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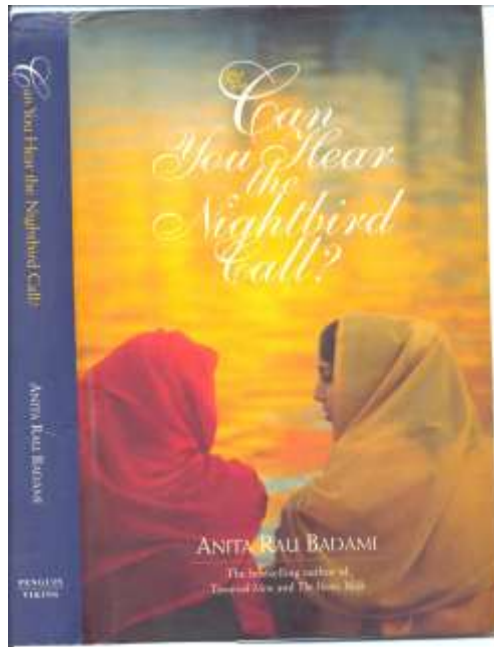
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An Androcentric and Gynocentric Perspective of Women as Victims in Partition Fiction: A Comparative Study

Radhika Purohit, M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.



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Abstract

This paper is a comparative study of the novels of the male and female writers on the theme of Partition of India. It is an attempt to study the manner in which the male writers have dealt with the aspect of victimization of women during the catastrophic events of the Partition as compared to the women writers. It also attempts to analyze the possible reasons behind the difference in the perspectives of the male and the female novelists in projecting women as the prime targets and victims of this history of death, destruction, defilement and destitution.

Introduction

Woman victimization is one of the evils confronting women all over the world this evil is further compounded if they are placed in unstable political societies or events. Women being extremely vulnerable are easy targets of any form of oppression, humiliation, deprivation and discrimination. Partition literature explores the sexual trauma, sufferings and painful experiences of women during and after the Partition. This in many ways substantiates the fact that inequality of sexes is neither a biological fact nor a divine mandate but a cultural construct.

Six novels have been taken up for this comparative study of which three works of the male novelists namely; *The Train to Pakistan* by Khushwant Singh, *Tamas* by Bhisham Sahni and *Azadi* by Chaman Nahal will be compared with the works of three female novelists namely; *Earth 1947* by Bapsi Sidhwa, *What the Body Remembers* by Shuana Singh Baldwin and *Can You Hear the Night bird Call?* by Anita Rau Badami.

The Andocentric Perspective

Train to Pakistan is truly brilliant in its approach and presentation of the Partition. The village of Mano Majra and the characters that inhabit it realistically depict the psychology of the Indian village. Suresh Chandra remarks that “*Train to Pakistan* is a

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village specific and not a village-centered novel for the feeling and concern for the village.”¹ It tries and captures a villages’ tryst with Partition. The predominant quality of the novel lies in its trenchant exposition of the theme of Partition thus fulfilling its primary objective.

The novelist analyses the cause of the Partition from political, communal and bureaucratic aspects and simultaneously deals with its drastic effects leading to mass scale violence and victimization. The novel is sarcasm on the religious and the federal aspects of the Indian society.

“*Train to Pakistan* shows how peace is disturbed by the fundamentalist forces in connivance with the government machineries and how personal loves of Hukum Chand for Haseena and Juggat Singh for Nooran assert itself and saves the train to Pakistan from being ambushed”.²

Khushwant does not fail to condemn the reigning Congress government and its policies. Also, the attitude of local police and petty government functionaries is very agreeably depicted. The author takes the opportunity to expose the low morality of the administration that is deeply affected by the existing communal and religious fervour. This victimization of the administrative system at the larger scale is apparent in the form of the Magistrate Hukum Chand. The police force in Punjab suffered from several failings and weaknesses: inefficiency, corruption, unscrupulousness and greed.

It focuses on the plight of the uneducated in the country poignantly revealing their pathetic condition for being forced into the confusing mess of the Partition and how easily they can be influenced and how susceptible they are to rumours.

It also deal with the principle value that if the educated people had taken a right step at the right time then there would not have been such a massive bloodshed in India.

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This novel is certainly about the innocent victims of the Partition where the village of Mano Majra provides the base for the different social, economic, federal and political thread work required to illustrate the suffering. The social sufferings such as Partition from the beloved, the trauma of leaving the homeland have been dramatically presented. The suffering part of the victims in the train is provided as a cause for the start of the chaos in the village. The whole part of the Partition is presented to show the human dimension of the momentous event

The train motif is also employed to depict the ghastly and awful experience of human beings involved in a historical and dehumanizing process. It symbolized death and disaster of the Partition as much as it symbolized life and action before the Partition.

