embedded deeply in politics and non-neutrality. These texts insist the spaces we occupy and places that we possess are all political no matter how detached they might seem from it. The anguish from outside travels inside and manifests itself through the disruption of normality within the family and household. The interaction of familial and political in certain circumstances takes away the 'normal functioning' of the home. The intimate space within no longer remains impervious to the struggles outside and puts the peace within the family contingent upon certain regimes of following the norms. Mastoor opens up the predicament of women within the household and the limitations of the demand of political conformity. She not only depicts the failure of the patriarchs to provide for their families thus questioning the notion of masculine protection but she also expresses the efforts of women to participate and take control of their lives.

At the fringes of political drama there is a constant struggle to reclaim life, to love, to find succor and to resist. Through Badey Chaha's assertion that 'everything will be settled once India is free' is scripted the unavoidable relation between 'nation' and 'home'. The interpretation of home as political and not neutral space brings forth the deeply political nature of home, its vulnerability and contingency upon the political events. Even if the domestic space is fortified the political will always intervenes. The connection between home, political narrative and domestic and the relation between constructing a home and nation is expressed by Dale Pattison. She states that "our attachment to domestic space as the predominant model for understanding the "homeland" and the "home front" is not particularly surprising, as domestic space on its most basic level suggests stability and protection, two concepts integral to

nationhood. Less obvious is how domestic space is intertwined with narrative, and how political narratives produced by the state embed themselves in our everyday lives. Considering the relationship between "the home" and "the nation," it is worth examining how our negotiation of the former bears upon our construction of the latter.[86]

If the women decide to express their political choices, like Chammi they are a danger to the stability of home as well as nation. If women like Najma bua and Kusum are open about love and sexuality it is again the home/nation that is in danger. If the women start behaving like the rival community their expulsion becomes necessary. 'Fallen' women are a representation of a fallen nation/home, thus control through marriage and hierarchy becomes imperative in such circumstances. However what the text also represents is the very opposite of this .Although there is control and hierarchy but there is also an effort on the part of women like Chammi, Najma and at a later stage Aaliya to take control of their lives and to go about their daily routine. The desire within to escape, to seek education and to love is alive even with the regulated social and cultural practices that purport to curtail them.

The house is shown as a site of intimate power contestation with "domestic space mapped as a hierarchy of specialized and distinct boundaries in the same way that the colony is divided into territories; both divisions are heavily enforced, the boundaries both naturalised by documents, architectural plans or national maps."[87] Writing at the time when the writers were focused on the outside, Mastoor's gaze inside the intimate corridors of home foregrounds the reality of people's struggle to live with political

[86] Dale Pattison , Writing Home: Domestic Space, Narrative Production and the Homeland in Roth's American Pastoral, *Twentieth Century literature*, Summer ,Vol.60.Issue, Hofstra University. P.222.

[87] Upstone, *Spatial Politics in the Postcolonial Novel*, p.118.

turmoil that led to the momentous event of Partition. Aliya's struggle from the beginning is to come to terms with the impact that the political events were having on the relationships within her family. It is only towards the very end when she migrates to Pakistan that she realizes her emancipation. The change in space also alters her imagination.

Mastoor refutes the notion of the 'discourse of order' within home and brings to the fore how nation and home are coterminous in certain circumstances. The supposed order and normality of home is brought into question by such representations which do not obscure disorder and highlight the homes intrinsically political status. The violence and hierarchy within is highlighted and the home as a metaphor of larger public space of 'nation' is equally brought to the front.

In the following chapter a discussion on the larger impact of the outside violence on the inhabitants of the home will be discussed where a discussion on the questions of migration and its gendered nature would further help one realize the interaction of political and domestic.

Chapter IV

Migration, Violence and Partition: Stories from Within

And now the

voyage ended, and the vessel

Was worn from travel, and they came stepping down

(Ovid: 1955)

In this chapter I attempt to bring out the complexities of the process of migration and discuss about the gendered nature of the experience of migration itself. I have already discussed the political and changing nature of home in the previous chapter, so this chapter will take the discussion forward and talk about the process of migration and sexual violence inside the home; how does the violence travel from outside to inside and more importantly I try to address the silence of the everyday violence as represented in Partition literature. My contention here is that much of the discussion around violence during Partition focused on outside violence and not on the violence coming from within. I aim to shine light on how within the home this apparatus of violence operated and the class dimensions of it. How did the experience of Partition migration and the ensuing violence impact the women even when they reached where they belonged? What I mean to say is that if Partition was done on the religious lines, then the Muslim women in Pakistan were not refugees, but they had come 'home' and belonged there. How did the figure of a refugee Muslim woman get negotiated in a country found for Muslims? This chapter has three sections. In the first section I shall give a detailed background of the violence during Partition and the operations started to recover women after the cartographic and violent exercise was over. In this section I will discuss how violence against women erupted more and more and the role of press in fomenting it. The first section will set the broad context against which I

position my arguments. In the second section I will discuss the experience of migration itself and how did the social location of women influence the decision of migrating or getting displaced. This section aims to weave out the experiences of women in terms of perceiving migration and its gendered nature. The third section has discuss on how the partition violence was not just the violence of majority community on the minority, but how the violence traveled inside the homes and was part of the social fabric of the family. I aim to highlight that to understand the violence during Partition it is important to look beyond the framework of 'Hindus and Sikhs against Muslims' model and shift the location of the perpetrator from outside to the inside. These questions will be discussed with reference to primarily *Zameen* along with *Aag Ka Darya* and *Mere Bhi Sanam Khane* as well.

Migration and Women

The migration during the communal strife of 1947 is considered to be the biggest event of movement in the recent history with about ten to fifteen million people having crossed the north western border to relocate to the newly formed state of Pakistan and what was demarcated as the Indian boundary[1]. The Western border of Punjab witnessed the movement of its people at its peak during this time. It was estimated that 5.5 million non Muslims and 5.8 million Muslims had crossed the Punjab border[2].The various studies about migration for a long time have been confined to just numbers in terms of how many people dislocated under such circumstances and how much property was lost. History like much of other stories of Partition has been mute about what it meant for people to live once they were

[1] This study does not discuss the migration in the Bengal area as that is beyond the scope of this thesis.

[2] Pippa Virdee, "Negotiating the Past: Journey Through Muslim Women's Experience of Partition and Resettlement in Pakistan", *Cultural and Social History*, Volume 6, Issue 4, 2009, pp.467-484.

displaced. The history of migration of Partition stops at calculating numbers where men and women become just figures and remain that. However in the recent times historians and feminist have begun to understand migration not just as a physical dislocation but in terms of the experience of the people who were rendered refugees and/or migrants. The focus of such enquiry about migration is particularly on the ordinary and daily narratives of women. Ravinder Kaur in her work on Partition migrants brings forth the significance of understanding Partition in the lives of people by getting to know their personal narratives. She underlies the importance of listening to the personal stories of people and how factors of class, caste and gender played a huge role in how people experienced migration. These individual narratives give one nuanced insights into the nature of Partition migration. She says:

> In order to understand the absences and omissions in Partition history we need to delineate what is popularly imagined as a common minimum narrative of Partition migration and settlement. By common minimum narrative I mean a simplified and compressed version of complex, multilayered personal experiences that the migrants often recount…More often than not the common minimum narrative is followed by an admission that the narrators personal experience did not match what they believed happened to millions of other migrants .The differing narrative therefore challenge the master version of Partition historiography.[3]

With many gaps, silences and methodological shortcomings in mind the exercise that feminist scholars have done to uncover the stories of Partition by placing women at the centre of these events ,what one gets is a violent history of a war fought on women's bodies. Independence of India was not a result of a non-violent struggle of larger than life heroes but it entailed brutal communal and gendered war which

[3] Ravinder Kaur, 'Narrative Absence: An Untouchable Account of Partition Migration', *Contributions to Indian Sociology*,2010 (281-306).pp. 285-286.

included women across the religious communities. What the mainstream history of Partition doesn't tell us is that it was undeclared civil war[4]and much of it was supported by law-enforcement agencies and communalized bureaucracy.[5] It wasn't just the suspension of law and order that led to the violence but a deep patriarchal complicity between State and its male citizens to inflict unprecedented violence on women across religion. Women were targeted by the men of other community in order to take revenge for what befell their communities. This notion of women being the bearer of 'honour' of the community was the underlying force in varied forms of violence that women had to incur. Women thus became a territory to be occupied. Men of other communities subjected women to gruesome brutality in the form of rape, mutilation, by engraving religious symbols like crescent and trident on their bodies. It wasn't only the men of other communities but family members as well who pushed women to kill themselves in order to *save* them from the men of the other community. The notion of 'women as repositories of honour' was thus employed by men of both communities and women were at the receiving end of such cultural understanding.

I want to briefly discuss the role of press and its partisan reporting which contributed to flaring of the violence against women. It was the press reporting of certain events that made sure the repeat performance of events could occur. The rumors had a huge role to play in facilitation of violence. Ilyas Chatta in his work discusses how the violence at one place led to violence at other place and the cycle continued with no respite. "In many instances, the violence was locked into an all-India pattern, as

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[4] Ritu Menon, Kamla Bhasin, *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition*, Kali for Women, 1998.

[5] Beatrize Gonzalez Manchon,A feminist Reading of partition in *Gender, Technology and Development* 4(1), 2000.

atrocities in one part of the country were justified as retribution for violence in another part. The Calcutta killings in 1946 triggered riots in Bombay in September that year and in the Naokhali and Tippera district of Bengal and in Bihar in October and November… the desire for revenge was kindled by false and inaccurate reporting."[6]

There was competing reporting by pro Muslim and pro Hindu and Sikh papers. On March, 15 a pro Muslim paper *Inquilab* carried a report about the killings in Rawalpindi and blamed Sikhs for starting the fight by procuring arms in advance and provoking Muslims. In response to this the editor of pro Sikh paper *Ranjit* published a booklet entitled *Fasadat-i-Punjab ka Khooni Drama*, which contained graphic description of rapes and killings and stories of forced conversion of Hindus and Sikhs. The pro Sikh and Hindu papers like *Jai Hind, Ranjit, Khalsa Sewak, Vir Bharat, Milap, Prabhat* and *Ajit* published details of the atrocities committed by the rival communities and invoked the feelings of revenge:

> O,Khalsa ji! A critical condition has arisen for the Panth which arose after the last great Ghallughara(General massacre of Sikhs)…Thousands of Hindu and Sikh women and children have been murdered. Keshas and beards of hundreds have been chopped off and an effort has been made to convert them to Islam; hundreds of women have been abducted; whole villages have been burnt up. Hundreds of chaste women have jumped into wells and have sacrificed their lives in many other ways in order to preserve their honour.[7]

Pro Muslim papers like *Ihsan, Azad, Zamindar, Nawai-i-waqt, Inquilab* also published 'colored' and exaggerated accounts of the events blaming Sikhs for having

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[6] Ilyas Chattha, "Partisan Reporting: Press Coverage of the 1947 Partition Violence in the Punjab", *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, vol.36.No 4, 608-625, 2013.

[7] Ibid.

been prepared for communal warfare for months ahead. As the events escalated the violence increased. Arms and ammunition were sold openly. *Nawai-i-Waqt* published an advertisement for the sale of arms:

> Gun, Pistol, Cartridge. Protect Yourself… A fresh stack of one barrel American, two barrels English and Spanish Pistol arrived…A rare opportunity for purchase…Welkin Company; the proprietor of Gun and Catridge, 85, Brandreth Road, Lahore[8].

Amidst this communally charged environment rumours created an atmosphere feasible for executing violent plans. In a society which largely depended on oral than written word, tales travelled far and wide and the repercussions were felt across many places of Punjab. One can see that the violence inflicted on women was linked to discourses of communal and national honour[9]. It was bodies of women that had to bear the symbolic burden of the honour of the community and had to experience range of sexual violence from "stripping, parading naked, mutilating and disfiguring, tattooing or branding the breasts and genitalia with triumphal slogans, amputating breasts, knifing open the womb, killing fetuses"[10] Menon and Bhasin argue that the "particular acts of physical violence engraved the division of India into India and Pakistan on the women of both religious communities in a way that they became respective countries, indelibly imprinted by the other."[11]

During August and December, the dislocation of people from Punjab was immense. The estimation of people who had crossed the border by June 1948 was around 5.5

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[8] Ibid.

[9]Kavita Daiya, *Violent Belongings: Partition, Gender, and National Culture in Postcolonial India,* Temple University Press, 2011

[10]Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin, *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition*, Kali for Women, 1998. p. 43.

[11]Ibid.

million non Muslims and 5.8 million Muslims. An estimated 75,000- 100,000 were abducted by members of opposing religious community to be sold, raped and forced into marriage with their abductors. These women would be forced into prostitution, passed from one person to another and given as gifts to acquaintances. As the time from the event of partition passed, the government of India and Pakistan signed an agreement to work towards bringing back these women. William Gould says that it was women like Mridula Sarabhai who played a significant role in such operations since between 1948-1950 she still kept sending letters to Prime Minister Jawahralal Nehru intimating him on the consequences of violence of Partition and state of women who were abducted. "Her letters and reports illustrated, often in graphic detail, the involvement of not only civilians but also of specific government servants, policeman, army personnel, and local politicians in the perpetuation and encouragement of violence."[12] However the State did not enter into this task solely on its own but it was also to do with overwhelming number of complaints by the family members that pushed it to undertake this operation. It was the enormity of numbers that put pressure on the State to take up the task of recovery[13]. Veena Das states that the role of people in the evolution of State in the way it did and made coercive interventions into the family cannot be dismissed. It is after the coercion and repeated request of people that the State came into action. "Refugees in distress made loud and frantic appeals to all departments of the Indian government. Pandit Nehru received letters in the months of August, Spetember and October, seeking his personal intervention to save a relative left behind, or to recover a piece of property, or to get

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[12] William Gould, *Religion and Conflict in Modern South Asia*, Cambridge University Press, 2011.p.163.

[13]Urvashi Butalia "Community State and Gender, Some Reflections on the Partition of India", in *Inventing Boundaries:Gender, Politics and Partition of India*, Mushirul Hassan. (ed).Oxford University Press, 2000.

back a precious possession from Pakistan. People also wrote to him accusingly, saying he was enjoying a victory at the expense of the Hindus of West Punjab.[14]

The governments of two countries entered into an Inter Dominion Agreement in November 1947 to 'recover' these women and hand them back to their families. In December the Indian government legislated an act to start facilitating the recovery operation. It said that "during these disorders large number of women have been abducted on either side and there have been forceful conversions on a large scale. No civilized people can recognize such conversions and there is nothing more heinous than the abduction of women. Every effort must be made to restore women to their original homes with the co-operation of women concerned."[15]

The symbolic significance of recovering women was reflected in the concerns of political leaders who expressed their angst at such 'moral depravity' and termed it as a 'shameful chapter' in the history of the country. This issue of abducted women was very emotional and entered the debates of parliament, discussions about religion and secularism and the "role of state institutions in legislating Indian families. This image of abducted Women took on heightened symbolic significance around Partition, which homogenized and simplified much more complex realities.[16] It was a shameful chapter in the history and many leaders expressed their concern at such moral depravity:

> If there is any sore point or disrespectful fact to which we cannot be reconciled under any circumstances, it is the question of abduction and non-restoration of Hindu women. We all

[14]Veena Das, "Figure of the Abducted Woman: The Citizen as Sexed", in *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary*, University of California Press, 2007, p.23.

[15] Menon, Bhasin, *Borders and Boundarie*, p. 69.

[15] Ibid.

[16] See William Gould, *Religion and Conflict in Modern South Asia*, Cambridge University Press, 2011

know our history of what happened in the time of Sri Ram when Sita was abducted. Here, where thousands of girls are concerned we cannot forget this. We can forget all the properties, we can forget all the every other thing but this cannot be forgotten.[17]

In Pakistan it was *Pakistan Times* that carried appeals of people for their women to be recovered from India. Also it carried appeals for women to come forward and assist in such work. Pipa Virdee in her research largely based on news paper reports says that *Pakistan Times* carried frantic appeals of people on the similar lines of saving honour and pride of the nation. What is worth mentioning here is that the editor of the news paper was Faiz Ahmed Faiz, a renowned member of the Progressive Writer's Association who would later be incarcerated for his radical ideas.[18]

An Inter-Dominion Conference was held in Lahore on December 6, 1947 in which the two countries agreed to start the recovery operation. It was attended by refugee ministers of both India and Pakistan. Mridula Sarabhai from India and Rabia Baji from Pakistan were appointed as chief organizers. It was stated that all the conversions after March 1947 would be considered invalid and women and children should be restored to their families in the shortest possible time. The responsibility was given to local police assisted by one AIG, two DSPS, 5 inspectors, 10 SIS, 6 ASIS and social workers.[19]. The government of India put forward the Recovery of Abducted Persons Ordinance, 1949 and it was followed by the government of Pakistan. The significant points of agreement at the conference were:

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[17] Menon , Bhasin, Borders and Boundaries, p.68.

[18] Virdee, *Negotiating the Past*, pp.467-84.

[19] http://www.outlookindia.com/article/An-Exchange-Of-Women/203611. Accessed on 13/2/14.

1. Collection of statistics about the number of abducted women
2. Establishing camps for the recovered women.
3. Broadcasting appeals to recover abducted women
4. Taking into custody of abducted women by police officers
5. Setting up of tribunals to determine whether the person is abducted or not
6. Maintenance of discipline in camps
7. Handling over of abducted person
8. Exchange of weekly statement about recovery of abducted women
9. An undertaking by the IGP of North Western Frontier Province to carry out recovery operation on the same lines as West Punjab.

The government of Pakistan decided that "any male child under the age of sixteen years or a female of whatever age who is or immediately before 1, March, 1947 was a Muslim and who after that has become separated from family and is found to be living with or under the control of a non Muslim individual or family should be recovered."[20] The double standards of State to deem men over sixteen to be independent enough to make a choice but see women as 'non-person' and unable to exercise agency was a very patriarchal assumption and impacted women who wanted to decide against going back to their countries. Muslim women found in Indian Punjab were *returned* to Pakistan and Hindu women found in Pakistani Punjab were *returned* to India. The women were defined solely on the basis of religion identity. As Butalia states that "even for a self defined secular nation(India) the natural place/ homeland for women was defined in religious, indeed communal terms, thereby

[20] Virdee, *Negotiating the Past*, p. 471.

pointing to a dissonance/disjunction between its professedly secular rhetoric … and its actively communal identification of women."[21]

The process of recovery was not an easy one. The significant point here to mention is that the recovery operations were set in action without taking any consent or seeking any opinion from the people who were abducted. The recovery process was thus a process of 're-abduction', the abductor being the state. The local police in charge of the recovery of abducted women were faced with various challenges in terms of locating women and reaching them. Informers of the village would pass the information to abductors who would run away into the fields with the abducted women. Also the impending danger of reselling or passing on of women once the police was seen active in a village, was a concern for social workers and police. The abducted women themselves were not willing to accompany the social workers and recovery officers had to persuade them to follow the orders. The condition of the camps where women were kept after recovery before they could be send back to their families was very bad and the resources were scanty. Women in the camps were given only two meals a day. "The condition in some of the Pakistani camps was even worse. When women from the Kurja camp arrived in Lahore, according to Kamlaben, they looked more like skeletons. They had not eaten properly for months, not bathed for weeks. Their hair and bodies were covered with ulcers and lice. During one hundred and ninety miles long journey from Juria camp to Lahore, they had been provided no water to drink."[22] Recovery operations however were slow and faced with many hurdles. Officers in Pakistan blamed the slow process of non-Muslims in India who

[21] Urvashi Butali, Community, State and Gender on Women's Agency during Partition', *Economic and Political Weekly* , Volume 28, Issue No.17,(April 24, 1993) WS 12 –WS21+WS24.

[22]Sneh Yadav, "Partition and Women: A study of Violence, Abduction and Recovery", *IJRESS*, Vol 3, Issue 12, 2013

refused to accept their women back because they considered them polluted.[23] In many instances it was police officers who resorted to raping recovered women before submitting them at the camps. Two assistant sub-inspectors who were sent to a village to recover an abducted woman raped her on the way to the camp. Many such incidents of violence would have gone unreported in such times. There were instances when police and political leaders connived to abduct women or failed to provide security to people who were escaping the riot hit places. In Jhelum district women were separated from their men folk and given away to pathans, while in Gujrat women were openly abducted from the refugee trains on the way:

> "I saw a long column of Muslim men, women and children proceeding from Kapurthala to Jallandhar. The column was guarded by a few military sepoys. It was ten or twelve deep, the women and children walking in the centre, flanked on either side by men. Groups of armed Sikhs stood about in the fields on either side of the road. Every now and again one of these groups would make a sudden sally at the column of Muslims, drag one two or three women and run away with them.In the process they would kill or injure the Muslims who tried to resist them. The military sepoys did not make a serious attempt to beat off these attacks. By the time the column arrived at Jallandhar almost all women and young girls had been kidnapped in this manner" [24]

Men who had the authority to handle such affairs also indulged in misusing their powers and exploiting women. They slyly participated in such crimes committed against women. Some Muslim member of the legislative assembly were accused of holding captive five hundred girls in West Punjab, while an abducted Muslim girl from a reputed family was reported to be in possession of the Maharaja of Patiala. In

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[23] Ibid.

[24]Quouted in Gopal Das Khosla: *Stern Reckoning: A Survey of the Events Leading Up To and Following the Partition of India*, Oxford India Paperbacks, Oxford University Press, 1990.p.289.

West Punjab officials, members of the Muslim league and landed magnates were involved as well.[25]

In East Punjab, the blame to abduct Muslim women was placed especially on Sikh Jhats, but the participation of police and local authorities was not ruled out. Anis Kidwai states:

> The better selling stuff would be distributed among the police and army while the left overs would be given to the rest (of the attackers). After this the girls would go from one hand to another, and after being sold four to five times they would become just decorative items in hotels, or they would be kept in a house for the enjoyment purposes of the police officials.''[26]

What one can never know accurately is how many women were abducted, recovered, raped, killed and lost. Leonard Mosley states that 100,000 women were abducted across Indian and Pakistan but he does not break down the figures and hints at the impossibility or difficulty of exacting numbers.[27] Indian government thought there were 33, 000 Hindu and Sikh women abducted in Pakistan and Pakistan reported that there were around 50,000 Muslim women abducted in India. However both the governments dismissed each others' claims as being grossly exaggerated and 'rather wild figures'.[28]However the official figures that were circulated are:

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[25]Andrew.J.Major, 'The Chief Sufferers: Abduction of Women During Partition of India', *South Asia,*XVIII, Special Issue,1995,pp.57-72.