However Singh's idea of victimization can be more importantly viewed in his portrayal of common people as victims of: politics at both state/regional and national level, as victims of the selfish motives of the bureaucrats or as victims of their ignorance and illiteracy rather than victims of the Partition violence.

Portrayal of Women in *Train to Pakistan*

In spite of the numerous merits, the novel falls short in the following aspects. Firstly it is essentially patriarchal in its representation. Secondly it depicts the lop-sided view of the victimization of the Partition violence and lastly it conspicuously misses women characters and their points of view of the Partition.

Women in the novel are presented as non-entities ever involved mechanically in the routine menial household chores. "Women rub clarified butter into each other's hair, pick lice from their children's heads, and discuss births, marriages(p.5). "women, who had gone from door to door collecting and dropping bits of gossip...." (p.78) "Women fed their children on stale leftovers from the day before. They did not have time to light their hearths." (p.83) or "hearths over which women were cooking the evening meal." (p.165) throughout the length of the novel the women are described doing nothing else

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other than these. Endowing women with no individuality displays a patriarchal approach towards women.

Politics, economy, religion and even the social context is thought from the points of view of the people who are classified by their professions and education and not by sex. Presenting too many perspectives, through different role portrayals, has overshadowed the more significant themes of the suffering and victimization of women and children. The problem is well highlighted by the list of the sufferings and a vivid description of the violent scene of the arrival of corpses in the train, but he fails to foreground the cause of female victimization in particular.

The only two very insignificant female characters that one finds in the novel are: Nooran, the object of Juggat's passion and Haseena, the object of Hukum Chand's lasciviousness. Haseena at that tender age is nothing short of a victim of the typical Indian representative of bureaucracy in India under the British Raj and ironically not of the Partition.

There is no woman thought in the book and at one point called the "weaker sex" just to give a hint of the existing social conditions. The women voice seems subdued and alienated, displaying a dominant masculine ideology in operation with regard to the Partition.

The women in Singh's fictional world are silhouetted against this vast, panoramic background, the great human catastrophe of the Partition as depicted from men's' point of view. It merely indicates and suggests the awful and ghastly experience of women involved in this historical and dehumanized process but does not portray or depict their fate, their misery and their sufferings.

"The sexual, predominantly masculine, symbolism Singh uses to locate the three Indian communities in the novel is redolent of the theory examined by George Mosse in 'Nationalism and Sexuality' –that only men, masculinity and heterosexuality can co-exist with a nation."³

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This view point can be substantiated by the fact that Jugga's male body takes the acclaim of heroism whereas the bodies of Noor and Haseena which are sexually and culturally "othered" through prostitution and pre-marital pregnancy are deployed differently. They are not coded as heroic.

The apparently straightforward, historical-realist plot is complicated by Juggat Singh's affair with a Muslim girl and Hukum Chand's liaison with a Muslim girl. Ralph J. Crane in this regard opines that "The treatment of Muslim women thus becomes a means of measuring Sikh and Hindu communal nationalism."⁴

However this also reveals that women never inhabit the identity of a proper religious subject. Women's bodies are not marked in a canonized ritual warp, for women are never 'properly' ethnically identified except through their relations with Hindu, Muslim or Sikh men.

Chand's response about the Hindu women being so pure that they would rather die than allow Muslims to lay hand on them, not only erases from the ethnic community the presence of the raped Hindu women, but also endorses the contemporaneous popular ideology of suicide as the only option for women raped, or about to be raped. This reinforces the common Hindu nationalist rhetoric about women's purity and defilement, supposedly making the very victim- the women of that violence desire physical death. In the character of Hukum Chand lies the failure of the novel in failing to transcend and envision discourses beyond patriarchy and communalism.

Lack of Women Perspective

Khushwant Singh unfortunately has missed the women perspective in the novel which is sad since here was one of a true writer who could capture India from villages to cities like no one else could. It would be more appreciable if he would have thought of women not as objects of sex (as he does with both the women characters in the novel) but more as victims of the Partition violence. Three full pages of the novel is devoted to describe the

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love making acts of Juggat and Nooran and twice the number of pages to describe the lustful encounters of Hukum Chand with Haseena. And even here one can easily feel the male domination pervading in these sexual descriptions. The novel fails to challenge the production of women as sexual objects and cultural symbols that grounds ethnic sexual violence. When a novelist does not fail to miss or ignore women as a source of men's sensual pleasure how does he miss or ignore women as the victims of men's retaliation?