[26] Begum Anis Kidwai, *Azadi ki Chao Mein*, National Book Trust India, 2007, pp.141-142.

[27] Leonard Mosley, *The Last days of British Raj*, Harcourt, Brace and World, 1962 , p.244.(Mosley does not give any source to the figures he quotes in his book.)

[28] .Andrew.J.Major, 'The Chief Sufferers: Abduction of Women During Partition of India',*South Asia,*XVIII, Special Issue,1995

Table: 1.1 Number of Women and Children Recovered from Pakistan[29]

S.NO		6.12.47 - 31.12.49	1.1.50-31.12.51	1.1.51-31.12.51	1.1.52-31.12.52	1.1.53-31.12.53	1.1.54-31.12.54	1.1.55-31.12.55	Total
1	**Punjab**	4981	287	234	116	70	60	53	5801
2	**North West**	413	23	8	16	25	3	5	493
3	**Baluchistan**	10	0	--	--	--	--	--	10
4	**Sind**	30	12	9	5	16	4	8	84
5	**Native Indian**	579	1	10	4	2	4	1	601
6	**Jand K**	259	548	482	333	211	89	121	2043
	Total	6272	871	743	474	324	160	188	9032

Table 1.2: Number of Women and Children Recovered from India[30]**:**

S.NO		6.12.47 - 31.12.49	1.1.50-31.12.50	1.1.51-31.12.51	1.1.52-31.12.52	1.1.53-31.12.53	1.1.54-31.12.54	1.1.55-31.12.55	Total
1	**Punjab**	8724	698	1240	571	984	491	213	12921
2	**Delhi**	62	2	--	--	--	--	--	64
3	**PEPSU**	3280	534	695	480	918	575	225	6707
4	**Rajasthan**	275	17	15	3	10	5	10	335
5	**J and K**	211	162	24	108	128	43	25	701
6	**Total**	12552	1413	1974	1162	2040	114	473	20728

[29] Figures obtained from Yadav, *Partition and Women: A study of Violence*, 2013.Op.Cit.

[30] Ibid.

Abducted women themselves were not always willing to go back to their family homes and evaded recovery. Many women had got adjusted in their new homes and had children with their new husbands/abductors. They expressed their doubts about the intentions of their families and so called security that was being provided by the state by recovering them and thus saving them:

> How can I believe that your military strength of two sepoys could safely take me across to India when a hundred sepoys had failed us and our people who were massacred. I have lost my husband and have now gone in for another. You want me to go to India where I have got nobody and of course you don't expect me to change husbands everyday…But why are you particular to take me to India? What is left in me now? Religion or Chastity?[31]

In many cases the fears of these women were real. Many families refused to accept their women back since they were considered polluted having been living with a man of a different religion. The strict codes of Hinduism stood between the abducted (recovered)women and their original families. The problem was so acute that the leaders like Nehru and Gandhi had to issue special appeals to people to make them accept their women back. In his appeal in January 1948, Nehru said:

> I am told that sometimes there is an unwillingness on the part of the their relatives to accept those girls and women in their homes. This is a most objectionable and wrong attitude to take up. These girls and women require our tender and loving care and their relatives should be proud to take them back and give them every help[32]

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[31] Quouted in Kripal Singh, "Partition in Punjab: The Women's Fate" in *Partition of India, Indo Pak Wars and the UNO* , (eds) Verinder Grover, Ranjana Arora, Deep and Deep Publications, 1999, p.15.

[32]Urvashi Butalia, "Community State and Gender: Some Reflections on the Partition of India, *Women and the Politics of Violence* (ed) Taisha Abrahams, Shakti Books, 2002P. 145

And Gandhi remarked:

> I hear that women have their objections that Hindus are not willing to accept back the recovered women because they say that they have become impure. I feel this is a matter of great shame. That woman is as pure as the girls who are sitting by my side. And if anyone of these recovered women should come to me, then I will give them as much respect and honour as I accord to these young maidens.[33]

It might seem the Muslim families were always willing to accept their women back without any reservations since Islam doesn't have strict codes about purity and pollution like Hinduism, but Anis Kidwai who was a social worker and witness to all the happenings states that some of the Muslim men were equally reluctant to accept these women for they were considered soiled and impure:

> Shame on these women, they would say. But had they ever tried to understand the predicament of these women: an oppressed woman, one who has always lived in Purdah, one who has, before this, not looked at a man other than her father and her brothers, and who now believes herself to be a loose woman, a bad woman, because she has lived with another man for months, she has lost her honour…who will take her back?[34]

It wasn't just the fear of getting rejected by the families but also the love for new relationships that had been formed by these women. Some of these women were happy and had reestablished themselves at the new place and their new homes. For some the abductor had turned into some sort of a 'lover'. As one liaison officer reports, "their sobs even after a third day of their recovery were a nightmare"[35] Urvashi Butalia explains that social workers often were faced with various

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[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid.,p.153.

[35] Yadav, *Partition and Women*, 2013.

ambiguities about the recovery operation. These workers would be flooded with men who would weep for their Muslim women taken back by the state "Often hefty Sikhs would come outside camps and weep, asking that their women, Muslim women whom the State had given back to their original families be restored to them"[36]. Veena Das also quoutes the social worker Kamlabehn at length to show the reluctance of women to return back:

"We had to encounter many difficulties in our work trying to recover Muslim women from the homes of Hindus from East Punjab. These people, who had at one time praised our work for recovering Hindu women from Pakistan were the same people who condemned our work of recovering Muslim women from the homes of Hindus of East Pakistan. They labeled our work as 'deeds of destroying domestic bliss. The women themselves resisted being taken back to Pakistan(or to India, as the case may have been), …women would make repeated attempts to escape from police escort in order to get back to the men with men with whom they had been living."[37]

The whole process of recovery and the motive of the families and the State behind such operations is a very complex web of various factors coming together. It wasn't just honour, religion and virtue but the material considerations were equally significant that drove families to file complaints and push the State for recovering their women. And when they were recovered, many times they were accepted not for how they belonged to their original families but for the property that would stay with the family if these women were there.

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[36] Butalia, *Community, State and Gender*, p. 148.

[37]Veena Das, "National Honour and Practical Kinship: Unwanted Women and Children" in *Conceiving the New World order: The Global Politics of Reproduction* (eds) Faye.D.Ginsburg and Rayna Rapp,University of California press, 1995, p.229.

The famous case of Zainab and Buta Singh, which became like Laila-Majnu legend in Pakistan illustrates this point. Zainab was abducted in Amritsar and sold to one Buta Singh who fell in love with her and married her. They had two children and lived happily. After many years her uncles and aunts who lived on the land that Zainab's family also had a share in searched for her and pushed the authorities to recover her from India. When she was traced she resisted the recovery but was taken back to Pakistan. The relatives wanted her to come back so that she could be married to her cousin in order to keep the property form going to the State, which in her absence could have been claimed by the State. Zainab left for India with her younger son. Bhuta Singh made desperate attempts to go to Pakistan to get her back. On reaching Pakistan he got to know that she was married off to her cousin. When the case came before the tribunal Zainab denied Buta Singh and returned his child to him. Bhuta Singh committed suicide. It was only after a persistent woman journalist managed to interview Zainab who confessed to having been coerced into rejecting Bhuta Singh. Back in India, Bhuta Singh's family was equally happy for Zainab was gone because they did not want her to have the share of their property. Thus it wasn't just religion and honour but material considerations that equally motivated families to reclaim and reject their women[38].

Of Refugees and Women: Migration as a (Non)/Opportunity

A lot of literature about migration and existence of Pakistan evokes the religious metaphor of' *hijrat*',[39]the migration of Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina in 622 CE in order to escape those who were opposed to Islam and wanted him killed. In

[38] See Butalia, *Community State and Gender*, 2000,

[39]Tahir Naqvi,"Migration, Sacrifice and the Crisis of Muslim Nationalism", *Journal of Refugees Studies*, University of California Berkley, 2012. Intezar Hussain's writings were centered around the theme of migration to the extent that Hyder accused him of creating a' Migration racket'.

this context migration then is seen as a continuation of that tradition where Muslims have to flee their land so that they can go to a more secure and promising land and all the sacrifices made and losses incurred would be repaid in how their lives would get better. The decision to abandon the homeland for the sake of one's religion then becomes a great sacrifice for "the true meaning of the word, a *muhajir* is not an involuntary refugee who is a victim of circumstance, but is rather an individual who has made a sacrifice for his faith."[40] Migration then within the Islamic tradition and Muslim community becomes a religious and political act with the purpose to move away in both moral and physical terms from sources of evil and ignorance.[41]In his interviews with migrants and their perception of the process of migration to Pakistan Tahir Naqvi states that *hijrat* occupies the ideological centre of Pakistani nationalism's extraterritorial imaginary. One of his respondents says about migration echoing what the famous poet Iqbal said '*To abandon one's homeland is to follow the God's beloved*:

"Where is Pakistan, *It mattered very little where Pakistan was*. When the Partition of India occurred the migrants who came here left behind their homes, their business and their lands. They left behind the graves of their ancestors, by whose name they were recognized. They left these things behind so they could arrive to this *Sarzameen* where only Islam would be spoken and where we would be governed according to the laws of Islam. Only on the basis of one slogan and one promise…There is no God but God and Muhammad is his prophet! We did this for our qaum as prophet had done for us![42]

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[40] Ibid.,p.5.

[41]See Ian Talbot, *The End of European Colonial Empires and Forced Migration: Some Comparative Case studies*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011 and Pippa Virdee, Panikoe Panayi(eds) *Refugees and the End of Empire: Imperial Collapse and Forced Migration in the Twentieth Century*, New York, Palgrave, Macmillan, 2011.

[42] Tahir Naqvi, *Migration, Sacrifice and the Crisis of Muslim Nationalism*, p. 13.

Beyond this celebratory account of migration there were some narratives from progressive writers like Khatija Mastoor who provided a social critique of such justifications and brought forth the dreary reality of the so called 'holy land' for Muslims. Very subtly Mastoor weaves in the plot the different meanings of migration for men and women and the opportunities that they saw when Pakistan came into existence. Much like how Quratulain Hyder touches upon this theme in her novels, *Aag Ka Darya* and *Mere Bhi Sanam Khane* where the female characters are shown to experience migration on a different emotional and intellectual level as compared to the men in the story, Mastoor brings forth that unlike men at that particular juncture the idea of migration did not appeal to women the way it did to men. The studies on gendered nature of migration often state that it is not just the process of migration itself that is gendered but also the "interplay of individual circumstances, familial relationships, larger economic cycles, and existing circuits of knowledge and transportation are gendered"[43] which has an impact on encouraging and discouraging individuals to undertake migration. Although in case of Partition migration these differences get veiled over by the magnitude of the event itself owing to the forces at play which did not always leave the people the liberty of choosing to move or stay. For some people migration was not a choice but necessity to avoid the life threatening situation. The narratives of migration are often hushed up and not delved into deeply. The silences around the journey of migration and what happened especially with women has been compounded by the patriarchal states compliance in keeping the elite political narrative of nationalism. Women's voices about migration and their experiences as refugees would evince and interfere with the statist narrative of

[43] Suzanne M. Sinke, 'Gender and Migration: Historical Perspectives', Florida State University, *IMR* Volume 40 Number 1 (Spring 2006):82–103.

accomplishing a dream of making a nation established free of colonial oppression based on the glorious struggle of freedom. It is only at a later point that researchers began to locate the specific experiences of people and dissecting the event of migration.