Overlooking this aspect of the Partition is indeed strange and unanswerable. Or perhaps the answer lies in the fact of sexual politics.

Bhisham Sahni's novel *Tamas*

The full story of Partition and its intense impact on the human beings once again comes alive in Bhisham Sahni's novel *Tamas*. The events described in *Tamas* are based on true accounts of the riots of 1947 that Sahni was a witness to in Rawalpindi. The subject matter of: communal riots has made *Tamas* (The Darkness), one of the most controversial works in Indian literature. Filthy politics played in a small town district center to create a religious divide, which in turn would encourage the geographical divide in pre-independence India, is the theme of this novel.

Robert Stam and Alessandra Raengo comment on the novel thus: "It is written in a classic realist mode with both small and large events woven together to create the plot for the main characters, who become the subjects of its quasi historical narrative. Throughout the novel, a series of episodes that resemble the casual impulse of the traditional documentary form are deployed. The theme of ordinary people as pawns in the large game of the political intrigue immediately after Independence remains the guiding thread of the narrative....."⁵

Tamas relives the four days of communal violence through the eyes of different characters in the book and their horrifying experiences. It reveals how politicians use innocent and ignorant people to cause communal riots, the Congress party workers

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dispute among themselves for leadership, the non-violence movement is ridiculed by the so-called nationalists, and the inert but deeply interested British government: form a part of this collective insensitivity. *Tamas*, is a mirror to our narrow minded society, and reflects the cracks in the foundation of our secular democracy.

Tamas harshly reminds that politicians are the first step towards insanity of human kind. Be it a Muslim, Hindu or Sikh, every politician is self-centered. The events after the riots depicting more than hundred villages drowned betray humanism showing how British achieved their divide and rule policy successfully.

The author also shows how religious ethics can cause havoc in a peaceful city. The people driven by their emotions and feelings of vengeance kill each other. The role of the religion in politics is so well emphasized and highlighted that it becomes the central idea of the novel.

Tamas does not have one protagonist and it gives the interpretation of the same situation through different characters. The novel deals with some real-life incidents conveying a subtle message that Partition was not the solution to any of the problems India faced in 1947, and a bit more restraint amongst the individuals was all that was needed to keep India from dividing.

Speaking of the victimization aspect of the Partition violence, the praiseworthy aspect of *Tamas* is that it covers almost all the sections located in different places of the Indian community. It shows the victims in the town, village, young, and old, Muslim, Hindu, Sikhs and English. The author very intelligently introduces the characters and powerfully depicts the physical and the mental suffering of the victims. A narrative of factual details saturates all the personal stories.

The sequences after the riots are equally distressing where many characters relate their stories to the relief camp managers. The women caught by the mobs are sexually harassed and killed. Some women killed their own children and then killed themselves to

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escape from the mobs. The women who had been carried away by the mobs lived in constant fear, agony and apprehension. Psychological sufferings of the people benumbed their wits. Those who had been forcefully converted lost their people, their religion and most importantly their esteem and lived as underdogs in the other community. All these sufferings have been shown very vividly and thoughtfully placed by the author in the novel.

One of the most moving accounts is the description how a defeated Sikh, Iqbal Singh, gets converted to Islam to save his life and how he is demeaned and ridiculed by the Muslims:

However, the absence of the women's views is conspicuous, as no woman character is fully developed and the trauma that women experienced during the Partition is not projected in depth. The female characters in the story merely exist in the shadow of the dominant themes of politics, religion and communalism. As such the perspective in which the story is presented is that of a man. The depiction of women victimization lacks the feminine experience and sensitivity, Perhaps a different dimension would have been added to the story, if the Partition violence had been presented through the experiences of a woman as a victim of the actions perpetuated by men.