Zameen written in 1987 is set in post Partition Pakistan. It begins at a migrant camp with Sajida being at the centre of the plot. Sajida and her father have come from a village and are residing at a camp with many other refugees from India. At the camp an old man who keeps calling out for his abducted daughter keeps haunting Sajida, who finds it difficult to come to terms with his pain, which she feels deeply. The conditions at the camp are horrible with people waiting to leave for a better place and those who leave are looked at with envious eyes by others. Sajida's father is often visited by a man called Nazim who keeps assuring him of granting a house in Pakistan. Sajida develops a strong aversion to this man since she keeps hearing him say that all that he needs to do is to break a lock on any of the houses to get them a house. Her father falls ill and because of the negligent attitude of doctors at the camp succumbs to his illness. She finds herself alone and without any support. In the heart of her hearts she keeps waiting for Salaudeen, who she fondly calls Salu. Before leaving India, Salu had promised her to meet her in Pakistan where they would start a new life, away from communal hatred and new opportunities awaiting them, where she could continue her education and realize her dreams. The women of the camp take pity on her and assure her that they would be around for her. After a few days a woman comes to the camp looking for her. Her name is Salma. She meets Sajida and asks her to go with her to her place where Sajida could live a dignified life. When Sajida boards the cab with this lady, she sees Nazim at the driver's seat. Shocked but helpless, with nowhere to go at that time she sits quietly. The car stops outside a big

house where people welcome her with open arms. The house is big and spacious and has been procured in the similar fashion as Nazim had promised Sajida's father. Sajida is assured that she can stay and feel at home since she is Salma's friend. There are two families under this roof. The head of the family who everyone calls *Malik* is a man of very few words and most of the time stays under influence. His wife who everyone calls *Ammi* is Nazim's mother and Nazim's aunt *Khala bi* who after the death of her husband came to stay with her sister and eventually developed a relationship with *Maalik.* Salma, who is *Khala bi*'s daughter never forgave her mother for betraying her sister. There is an underlying tension in the house always for Salma doesn't get along with anyone except Nazim bhai, who is always at odds with his brother Qazim. He is an opportunist and wants to make the best of the opportunity for having landed in Pakistan. After he gets a job in the state services and gains power, he dictates the terms in the house.

Nazim who desires Sajida lies to the family about her background saying that her father was a famous trader in India. Sajida, being a woman of her own is unable to stand this lie and tells everyone that her father was an accounts manager a *munshi* at a cloth shop. On hearing this entire family except Nazim and Salma is dumb founded and give her demeaning looks. When the dinner is over, she is handed over the dishes and asked to go to the kitchen and help Taji, the domestic help. Sajida reacts strongly to this and makes it clear that she will not stay at the house as their servant but will leave and go back to the camp. Salma comes to her rescue and takes her to her room. Days pass like that and relationships change. Sajida keeps thinking of going to college and realising her dreams. Nazim proposes Sajida who agrees on the condition that she would marry Nazim only after publishing an advertisement in the newspaper to locate Saludeen. After a week's time when there is no response she agrees to marry Nazim.

They marry quietly with Salma as their witness. When they break the news to the family there is disappointment on all quarters except Nazim's mother, Ammi who gives the couple her blessings. Qazim qualifies the State exam and the differences between two brothers become even more vocal. Differences between the two brothers push Nazim and Sajida out of the house and they locate to a different house. Nazim gets busy with the political work and she takes up a job at a school. When Nazim is arrested she moves back to Malik's place. Salma had distanced herself from the family and would rarely visit them with most of her time being spent at her friends place. Qazim is appointed as a commissioner and one day when Sajida is taking a stroll near his office room she spots Saludeen. She had been waiting for this moment for years and years and when she beheld him, she sees a different person who doesn't feel the pain that Sajida felt on seeing him. He speaks to her in a very causal manner and when he gets to know that she is related to the commissioner, asks her to beseech him on his behalf so that he could grant him more land that is still unclaimed. He disappears after this and she is left standing there. On her way back in she thinks about Nazim.

Like most of her works, novels and short stories, *Zameen* is narrated in simple lucid language with not much of an experiment with the technique. The plot unfolds simply with no twists and turns. There are no conceits or surprise elements that would take the reader by surprise. What this work narrates is the journey of refugees who later became 'muhajir'. Like much of her earlier works *Zameen* is a story of women's experience of the event of Partition. Mastoor moves away from broad analysis and focuses on the interaction of gender, class and conflict on the lives of the middle class

and lower middle class Muslim Women.[44] Commenting on her writing style and subject matter Rajkumar states that since Mastoor grew up in a family that had experienced the effects of Partition firsthand it became a repeated theme in most of her writings. Her work represents the bleakness and austerity as well as lack of economic autonomy. Her work about Partition investigates how the gendered roles legitimize the violence against women and the consequences for the survivors.[45] Her focus on the post partition times is also suggestive of her concern to understand the complex interplay of social location and individual position. Her focus on the individual agency and how it unfolds during such times is to broaden the framework through which we understand Partition and women. A framework where people's experiences become the centre of the focus would result in teasing out the complex forms of agency at work in women's negotiation of memory, nationality and state ideology.[46]

> It was the third night of Dalton Camp. The organizing committee for taking care of the food of refugees had been distributing rice and pulses amidst the slogans of *Allaho Akbar*. People were running towards the food counter and snatching more *rotis*. Loud cries could be heard from here and there. Men and women sat separately narrating their stories to each other. The flairs of their saris and kurtas had gone dark due to the dirt. Women were horrified and shocked, it was only the kids who were frolicking around with no sense of what had happened[47].

[44] Mohanlaxmi Rajkumar ",Between Women and Their Bodies: Male Perspectives of Female Partition Experiences in the Writing of Khatija Mastoor", *South Asia Review*, Volume 29, No, 2008.

[45] Ibid.

[46]See Kavita Daiya, *Violent Belongings: Partition, Gender and National Culture in Postcolonial India*, Temple University Press, 2011.

[47]Khatija Mastoor, *Zameen*, Sangemeel Publications, Lahore, (1995 Edition). p.6.

Thus begins the story of Sajida and her journey to Pakistan from Dalton camp which was swarming with refugees with the numbers increasing every day. *Zameen* can be read as an extension of *Aangan* in how the latter ends at the migration of Aliya and her mother and *Zameen* begins at a migrant camp in Pakistan. Sajida's character is in a way an extension of Aliya's character who had to leave India much against her will. The story moves beyond brutal representations of migration of projecting the picture of riots and plunder, and rather delineates how women experienced it. It allows certain other kinds of narratives to emerge. These narratives that focus on the subjectivities of women rather than just how violence against women was perpetuated help evince the impact of violence after Partition was supposed to have finished. Moving away from a narrative that focuses on dates and compartmentalizes figures into 'raped' and 'killed,' narratives that focus on the subjectivities of women and how migration affected then become crucial to understanding the larger impact of such a *displacement*. Urvashi Butalia raises this question of why the movement during the event of Partition should be termed as migration and not dislocation. She states that migration does imply some sort of choice whereas displacement has an element of force in it. So why should we say people migrated during Partition and not say people were displaced.[48]This is an interesting distinction to make for it forces us to think through the process of migration in order to grasp the meaning of such movement in turbulent times. The significance of such question lies in how one needs to take caution to stay away from the totalizing narratives that somehow put a veil over the myriad responses and experiences that people had.

[48]Urvashi Butali, "Migration/Dislocation: A Gendered Perspective" in *Women and Migration in Asia:Gender, Conflict and Migration*, Volume 3, edited by Navnita Chada Behera, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 2011.pp.137-154.

Ania Spyra in her work on cosmopolitanism hints upon the symbolic burden that women carry in times like Partition and how it gets difficult for them to be at home everywhere and anywhere. She states that "even when movement and mobility "hints at a freedom of movement and change and thus an ability to escape containment, because it connotes volitional belonging to many places at the same time while upholding the possibility of a single human community…women are not excluded from this ideal but the limitations of this cosmopolitanism lies within women facing difficulties in finding a space of belonging"[49] The psychological trauma and entrenched emotional boundaries of Sajida in *Zameen* keep taking her back to her place where she had lived with her parents and had dreamt of a life. Her sudden de-territorialisation from her familiar dwelling from her birthplace, her language, her surroundings baffle her and make it difficult for her to comprehend the reality that stared at her. Her dislocation was not just material but also emotional. She kept thinking of the Peepal tree, Neem tree, friends and her songs. The change of the neighbourhood baffles her as she finds herself completely out of tune at a place that she recognizes nothing from. Her mind wanders to her house, she keeps roaming in the narrow corridors and small rooms of her home and refuses to accept the present that was so palpable and bearing. For women like Sajida migration then upturned their world that revolved round the everyday and domesticity of home that was brought down with partition like the "fragile paper-mache in the fratricidal war."[50]

Migration is always gendered and in the case of women even they do not face opposition they rarely migrated like men because of how the community did not relate

[49] Ania Spyra, "Is Cosmopolite Not for Women? Migration in Quratulain Hyder' s Sita Betrayed and Amitav Ghosh's The Shadow Lines", *Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies, Vol*.27, No 2,2006.

[50] Suzanne M. Sinke, 'Gender and Migration: Historical Perspectives', Floride State University, *IMR* Volume 40 Number 1 (Spring 2006):82–103.

to their role in the family as did the women[51]. The social location of women made them indispensable to their homes and thus migration came loaded with extra set of baggage. This social location of women and the uprooting of the violent kind ensues a conflict between 'belonging' and 'longing.' The struggle to belong to a new place and the fight to resist, to remain at the margins is exemplified by Sajida's consistent efforts to accommodate herself and accept her new surroundings, new place, new dialect and yet the struggle for longing remains deeply entrenched within her. She keeps wondering as to why her father does not miss his home like she does. When Nazim comes to her father about noting the details of the refugees Sajida's father lies with ease that he had left big bungalow in India and should be granted a property of equal value:

Arey Nazim Sahib, please don't get me started on what all I have left in India. A big house, one big showroom of garments ... I had two accountants working for me … Ah! Those were the days![52]

Sajida's father lies about his property. In fact he was a mere accountant in a small shop and had a house of two rooms that he and his wife had constructed after a lot of hard work and savings. Sajida does not understand the reason of her father's lying about his property. It perturbs her to see her father, a man of principles to lie to make his life easy. Her thoughts take her back to her home:

I wonder why does baba not miss his home… how is he so happy and so hopeful? Amma had saved each penny for almost twelve years and got those two rooms made… when it would rain she would keep shifting the stuff from one corner to another and Abba would be busy

[51] See Sucheta Mazumdar, Localities of the Global: Asian Migrations between Slavery and Citizenship', *IRSH*, Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis, 200752, pp. 124–133 2007.