Nahal's Azadi

Azadi is a deeply touching saga of the Partition of the sub-continent and the accompanying disaster. The novel is realistic in its chronicling the details and in depicting a picture of human cruelty and perversity. "It also has a remarkable penetration and convincingness in its well-executed and gripping narrative, clear cut and readily identifiable characters and a kind of grisly, macabre atmosphere that has its own sharp appeal".⁶

As Khuswant Singh and Bhisham Sahni were more inclined towards the themes related to politics, communalism or religion, Nahal chose to deal with 'exile', as a consequence of

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the Partition. Unasked for exile, the suffering and loneliness that such forced exile imposes on the persons involved, is an experience by itself. Nahal confesses that “I wrote *Azadi* as a hymn to one’s land of birth, rather than a realistic novel of the Partition”.⁷

“Like the important novels written on this theme *Azadi* also focuses on the common man rather than on historical figures of the time.”⁸

There are only two characters in the novel that evolve and develop with the story – Lala Kanshi Ram and his son Arun. The novel opens projecting the protagonist indirectly. The prime concern of the author is the travails of migration which is depicted through the character of Lala Kanshi Ram, whose placid life is disturbed by the enervating change wrought by the Partition. Uprooted from home and feeling “crushed” (205) he is still “not defeated”, (269) as he leaves for India. The exodus of the people of the refugee camp, the painful experiences in the camp, the sad news of his dear daughter Madhubala’s death and series of experiences made his heart heavy and sadden his soul. But the protagonist in him is powerful as instead of getting down and defeated; he gains heroic endurance: “Many parts of him had died, but there were others still alive, forcefully and affirmatively alive, and he knew he was not defeated.” (p.269)

“The members of Kanshi Ram’s family suffer from a psychological partition from one another and feel unable to communicate mutually. All of them suffer from a sort of existential loneliness. Perhaps, all the material suffering like displacement, loss of land, home, roots, friends and relatives and so on have awakened in them the deep seated Hindu philosophical feeling of ‘vairagya’ or detachment.”⁹

“It is a Partition novel with a difference, as Nahal stresses through the protagonist Lala Kanshi Ram the necessity of human forgiveness, laying due emphasis on the “affirmation of life” to which he is committed through his stark realism, though it gets dissipated by a heavy dose of romantic love and sex.”¹⁰

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With regard to the depiction of violence and victimization in general, *Azadi* is full of graphic description of human indignity and brutality, mass murders and mass rapes, large scale abductions and parades of nude women. One of the most powerfully touching scene in the novel is the parade of the naked Hindu and Sikh women in Sialkot. In retaliation, Muslim women are paraded exactly in the same manner in the Indian Punjab.

“The novel is an example of how religion could generate in man the most destructive and inhuman frenzy. The description of the parading of the naked Hindu women by Muslims at Narowal is an example of it.”¹¹

Viewing *Azadi* from a feminine perspective one can admit without any hesitation that its perspective is male-oriented. Though all the characters in the novel, more so the women experience the same effects of a cataclysmic event marked by brutality, violence, bloodshed, mass murder and rape it is the varying reactions of the two male characters namely Lala Kanshi Ram and Arun, to these events which becomes the centre of interest in the novel.

“It is thus that the transformation of history into art is effected most successfully through the multiple perspective in which the events and actions are presented, by our being made to see the tragic drama enacted at once in the minds of the two characters representing two different generations and two different values and world views”.¹² (132) It is once again as in *Train to Pakistan* and in *Tamas* that the male characters alone are the centre of consciousness.

The episodes of love between Arun and Chandni are unwanted and uncomfortably sensual. The book was declared “obscene, vulgar and communal”. “In describing with intimate detail the liaison between Arun and Chandani, the author appears to be aiming at killing with one stone two birds of sex interest and social reform.”¹³

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The openness and boldness with which the sensuality of a women's body have been described in these episodes could have been more appropriately and meaningfully used to describe the victimization of women in the novel.

A View from the Feminist Perspective

Viewing from the feminine perspective, these three eminent novels on Partition considerably fall short in the depiction of the theme of women victimization with major women characters and their enduring the Partition tragedy. Women have been denied their due place in a narrative where they deserved to be the foremost. Why? The following aspects emerge upon a close analysis.

Firstly, men simply project on to women the attributes of weakness and masochism. This ignores the unconscious psychological processes of gender formation and the more impersonal social and economic factors of women oppression.

There are numerous such citations in these novels already mentioned which substantiate this attitude.

The Result of Men Shaping Literary Values and Conventions

Secondly, literary values and conventions have themselves been shaped by men. Thirdly, the male writers address their readers as if they are always men. The various scenes describing the love-making in *Train to Pakistan* and *Azadi*, and even the scene describing the parade of the naked women on the street in the latter confirm this limitation of a male writer.