[52] Mastoor, *Zameen*, p.23.

mending holes in the roof..Those flowers of chameli and how Amma would tend to them… Abba would always say that those two rooms were his palace and he would give it to his son-in-law… I wonder how does he not remember all that and why does he not miss home?[53]

For Sajida's father migration even when it came along with loss of home meant promise of a new life. He seems to be comfortably detached from the people and places that were once his home because even with redrawing of boundaries he could still see an opportunity to live a better life. For Sajida the transition is not easy because her notions of 'safety' and 'belonging' are entrenched deeply with the space of home**.** These feelings of belonging cause the tension within her to look forward to a new home. The desire of longing for what has been left behind also gets accentuated by the strangeness and marginality that she faces in her new surroundings. She does not see any opportunity arising for her but sees the future where she sees herself as marginalized and threatening/threatened. While the migrant men and women face a certain kind of 'othering' from the community in which they migrate to, given the social and political context of India/Pakistan at that particular time women who had already been subjected to so much of violence were already caught between a mental strife of the burden of representing a nation and representing themselves. What I want to say is that since women during Partition were claimed to be representing a nation symbolically and culturally and then added to it was the displacement and violence, such contradictory positioning and repositioning of women with in the nationalist framework impacted women in a very complex process. How does then one decide where home is? Doesn't the relocation then impact the location itself? The exclusion that Sajida faces is not only physical but mental as well since the barriers are not just her geographical location but also the political situation where she is unable to decide

[53] Ibid.,p. 20.

where she belongs since she does not belong to the country where she was born and is left a refugee where she was asked to belong to. The fear of being rejected[54] was deep inside of for and it was this fear of exclusion that she would have to revise her identity, as she does later which although results in a sense of loss and disconnect.

Champa in *Aag ka Darya* ruminates after she discovers that Amir Reza had migrated to Pakistan about the ease with which men were able to make decision to change their 'country'. He was once a loyal Indian who was against the British rule, and swore by the unity of India but migration had opened a window for him. The narrator says:

> He has gone to Bombay where the navy is divided into Hindu ships and Muslim ships. He will take his Muslim ships with him and sail off to Karachi…Champa was Dumbstruck. Ram Autar and Ganga Din remained lost in thought. She returned away like a defeated long distance runner. Amir Reza had left because apart from horses, sports cars and pretty women he now had a fresh interest in life: a brand new country, promotions, greater opportunities and challenges. Men have an entirely separate world.[55]

In both Champa's and Sajida's case who are middle class Muslim women the anxiety about migration could also stem from the comfort of pre-partitioned borders where patriarchal 'protection' was promised within the fixed national boundaries. Sajida did not want to migrate but she had to go with her father's decision and Champa decides to stay back as her family stays back in Moradabad. Although migration did come with mobility that was denied to women like Sajida and Aliya as both start working at

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[54] For Muslim women like Sajida ,migration was not the end of the Partition for them for their identity would always remain Muhajir, and not a regular citizen of the newly found State. Since nationalism is based on exclusivity, the people who went to Pakistan were always considered outsiders who came from somewhere else and did not share the same affinity with the motherland. See Peter Van Der Veer (ed) Nation *and Migration, The Politics of Space in South Asian Diaspora*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995.

[55] Hyder, *Aag Ka Darya*, p.504.

a school and at a refugee camp[56] respectively but their agency to move was exclusively in the hands of the men of their family who initiate it. The theories of migration suggest that in the usual circumstances the female migration is secondary to male migration and women though when they chose to migrate for "making families, it tears them away from the environment they love."[57] Also migration as a phenomenon has always been studied with male centric approaches with the figure of a man at the centre who travels away in search of capital to return to his native place or settle at a different place. For researchers looking at migration women had to be put at the centre to understand the impact of the migration and the relationship between private and public sphere. For women migration in certain untoward circumstances becomes limiting rather than enabling as happens with Sajida who was headed to college but after migration ended up marrying a man she detested. In the political structures amidst which the migration or displacement happens the decisions does not lie with women. At the time of the Partition when the political and social structures were dissolved what choice did women have to make a decision when they were at the centre of violent brutal attack. The migration ensued by partition riots was as Rita Manchanda says not 'livelihood threatening but was life threatening[58]'. In such cases where the conflict fought on one's body how can the experiences of women be understood through conventional framework of migration studies? One also needs to realise that the event of Partition migration was extremely violent and people were possessed with terrible fear and anxiety. The choice to leave or stay was entirely of

[56] Both the governments of India and Pakistan started education programmes for the refugees at the camp. Partition thus served as an opportunity for many women to attend school and to teach at such camps. The boost in the education of the women meant more independent and career oriented women.

[57] Silvia Perdraza, Women and Migration: The Social consequences of Gender, *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol 17 (1991), pp 302-325

[58] Rita Manchanda, "Contesting Infantalisation of Forced Migrant Women" in Navnita Chadha Behera (ed) *Gender, Conflict and Migration,* Sage Publications, New Delhi, 2011.

men with women nowhere in the picture. To illustrate this point I refer to Urvashi Butali who gives an example of the people of Dinnagar in Pakistan where all the Sikh men decided to relocate en masse to Seldah station in Calcutta where all the women were sent away by their men to escape the assault. Women then had to decide between either getting killed by the men of their own community or getting sexually assaulted by the men of the majority community. Butalia asks the question about how to explain the choices that the men made for their women, making them martyrs by kiling themselves and another to send them away to escape death? In neither of the cases the choice of women was taken into account. "In theory everyone had a 'choice' to move away or to stay but in practice staying as virtually impossible, and most people therefore 'chose' to leave, or had this 'choice' forced upon them. Within that broad realm of choice there were many layers."[59] This act of men making choices for women assumed that women were incapable of making choices for themselves. In records there is no mention of women making choices about leaving and staying. It is imperative to mention that the fears regarding women on part of the men were not baseless but the question about women's choice remains relevant in order to understand the complexity of the process of migration. People moved to placed where they thought they would be safe by the mere virtue of belonging to the right religious community. It was of course not true, as we see in the case of women who were sexually assaulted by the men of the family even after partition frenzy had subsided.

The migration narratives of Partition follow the usual model of male as actors and women as passive acceptors. Between the realm of 'actors' and 'acceptors' are located the endless silences of women that shape their subjectivity and make them negotiate the unfamiliar territory in which they are thrust. The process of migration

[59] Urvashi Butali, *Migration/Dislocation*, p. 141.

does not end with reaching the destination but begins again at the time of settlement when the long term impact of the movement confronts the migrant. "In the process of migration/dislocation the most difficult moment is when the settlement begins to lead to social change that the initial welcome that migrant say may have received turn to concerns and resentment."[60]

Nayanika Moohkerjee states that for women migration during conflict or war is threatening but it could also be "imbued with adventure and excitement precisely by virtue of one's class position"[61] For Sajida who is a lower class woman devoid of any privilege migration is no adventure but a burden to refigure her life and fend for her location within certain social order Many experiences that do not find a voice and a way out never come to represent the narratives of migration. To articulate such experiences is always faced with a challenge since it interferes with the postcolonial imaginary of the nation. The exclusion is not initiated by just one's community but by the state as well because the presence of such differing experiences of women in a new Muslim nation interferes with the homogenous, neat and 'parochial meta-narrative of the experience of partition.'[62]When such space is not accorded to women then the narratives of migration miss the link that connects the individual perspectives to the collective imaginary. The arboreal narratives of the state do not give space to the little but significant details. In his work on women's narratives of partition migration Farrukh Khan rightly remarks that a "state's narrative obsessively revolves around dates as this particular insistence provides a coherent packaging of historical events that may be read and interpreted with a particular bias…The strategically

[60] Ibid.,143.

[61] Nayanika Mookherjee, S*exual Violence, Public Memories, and the Bangladesh War of 1971*, Duke University Press, 2015.

[62] Farrukh Khan, "Speaking Violence: Pakistani Women's Narratives of Partition*"* in Navnita Chadha Behera (ed)*Gender , Conflict and Migration*, Sage publications, New Delhi, 2006, pp 97-115.

essentialist mode of one history of a nation requires selective placing of chronological events and clearly defined protagonists…Individual memory, on the other hand offers much less clinical separation of dates; one of the most significant descriptions that occurred in almost all the narratives was the incessant rain and the flooding of the river Ravi. The state's narrative has no mention of the characteristics of the daily events and the conditions that were faced by the people who were caught up in Partition's forced uprooting."[63]Urvashi Butalia also explains how the notions of belonging to a place get very complicated since the agency to decide is not with women which in turn impacts the linkages established with home and a stable habitat. The silence about women in the migration narratives and in general narratives of the Partition ensures that it remains their only representation. The anguished questions of belonging for migrants, of grappling with where they belong; in the land they left behind or the land they find themselves in, or perhaps at neither of the two places.The choice afforded to most people was not afforded to women… For many women denied the agency and the rights of ordinary citizens all their lives, the categories of 'nation' and 'family' can and do at such times overlap…neither structure nor institutions are able to offer belonging in quite the same way for a variety of reasons."[64]

Sajida's desire to go back and be one with her lover Salaudeen is also manifested by her recurring thoughts of names and places associated with her home. Her connection to her land seems so powerful that she does not realise the reality of becoming foreign to her own people who she had lived with ever since she could remember. Yet the pain of the conflict between going back is equal to the pain of staying at a place that

[63] Ibid.,p.102.

[64] Urvashi Butalia, *Migration/Dislocation,* p.145.

she does not feel belongs to her. When Salma takes her to her place and Sajida fears that she would be used as a family maid, she immediately decides to go back to the camp and wait for the time when she is ready to go and find her destiny. This decision on her part is an example of her vigour to go against time and write her own history but her reluctance to make good on her decision illustrates the insecurity that women faced in the camps too. Refugee camps were not a replica of some family fold where women were safe from the eyes of enemies.

When Roshnak gets the news that her father was ill she visits her family in and is overwhelmed by emotions of her past life and her emotional connect with a place that she had always thought of as her home, her abode for which she would fight whatever it took. She notices the old name plates of the family she had one lived with and laughed with. She had come from a place that was home to so many displaced people to a place which was equally home to many displaced people. Seeing how the reality of life had changed for her she breaks down and is woken up from her slumber when someone asks her where her home was. She is perturbed for she does not understand if it was home or the country that they wanted to know. Her home was here but it was not her country anymore. Where was her country? Was it from where she was forced to run away or was it where her husband had bequeathed property by forging papers and breaking into someone's house. Her disillusionment about home resonates with Sajida's experience. She keeps waiting for Salaudeen and one day when she happens to see him at the commissioner Qazim's office she is thrilled to know that he was alive and came all the way to look for her. But soon her hopes crumble when Salaudeen, whom she would call Salu shatters her illusions and tells her that he had married a woman from Pakistan and had acquired property. In fact he had come to the commissioner's house to get more unclaimed land sanctioned before anyone else

could claim it. He pleads with Sajida to ask her brother-in-law Qazim to extend him the favour of granting him property. Sajida is chocked at his indifference and realizes that the migration had changed their relationship. It was not separation for Salaudeen but a source of mobility and resources for him. It had helped him gain social status and lead a life very different from what he would have lived had he not migrated. He was not a simple man of principles who wanted to seek education and earn a livelihood and live his life with his beloved. In fact Sajida realizes how her exile had turned out to be his freedom.

In *Aag Ka Darya* the narrator says that Amir Reza had been living in Karachi as if he had never lived anywhere else. Much like Qazim his interests to migrate of course was due to the political unstability but also because of 'perks' of migration. He realizes that given the discrimination against Muslims in India he would not be in a position of higher authority, something that he had always wished for like Qazim. Migration became his chance to live a life that would have been not so easy to get in undivided India. It is not any political conviction that drives him to his decision but just the opportunities that the displacement had for some men.

When Nazim meets Ramzan at the refugee camp he very confidently asks him to give details of what he wants and very nonchalantly says: Don't worry, all I need to do is break a lock and you are good to go". Qazim in conversation with his family members speaks along similar lines when he says:

> Almost one crore people have crossed the border… It is very worrisome! Yes, But you know Amma we are the real refugees and deserve major share of the resources. We have arrived here first. This house is ours now! These people lived in shacks, it is one and the same thing

for them… This country and this government *is for people like us. It was created for our welfare*!"[65]

The house that the family resides in was occupied simply by breaking a lock. It was a big house with all the tapestry and upholstery intact. The family that had left had not managed to take much of their belongings. Similarily in *Mere Bhi Sanam Khane* When Diamond writes to Rakshanda, she says :

"My dear friend, my father has occupied a very plush house. It is very big, like a mansion in Model Town. There are thirty five Persian carpets in this house. The garden is so big that it has a swimming pool, a tennis court... Looks like this belonged to some millionaire, God knows how he would be living now. When we broke in the dining table was laid, with lights on and radio playing music… The dressing table is full of Saris and bangles, Roshi."[66]

Initially the governments of India and Pakistan had decided to protect the property left behind but it seems later the administrative rules were changed and the refugees coming into the country could claim land on the basis of Evacuee Property Commission Act.[67]When Kamal goes back to India after Partition to look at his property he finds it being inhabited by a Sardar family who ask him to wait outside before they could give him permission to take a look at the garage where some of his old stuff was lying. Kamal is found sitting at the steps of what was once his estate and what he was bound to be heir to by virtue of his birth in a Nawab family. Partition came as destruction to his dreams putting an end to the life that he thought he was entitled to lead.

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[65]Mastoor, *Zameen*,. p.48.

[66]Hyder,*Mere Bhi Sanam Khane*, p.221.

[67]Tahir Naqvi,"Migration, Sacrifice and the Crisis of Muslim Nationalism", *Journal of Refugees Studies*, University of California Berkley, 2012.

Also, the writers hint at the change of identity in terms of political upheaval to gain access to resources or to escape from repression. In these texts what we also see is that migration ensued anxiety of survival and also put forward opportunities. Champa's father expresses such views in conversation with Kamal when he says that "I hear all these low caste Muslims have made it big in Pakistan. Weavers and butchers from UP call themselves Syeds and are doing well"[68] When Sajida meets Anwar in Pakistan who initially eschews any chance of speaking to her, we get to see how the possibility of a new life was also a motivating force behind migration for many families

> Baji you know how much Abba had to struggle in India. He broke his back working for each penny.. God created Pakistan and it was a turning point for people like us… Here no one knows us, no one knows any one. People call my father *ji huzoor*! People here know my father as a mill owner, he even changed his name. He is Sarwar Hussaini![69]

Kamal experiences the same kind of feeling about how migration resulted in upliftment of a certain social class. In his letter from Karachi, he expresses similar feelings of how Partition was seen by many as an opportunity to transform their lives:

> When I look at Karachi, I realise the fact that middle class Muslims were never before so prosperous. The natives of Uttar Pradesh have transformed themselves and established their lives here. Before the creation of Pakistan one hardly came across a Muslim traveler in a first class coach. Pakistan has given us this opportunity. I feel so happy.[70]

Zameen provides a critique of how Muslims wished for Pakistan to be a safe haven for them, a land full of opportunities where they can live with their opinions and

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[68] Hyder, *Aag Ka Darya*, p.597.

[69] Mastoor, *Zameen*, p.85.

[70] Hyder, p.622.

express their political views freely. But it did not turn out be what they had hoped for. The political repression and social hierarchies remained intact and the freedom did not live long. The disillusionment with how the government was functioning is conveyed very early in the novel in the family conversations. Nazim who is later imprisoned for his activism had fought with Muslim league and believed in the idea of Pakistan but all his hopes are shattered when Pakistan becomes nothing like what he had envisioned:

> So many safety acts and ordinances for silencing people. Even if you call out one's name aloud the government thinks it a slogan against them…if you harbour such thoughts in Pakistan your life will end in a prison.[71]

When Salma and Qazim are having an argument about the existence of Pakistan Salma says:

> I don't know where Nazim is. When the movement for Pakistan was at its peak he would work day and night for it. That time these people would scold him and say he would bring their doom. But now when they are enjoying the comforts of migration they can't stand anyone criticizing Pakistan.[72]

These narratives give us an understanding of the struggles of women and an attempt to understand the human dimension of migration and its impact on everyday life of people. For Sajida migration is a sad story as it took away her family from her and changed her circumstances for worse but for Qazim it is a boon because it gives him an opportunity to become a commissioner, something he could have never achieved in united India. What we gather is that Partition and the ensuing migration impacted men

[71] Mastoor, *Zameen*, p.154.

[72] Ibid., p.109.

and women differently in both material and emotional ways. While some of the men seized the chance to make their lives better, women on the hand had to face radical situations to rearrange their lives. While the changed identity transformed the situation of many, women continued to face questions regarding their lives, identity and their position in the new social order.

Home as an Unsafe Haven: Violence From Within

> Hardly ever and hardly anywhere, have women written history. They have left few accounts, personal or otherwise and have committed much less to writing than men.[73]

> I am sure you remember those days. Women never forget, they only pretend to forget, otherwise it would be difficult for them to go on living.[74]

In *Zameen*, there is no mention of the brutal violence by the warring communities rather it takes that as a departure point and focuses on what happened after women managed to escape that violence by the opposing communities. What is a significant feature about Mastoor's work is that her focus stays within the family and dynamics of changing relationships and unfolding of violence within the four walls. *Zameen* is also a document of complexity of the abuse of women not by the opposing communities but by the members of the family. Khatija Mastoor depicts the violence of Partition by focusing on the everydayness of the violence. Violence that is perpetuated secretly and silently has the propensity of not getting recognized since there is no witness. The boundaries between violence and everyday get blurred and the whole apparatus of sexual violence is perpetuated since family or 'ordinary' is not considered as a site of violence like the 'extraordinary'. Veena Das states that for violence to get recognized it has to be a spectacle and since familial violence happens

[73] Menon and Bhasin, *Borders and* Boundaries,1998.

[74] Kamleshwar, Vishwamitter Adil, Alok Bhalla, "How Many Pakistans" *Manoa*, (19.1), 2007.

with the same social actors who share familiarity and social space, it becomes increasingly difficult to speak of such violence. In *Zameen* Khatija Mastoor portrays this distortion of the local and familial moral fabric and teases out how violence gets embedded in the normal patterns of everyday. For such violence that gets stitched on to the body renders itself devoid of a vocabulary to narrate such exploitation. The lack of vocabulary for an experience then also becomes a statement towards the impact and magnitude of that experience. It is important in terms of looking at the contiguity of violence against women outside and inside. Most of the narratives around violence as we have seen are about the violence from outside but the documentation of violence from inside has been very scarce thus leaving a gap in our understanding of how violence during the Partition unfolded.

By looking at the violence from within these narratives moves beyond the visible brutal violence and brings forth the struggles and strategies that women took to once they 'escaped' and entered the promised 'land of hopes and dreams' for Muslims. In certain narratives silences also have to be read as a strategy to not accept the vocabulary of 'shame' and 'honour' and an effort to think beyond it.

The centrality of the raped or abducted woman and the brutality of the Muslim/Hindu male formed much of the canvas of Partition literature. The violence that women had to go through during the event became more like a record for official statements and nothing beyond that. Even if such incidents did figure in meta-narratives of Partition they were only to serve the purpose of explicating the magnitude of the violence that unfolded. The "stories of these women do find a place in the narrations, but are rarely considered of any significance other than the illustrative examples of the violence and maliciousness of the 'Other' Narratives used in Partition inspired fiction or those

historians' accounts, which are considered and legitimized as authentic by the state authorities are always imbued with a patriarchal perspective and signify the violence carried out on women as always important than the victims' subjectivity"[75]The narratives of raped and abducted women are closely kept under veil so that the narratives of nation as confidently progressing may not be disrupted. These stories create crevices in the neatly packaged statist narratives and also those narratives that locate ruptures outside of the community.

Khatija Mastoor gives a picture of how during the Partition it wasn't just the outside, the 'other' that was the source of violence but the male members from the family who inflicted the violence on women within the so called 'safe confines' of their home. She moves beyond the narratives of clearly defined villains and heroes and through her stories demonstrates those experiences that are pushed into the unconscious. Taji's case in *Zameen* illustrates this very well. Taji is brought to the house from a refugee camp on the pretext of giving her shelter in a respectable Muslim home and help her pursue her education. She narrates her story to Sajida:

> I have worked so hard in my life that I am already tired… Partition happened… Pakistan came into existence … riots erupted… Caste and class lines were blurred…my mother and I joined a caravan coming to Pakistan ... me and my mother separated but she told me that I will get a respectable life in Pakistan and a respectable partner…Pakistan came into existence but life did not change.[76]

The inmates of the house start Taji's mistreatment once they get to know about the poor background of her family and how her mother could not escape the rapists. She is not treated as a 'honourable Muslim woman' who has come to Pakistan, the holy

[75] Khan, *Speaking Violence : Pakistani Women's Narratives of Partition*, p.100.

[76] Mastoor, *Zameen*, p.62.

land created for the 'upliftment of the community'. She is made the servant of the family. Qazim with the knowledge of other family members exploits Taji sexually. No one in the family raises an objection to how Qazim exploits her. Her many abortions done stealthily with the help of a local woman are kept under a veil until the time Taji falls seriously ill. On Sajida's intervention Taji is taken to a hospital where she breathes her last. Life for Qazim and for family moves about in a routine way with no mention of violence committed on Taji. Khala Bi, who abets Qazim has no regrets for her abetment. The family 'honour' is thus saved by killing Taji. The mindset of men having a 'right' over women's bodies, especially when they are feeding them and providing shelter is hinted by Mastoor in a very explicit manner.

Through Taji's case Mastoor contests the representation of one's community and home being a safe haven for women where they receive unconditional love. Women experienced the feeling of homelessness even when they were with their families because for 'violated' women the home was lost with the loss of 'chastity'. Taji is treated as a maid inside the family and no one respects her as a family member because a woman's place inside a family as much as outside the family "is contingent on certain regimes of the body, most important among which is chastity."[77] It also proves an alternative to our understanding of violence inflicted on women. The story of Taji theorizes violence against women differently. It is not just a moment of insanity that came upon men in such conditions but the transactions of violence happen on a daily basis. The violence against women is not just anomie of certain times ensued by circumstances, but embedded in everyday social relationships. The

[77] Sukriti Paul Kumar , *Narrating Partition, Texts, Interpretations, Ideas*, Indialog Publications,2004,p.4.

political rape thus is not something that is outside the family but very much part of how male members of the family operate in positions of power.