Kate Millet, in *Sexual Politics* exposes the oppressive representations of sexuality that one can find in male fiction. The characters of Nooran and Haseena in *Train to Pakistan* and their depiction merely as objects of sexual pleasure for their men, the sketching of

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female characters and incidents related to them in *Azadi* or even *Tamas* are all such glaring examples of male domination pervading the sexual description. These novels are examples of narratives that carry the tone of one male relating an exploit to another in the masculine vocabulary and point of view. Are these male novelists compelled by their gender to reproduce the oppressive sexual politics of the real world in their fiction?

If the point of argument is that these writers narrate events from male point of view, as they are men, then this should be true for the women writers as well. But no women writer discussed in this work has excluded or ignored men's perspective in their narratives just because they are women. Male characters have been given equal significance and are depicted with equal sensitivity. The characters of the ice-candy man, Sardarji, Pa-ji or Satpal in the novels of the female novelists are sketched with great care and detail and one does not get a feeling that since the writer is a woman the male characters are reduced to insignificance, the feeling that one gets when reading a male novelist. If women can write about men without any prejudice in spite of being a woman, then why should not men write similarly about women because they are men?

Women's Experience – A Different Perspective

The literature about women is realities of their mental and physical sufferings and desperate struggle for a meaning in life and living. A woman's experience includes a different perceptual and emotional life; women do not say things in the same way as men and have different ideas and feelings about what is important and what is not. Sensitive as they are women writers express themselves by portraying characters or events with relation to exploitation, destitution, suffering and violence.

Since the theme of Partition demands portrayal of not only the socio-economic or political or humanistic implications of the tragic experiences of the suffering millions but also the deep psychic disturbances and emotional transformations brought about by that traumatic experience in the lives of women, portrayal of substantial female characters

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becomes indispensable. Though all the characters in these novels experience the same traumatic effects of brutality, violence, bloodshed, mass murder and rape, it is the varying reactions of the male protagonists to these events which become the central concern of these novels. Whereas the fact is that it is women who are the primary victims of any such conflict because of their being extremely vulnerable targets to sexual violence. The magnitude of this kind of violence is the most devastating kind and is beyond comprehension.

Manto's Short Stories

Quite unlike the male novelists discussed in this paper, Manto's short stories "scathingly critique the multiple forms of discursive and embodied violence that saturated women's lives during the Partition. Through irony, many of his stories make visible the female subject's dehumanizing reduction to a sexual object of communal consumption and ethnic exchange."¹⁴

The Gynocentric Perspective

Explaining the importance of examining women's experience Gerda Lerner says:

"Women have been left out of history not because of the evil conspiracies of men in general or male historians in particular, but because we have considered history only in male-centered terms. We have missed women and their activities, because we have asked questions of history which are inappropriate to women. To rectify this, and to light up areas of historical darkness we must, for a time focus on women-centered enquiry, considering the possibility of existence of a female culture within the general culture shared by men and women. History must include an account of the female experience over time and should the development of feminist consciousness as an essential aspect of

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women's past. This is the primary task of women's history. The central question it raises is: What would history be like if it would be seen through the eyes of women and ordered by values they define?"¹⁵

This question is suitably and duly answered by the female novelists of the Partition: Sidhwa, Anita Rau Badami and Baldwin.

The Female Novelists on Partition

All the three writers discussed in this paper have used their protagonists to explore a 'female consciousness and value system'. These female novelists have been influential in drawing attention to the differential history of women's experiences during the Partition. Narrating the stories of women characters who experienced the migration and violence, the novelists have revealed the complex dispossessions which is both psychic and material. They in these novels make visible the trauma, anguish, pain and ambivalence that mark the experience of Partition.

While Sidhwa specifically explores the abducted women's experiences, Anita Rau Badami represents an actual violation of the female body during the violence, through her writings. Baldwin on the other hand portrays women as victims of both the patriarchal society and the Partition.

Sidhwa's Novel

"Sidhwa's novel was written at a time when interest in the ongoing impact of Partition especially in the lives of women, was just beginning to be explored."¹⁶

The entire story is narrated by a child in a way that "Sidhwa's fictional, partial and episodic figuration of Lenny's reflections on her childhood experiences represents an

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effort to make visible the fragmented, non-linear, and contradictory experience of 'independence' alluded to in the 'cracking' metaphor of her title"¹⁷

"Lenny observes the clamorous horrors of Partition from the lap of her beautiful Ayah, or clutching her skirts as she is pursued by her suitors through the fountains, cypresses and marble terraces of the Shalimar Gardens."¹⁸

This is apparent when she ponders if the Earth will bleed when the adults "crack" India. This device of the child narrator, who has no Hindu, Muslim or Sikh motives behind her observations, enabled Sidhwa to treat the holocaust of Partition with objectivity and lack of prejudice. The disruption of a settled order, the traumatic separation of friends, the sense of loss and uprootedness are all revealed through the wondering eyes of precocious Lenny.