The significant issue here is how the writer brings to the front the notion of chastity and women's honour 'being' important for maintaining a family and in a larger sense a nation. Also, Partition violence did not only come from outside and not only from men but in some exceptional circumstances inside the family it was women too who connived with men to inflict and perpetuate violence. Khali Bi has full knowledge of how Qazim rapes Taji in her servant quarter every night. She does not act on it but rather helps Qazim in many ways to conceal his sexual exploits. She arranges for a mid wife who conducts many abortions on Taji. When Taji is taken ill Khali Bi pleads with Sajida to take her to the hospital to not save her life but to save the family honour:

> Sajida, please take her to the hospital… Please save the honour of this family one more time…take her away…make sure to register her as the gardener's wife
>
> But Khala Bi, shouldn't Qazim take her to the hospital
>
> What? What are you saying Sajida? He would he go out with this *zaleel* woman… You don't know the likes of her, Sajida. Even when they are kept inside the safe confines of a family, they don't forget their habbits… And you know men, they are not be blamed if women roam around with makeup.[78]

Taji is treated as the family property and although she realizes it but is helpless to do anything. She is treated as Qazim's property and by extension property of the family since she stays at their place. Her rape is not seen as an abrasion of her rights or any civility nor is it seen as an offence committed by Qazim. Khala Bi's assertion about

[78] Ibid.,p.140.

Qazim's right over taji's body is discussed in some way by Veena Das in her study on violence and rape. She states that "women are implicitly treated as the property of men so that rape comes to be defined not as an offence against woman's bodily integrity but as an offense against the property rights of man who is her guardian. The reasoning deployed works with the notion that men are sexual savages 'naturally' positioned to take women…women however are divided into good women and bad women; the former are women who are in custody of fathers, husbands and have no history of sexual promiscuity … the bad women are seen incapable of saying no to sex."[79] Khala Bi's character also disrupts the notion of 'aggressive and violent communal male'. Her role in strengthening the sexual violence against Taji is what helps Qazim get away with his crime. "Although women are victims of communal violence but it does not make them immune to communal ideology. Both Patriarchal and communal mindsets exist equally among men and women…Feminist convictions are not given or inherent in all women afterall."[80]

Taji had in away internalized the violence that she was caught in. She keeps thinking that it is because she is poor and has nowhere else to go. The violence inflicted on her has a profound impact on her subjectivity and how she envisions how to live her life:

> Yesterday Qazim had come to my room and he slapped me and told me that once he is married he would throw me out of the house … he would send me to some other place because then he would not need me. He said that if I talk about anything he would kill me and people won't even get to see my dead body…It is my mistake baji, when Qazim came to my quarter for the first time, he said he loved me. I believed him, everything! His mother resented

[79] Veena Das, "Violence, Gender, Subjectivity", *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol 37, 2008, p.292.
[80] Prakash, *Writing Partition*, p.122.

it when he would look at me…But now when she is convinced that it is nothing beyond sexual exploitation she doesn't mind at all![81]

Qazim tries to rape Sajida also but she escapes. One night it was raining very hard and she was trying to sleep. She hears sounds on her door and thinks Taji had come to visit her. When she opens the door, Qazim jumps in and latches the door from inside:

What are you doing?

I thought you would be scared because of the thundering.

Qazim, this is not Taji's quarter…Get out of my room… Get out now. You have come to the wrong place!

Taji is so much better than you… We *feed her and she pays for it*!

And you…what do you think of yourself…why did we get you from the camp…you *Munshi's daughter!*[82]

Before he could approach her she shouts loudly and opens the door and escapes. She tries to convey it to Salma but her conversation makes her realise that the family was already privy to what Qazim was up to and also did not object to his doings. After this incident Sajida stays away from Qazim and tries to stay in Salma's room most of the time. Qazim's words keep ringing in her head; "Who is going to listen to you. You poor woman"! She decides to leave the house and search for a new home. But within no time she realizes that she had nowhere to go and was forced to stay there. Later Nazim proposes to her and she decides to marry him for she feels it to be the only way she can stay safe in the house. She enters the alliance not because she loves Nazim

[81]Mastoor, *Zameen*, p.70.

[82] Mastoor, Zameen, p.100.

who is her captor in many ways. He gets her from the camp and keeps her in his house. When Sajida realizes that she could become a victim of Qazim's vile motives she decides to accept Nazim's proposal. In order to escape one man she enters into a relationship with another. Sajida's life exemplifies the predicament of all those women who had to marry their abductors. It wasn't out of their will or their desire but out of a requirement to 'save' themselves. The desire for home stems from the desire to keep claims of body at bay. Sajida realizes that to situate herself in the social she needs to anchor herself somewhere because the dangers of breaking the walls of home and escaping into the larger society were real and palpable. Her decision is a critique of how for women refugees to escape one oppressive structure it became inevitable to enter another. The danger of sexual exploitation and threat to herself forces Sajida to consolidate the notion of home/family as a safe place. It is quite paradoxical that she was rendered unsafe within the confines of home and she chooses to enter this protecting/threatening space again. Her strategy to use 'marriage as part of her settlement programme'[83] illustrates the patriarchal circle that women are caught in situation stable or unstable.

Sajida and Taji being taken away from the camp by random people is in fact a different kind of 'abduction' that women had to face. Both women were abducted by Nazim and his family but they did not fall into the fold of what the State termed as the category of abducted women. If a Hindu woman was found in a Muslim household she was abducted and if a Muslim woman was found in a Hindu woman she too was abducted. But what did the State do for people like Sajida or Taji who were abducted too but by the members of their own community. This story of their lives opens up

[83] Annika Philip, Elsie Ho. Migration, Home and Belonging: South African Migrant Women in Hamilton, *New Zealand Population Review* , 36, 81, 2010.

various unattended perspectives of violence meted to women during Partition. In the eyes of the State both women were *in their place* since they were with *their* community members and deserved no further intervention. The story of women like Sajida and Taji then create ruptures within the offered narrative of abducted women and throws into question the framing of the category of abducted women on the basis of religion entirely. It forces us to widen the perspectives to understand the process of abduction of women during the Partition.

Also what *Zameen* does through the character of Lali, who is beaten by her husband, is that it shines light on the fact that the violence against women is not just because of some exceptional circumstances but it is woven in the fabric of everyday functioning of men-women relations in the society. Lali, Taji and Amma are an example to state that the violence of Partition did not end with that but women continued to face such debilitating acts. Lali is repeatedly assaulted by her husband who is a political worker and it is only on Sajida's insistence that she resists and retaliates. The conversation between Sajida and Lali exemplifies the agency and solidarity that women expressed in the face of violence and an insight into their evolving subjectivity:

> I refuse to engage with you if you cry like this… what should I do then?... Just that when he hits you, you should hit him back. .. I should hit him back, hit my husband ...Yes. You. He will keep beating you till the time you keep quiet but once you hit back and speak, he will stop it.[84]

Nazim's father is a drunkard who does not get along with his wife but stays with his wife's sister in the same house. Her daughter Salma rues the fact that her mother destroyed the home of her elder sister by developing a romantic relationship with her

[84] Mastoor, *Zameen*, p.163.

husband. She curses Partition for being responsible for what her mother did to her sister, who everyone calls Amma. For Amma existence of Pakistan always reminded her of destruction of her home and her intimate relationships. When Nazim goes to her room to say hello she says:

> How is your Pakistan? Everything alright?
>
> My Pakistan? ...He laughs….Isn't it your Pakistan? Why do you think it is just my Pakistan, whatever this country has, it is for all of us.
>
> Not mine…. Not mine. There is nothing for me here… whatever this country has to offer is for you, your father and your Khala![85]

As discussed in the previous chapter home is not a neutral place which functions on unconditional love and familial ties. In fact what constitutes home is not just the images of intimacy and familiarity between its members but the place of male dominion. Looking inside the corridors of home for violence against women helps us theorise the Partition violence better. Partition literature has been informed by images of communal violence and has been silent on the violence by the family members. The state and family members equally pushed their women to kill themselves in order to *save* them from the men of other community. 'Women as repositories of honour' was thus employed to kill these women to keep alive the notions of cultural understanding. In the interviews of women who survived the violence Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin discuss the case of ninety women of Thoa Khalsa who (*were forced*) jumped into the well to evade the sexual aggression is indisputably forced suicide. Notions of shame, honour, *izzat* are so deep rooted in the society that women internalize these notions of preferring death over life. And women like Taji who

[85] Ibid.,122.

revolted against committing suicide and desiring to continue to live were forced to die by the members of the home where she was treated as nothing less than a dirty little woman with weakness for men. Taji's case is complicated because she had come to a nation where she belongs as per the logic of Partition. She was a Muslim and belonged in Pakistan. She could not have stayed back in India eve if she would have wished so. Her recovery from her abductors home would have gathered nobody's attention since she was placed within her community. If she had not escaped and had been abducted in India would her life have been different? In India if single Muslim women were left behind they posed a different challenge to the State. Were these women to be sent to Pakistan where their families had been relocated or where they to be kept in India because millions of Muslims had stayed back. These women though were seen as some kind of pollutants to be kept away in order to save the male Hindu subject. As one of the leaders stated "I don't suggest for a moment that the Muslim girls should be kept here because I believe that not only would it be good for them to be sent away but it is equally good for us to get rid of them…I don't want immorality to prosper in my country" [86]

Conclusion

Partition dislocated/displaced millions of people and from the examination of these texts one could come to the conclusion that the impact was felt differently by men and women. Of course what also needs to be mentioned is the class factor and how much of a role did that have to play in migration and help people confront the new reality of their lives. Many people gained from the migration in how it helped them acquire property and wealth that did not belong to them. For women it was different in how it

[86] Veena Das, *Critical Events: An Anthropological Perspective on Contemporary India*, Oxford University Press, Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, 1995

impinged on their lives. For those women who were abducted or raped during migration life posed challenges of survival; surviving alone and rebuilding their lives. Some women like Khala bi made intervention into another family to secure their lives and others like Sajida were forced to enter a relationship with a man to save herself from further violation of her bodily integrity. The educated middle class women gained from the opportunities of seeking further education and help them grant some mobility. Partition thus became enabling for them. Also how women resisted to violence differed and is illustrated through the cases of many women characters in the novel. Sajida was not able to do much for Taji but for Lali she realizes the importance of strength to fight back. The experience helps us better understand her subjectivity. It is a slow and painful process for her. *Zameen* helps us understand and read the events of Partition through the lived experience of people. The human dimension of the event which have been brought forth by various oral histories of Partition as well help us understand and enhance the various stories of the event. These narratives of partition migration unmask the "complexity and the multiple levels within the Partition movement"[87]Although history and empirical studies have been given a primacy over such methods but nevertheless such documentation presents us with the bigger picture. As Pippa Virdee discusses that within history the role of the women has been completely marginalised. Piecing together the impact of Partition on women from documentary sources is possible but only to a limited extent, which justifies the role of other alternative sources: "It allows us to challenge ideological reading of the past…By empowering women to speak it presents us with the opportunity to piece together a social cultural history of hidden lives, often confined to private spaces but nonetheless, lives which are important… these personal narratives demonstrate there

[87] Ravinder Kaur, The Last Journey: Exploring Social class in the 1947 Partition Migration, *Economic and Political Weekly*, June 3, 2006.

is still some progress to be made but they do provide the historian a insight into other alternative narratives, which is essential if old histories are to be challenged or reappraised. These accounts allow us to explore the subtleties and the complex lives during this difficult period. It is these alternative spaces created by women which are important in moving forward any discussion on displacement and upheaval caused by Partition."[88]

These literary accounts thus become as documents that tell us the other side of the story of Partition migration placing women at the centre and weaving the narrative around occurrences that seem insignificant to the larger historical narratives. The frames of our reference and perception get changed with such narratives. Migration did not stop at the settlement of the refugees in the bueurocratic terms but continued in terms of the struggles of people to find a place within the new nation. For women it was not just the tedious journey of escaping the attackers but life beyond that event that equally reshaped their lives within the familial fold. The terror outside the home resonated inside the family a well because the violence that no speaks of perpetuated unabated within the four walls. Pakistan after all was not a holy land, land of prophets and saints but it was the continuation of the same dreary reality that Partition had unfolded for women.

[88] Pippa Virdee, "Remembering Partition: Women, Oral histories and the Partition of 1947", *Oral History*, Vol. 41, No. 2, CONFLICT (AUTUMN 2013), pp. 49-62.

Conclusion

Partition reverberates, even today, even now when violent ethnic conflicts and inter community tensions are alive in the subcontinent. It is a metaphor from the past that has bearing on the future so much so that some scholars are of the opinion that rather than post colonial times there should be post Partition times[1]. It continues to shape the political and social contours of post colonial states and their engagement with the contemporary political crisis. Muslims in India and non Muslims in Pakistan are still struggling with national belonging owing to the political, cultural and religious repression that the communities face from the ruling states respectively. The far reaching implications of Partition can be seen in the communal patterns of current violent climate. In India being Hindu comes with a certificate of patriotism and being non-Hindu, especially Muslim has its own consequences; suspicion and fifth column. In Pakistan similar treatment is meted out to Hindus, Christians and Ahmedyas. When the fundamental basis of a nation is the thrust on similarity and dissolving heterogenity then the conflicts can never end and nation states can never survive. Constructing false national identities on the basis of coercion and political repression will lead only to instability and more conflicts. The fragile nature of postcolonial states has never been more pronounced than it is today and the memories of Partition have never been more manifest as they are in this time.

The thesis focused on the narration of Partition in the writings of Muslim women. The concern of the project was to understand how the Muslim women writers represented the impact of the event as experienced by women who were thought of being passive

[1] Rannabir Sammadar quoted in Smita Tewari Jassal, Eyal Ben Ari (eds)*The Partition Motif in Contemporary Conflicts* , Sage Publications, New Delhi, 2007.pp 21.

participants in the political turmoil of that time. While the memory of the Partition still stays fresh in the minds of the people, many stories have never been told or heard due to the difficulty of narrating something as traumatic and as gripping as partition violence. Also the memories of Partition have not been institutionalized in terms of a day dedicated to public mourning in memory of millions of people killed and displaced[2]. In such situations where stories of trauma, violence and displacement have to be hidden in order give way to celebratory narratives, writings by women acquire a specific significance. At such junctures literature acting as 'surrogate testimony'[3] becomes important to understand the dynamics of Partition. For a 'healthy catharsis'[4] one needs to take recourse to literature to understand Partition and the new social and political arrangements.

I have argued that the women writers by narrating the nation in a certain defiant way have offered a critique of the process of Partition, its hasty cartographic articulation and the gendered violence through which much of the nationalism was defined by. In this concluding part I want to bring all the earlier concerns together and sum up my final impression of the theoretical concerns of the preceding chapters.

In relation to my first chapter I trace the trajectory of cultural symbols and their employment to further the divisive narratives of Partition to suit the interests of the few. The symbols of language that were used to unify the community turned out to be divisive after the creation of Pakistan. The use of the language as the moniker of identity of a community and the continuous exercise of attempting to cohere it failed with the repartitioning of Pakistan. In the subcontinent Pakistan was the first state to

[2] The Partition museum as referred to in the Introduction is a project in the pipeline.

[3] Tarun.K.Saint, *Witnessing Partition: Memory, History, Fiction*, Routledge, 2010, pp 47.

[4] Sukrita Paul Kumar, *Narrating Partition: Texts, Interpretations, Ideas*, Indialog publications, 2004

be conceived on the basis of the religious identity and the state to break away from its east wing on the basis of cultural and linguistic pluralism. The creation of Bangladesh and its demand was seen as lack of national belonging by Pakistanis and the non devotion to Urdu language as a treachery. The creation of one more separate nation with majority of Muslims was the rebuttal to the creation of Pakistan and its philosophy of the desirability of the separate Muslim land, as well the failure of the coherence of states on the basis of religious similarity. While the formation of the new state was advocated and supported by many on the basis of recognizing the aspiration of those who wanted a separate homeland based on religiously shared propensities, the decision to divide people on such basis did not stand the test of the time. The arguments of difference that were generated to create the nation were again used to break the nation. The creation of Bangladesh engendered the production of the narrative of how nations are created by erasing the dissimilarity and build on forced homogeneity. Varying narratives of nation are thus subsumed in the one mainstream narrative that is generic in terms of how if offers the history of the event. Women writers in their creative exercise take opposition to these generic narratives and craft more of specific narratives that take us beyond the imposed and forced narratives which willingly obliviate the uncomfortable legacies of an event like Partition. Such writings complicate what seem to be like the smooth and organic continuity of the events and rather bring forth the ruptures and crevices in such narratives. The implications of such cartographic exercises on the subjectivities of both men and women can be seen in the reading of Quratulain Hydrer's work that I shed light on in the Chapter II. Hyder's work is a testament to the fact the women's narratives of Partition were in opposition to the official and statist narratives. In Pakistan where the accounts of Partition were celebratory and lot of the history was tapped into the

Islamic significance of Muslim homeland, Hyder debunks such narratives and brings forth the complexity of the deliberate erasures on part of the nationalist historians. Her work complicates and if I may say implicates the historian in representing an organic view of the chronology of Partition. Her writing questions the manipulation of historical facts to serve the nation and gives it a different history replete with manipulation and erasures. The analysis of the texts also questions the political investments made towards bringing a nation into being.

While the event was ridden with violence and trauma, the perspectives that Hyder offers us beckons to understand Partition through new paradigms that look beyond the corporeal narratives of the event. This is explicated by Khatija Mastoor as well in her work which I delve into in my chapter III. What we see in her writings is the representation of a Muslim home in the times of political and social crises and the engagement of women with their immediate reality. The dichotomy of public/private spaces is addressed and what comes forth is the condition of coalescing of these boundaries where the private becomes public or the private performs the public within the solid and material confines of home. These writings interrogate the suppositions of the dichotomy of public and private positioning of the women as well as men. The house as a site of power contestation is a reflection of the nation wrestling to free itself from one power structure only to form another one divided on the basis of religion.

The narratives of Muslim women reconfigure and reconceive the position of women within the framework of understanding Partition. In other words what I am trying to state is that these writings open a new arena of conceptualizing the event of Partition where the different ways of how the event impinged on the lives of people is

examined. The turning of lens to women's spaces addresses the tensions within the Muslim home and exposes the interior life of the family. The competing arrangement of the relationships within the precinct of home is fore-grounded to tell the stories of women that otherwise stay on the fringes. The notions of similar interests shared by the collective community are debunked here for these writers unpack the diverse and varying experiences of women based on their social location and position.

By turning in the gaze inside these writers expose the limits of the project of nationalism; homogenisation and erasure of difference. By positioning their narratives inside the home with women at the centre writing becomes an act of intervening in public spaces reserved for men. The male conceptualization and portrayal of women centered around the violation of 'women's honour' which gave a passive position to women and their roles. However in these writings we see how women navigated through and made choices amidst the asymmetrical power equations. The writing and the narrative in this case becomes the voice which is denied to women in mainstream discourses. The visibility and the agency of women which is seen as the instability within the household is explicated in these texts. The Muslim home as a site of complicated socio-political arrangement sheds light on how the private sphere and public sphere interact with each other. Reading home as a physical space and a cultural space is in a sense subversive of doing 'business as usual'[5] since it portrays how even the private sphere is endlessly embroidered in the political. This also leads one to recognize the fact that the memories of home are crucial in understanding the impact of the event like Partition for it is home where the politics is translated into the arrangement of relationships and the transactions of violence happen as well. What I

[5] Antoinette Burton, *Dwelling in the Archive : Women Writing House , Home, and History in Late Colonial India*, Oxford University Press, 2003.

attempt to bring out in Chapter IV is this very assumed liminal nature of home as a source of significant material required in traditional methods of doing history. When we look at violence against women during Partition, the major thrust is on the violence from outside while the violence inside from within the home was equally present.

The conversations within the home put forward the dynamic of Partition migration and how people from different backgrounds realized the process of dislocation. Many people like Taji as we see in Chapter IV were directly affected by the riots and violence so they did not have any option but to flee their land. For many others like Qazim who were called 'Optees', Muslims who opted for migration in order to be part of the government services in Pakistan, migration was altogether a different story.

To a practicing historian these details might be useless for the mere fact that factuality of such incidents is questionable for the want of material evidence. It is this approach towards understanding an event that leaves significant stories and perspectives out of the historical fold. One argument that I have tried to highlight throughout this thesis is the approach towards the sources to understand Partition and its consequences for the people. The underlying assumption also hints at the continuing marginality of the women's experiences owing to the use of certain 'authentic sources' to locate them and the for the want of a better word I would say the value of literary narratives to look at the perspectives that are ignored.

Both writers use familial space to construct their own version of how history impacts the individual and vice versa. Antoinette Burton in her study of the colonial home through daily diaries and memoirs written by women suggests the importance of widening the parameters and paradigms of understanding the socio-political reality by

constituting an ‘inclusive archive’ to understand the vastness of an event. Listening to such stories is productive in terms of moving forward to understand the futurity of the postcolonial nations. While various stories get erased and subsumed in the service of contributing to the nationalist narrative the writings by women become the instruments of defiance and tools to challenge the authority and imbalance of such narratives. The reasoned and established narratives of the state engulf the emotional narratives to form a coherent picture. The human and cultural loss during and before the Partition and the dislocation is framed as necessary sacrifices to make the nation survive and come into being. In the women’s narratives however we see that the formation of Pakistan does not evince the same response of willing sacrifice for the Muslim nation but rather a strife and struggle with the memories of home that was elsewhere. The tension between how women narrate and relate to the nation is expressed in terms of how the stories of glorification of nation and heroism are kept at bay and rather the poignant loss of home is given precedence. They bring out tensions and contradictions in the narratives of nation.

When the formation of nations is predicated on the understanding of the significance of homogeneity then the minorities and dissimilar groups are seen as a threat or a problem within the scheme. Dividing people on the basis of religious affiliation to resolve a conflict has never yielded the desired peace. The echoes of which can still be heard in the postcolonial states of Indian, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. The minority community in each of these states is seen as an aberration and as a threat to the unity of the nation. Partition was replete with contradictions, the manifestation of which is the persistence of ethnic conflicts in postcolonial nation states. The struggle of Kashmiri nationhood is the biggest reminder of the hasty articulation of the decision that led to Partition.

This thesis attempted to offer a critique of articulating the nation and the engagement of Muslim women with the performance of nation and the interaction of the domestic with the national. The deconstruction of the nationalist narratives through the cultural production of Pakistan has opened up the challenges to the dominant narrative. These texts lay bare the event of the Partition through quotidian experience. In this thesis I have tried to show how Muslim women engaged with the experience of Partition, formation of Pakistan and the strife within homes. The tension in the writings of Muslim women is how the Partition and consequently the birth of Pakistan is remembered. While Hyder takes us back into the history before she wants us to look ahead, Mastoor moves forward and dissects the consequences that are otherwise looked over; what are the claims that a nation makes and what are the constraints that come with it.

Raahe-e-mazmoon-e taza band nahi

Ta qayamat khula hai bab-e sukhan

The road to new themes is not closed

The doors of discourse remain open till the day of judgement

(Wali Muhammad Wali)

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