Though the novel includes a host of characters from all communities; Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and Parsis, which contribute to a multiple perspectives of the Partition, the novelist is more concerned about the miniscule minority, namely the Parsi community. The characters that surround Lenny are "Slavesister", "Electric Aunt", "Old Husband", "Godmother", "Ayah" and "Ice-Candy Man". In fact Ice-candy man is a Muslim street vendor, drawn like many other men by the magnetic beauty of Ayah, Lenny's nanny. In contrast, Sidhwa portrays the Godmother as a true source of strength and action, through knowledge instead of pride and rhetoric. Lenny's mother, and other Parsi women when they help Hindu and Sikh families escape in safe convoys to India and assist in the rehabilitation of destitute and kidnapped women. Lenny's Godmother rescues the Hindu Ayah who was forcibly married to her former Muslim friend i.e. the Ice-Candy Man.

Irrespective of community all people invariably suffered during the Partition--"Amidst banter, repartee and humour the novelist subtly portrays the underlying fear of the Parsis about Partition and Independence"¹⁹.

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“The novel points to the (im) possibility of completing the history of Partition with ‘first hand’ testimonial or fictional accounts by underscoring the ‘unnarratable’ quality of ‘abducted women’s’ experience even while the novel signals the importance of understanding the causes and consequences of their predicaments”.²⁰ Ayah eventually becomes one of these ‘abducted’ women, but Lenny’s naïve view of her and other women’s treatment dislocates the state’s and community’s attempts to justify their actions and their ambiguous attitude towards women. For example when the Recovered Women’s Camp is first established in Lenny’s neighbourhood, she recalls how she assumes “it’s a women’s jail, even though they look innocent enough.” (p.201) Lenny’s naïve observations point to the anxiety surrounding their ‘sexual contamination’ by the other community that turns women into outsiders. Ayah’s replacement, Hamida, who has just been released from the camp, sees herself as a ‘fallen woman’ and tries to explain that the women are ‘fate smitten’.

“Lenny’s interrogation of the normalized assumptions that inform the ‘abducted’ women’s treatment helps to make visible the way patriarchal nationalist interests produce their identities as polluted. Her off-center view highlights how the women’s suffering is both the result of the brutality of their abductors and the ostracization they experience when they are ‘recovered’.”²¹

Looking at the novel from feminist perspective, Fawzia Ahmed Khan aptly points out that, those who display moral strength in the novel are all women. If “the bloody history of the Indian-Pakistani Partition had been defined. by the kind of values women like Godmother and Ayah stand for, then the world might be a less violent place”.²²

The women certainly play the pivotal role in the novel. Lenny’s comprehension of the events of the Partition is narrated through the story of what happens to her beloved Hindu Ayah. When the story begins, Ayah is surrounded by many admirers, Hindus and Muslims. Among her many admirers is the ice-candy man after whom the novel is named.. Unfortunately her charms lead to her abduction by a group led by the ice-candy

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man. He keeps Ayah, renamed Mumtaz, but she is eventually rescued. At the beginning, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh admirers, flock around Ayah, gradually the change in the situation is depicted by the change in the dwindling group around Ayah. They still come, but in “twos or threes, or singly” (147). The amorous, playful caresses of the earlier scenes become lustful, threatening and violent. The scene of Ayah’s abduction, juxtaposing sexual images with images of violence is described with symbolism and sophistication. The last thing that Lenny notices is Ayah’s slack mouth that gaped piteously, her disheveled hair flying into her kidnappers’ faces, staring as if she wanted to leave behind her wide-open and terrified eyes.

Lenny remains tormented by Ayah’s rape and kidnap and her child mind is mature enough to realize that Ayah’s ‘carrying away’ had less to do with fate than with the will of men. Eventually when Ayah is finally traced Lenny can clearly see that the radiance and the animation in Ayah had gone. “Can the soul be extracted from its living body? Her vacant eyes are bigger than ever: wide-opened with what they’ve seen and felt.” (p.261). She seemed past everything: emptied of life and despairing. Her spirit was killed and her angel’s voice mutilated. Thus Bapsi Sidhwa captures in a few lines the terrible consequences of the victimization of women. The theft of the body de-genders Ayah as it robs her of her privacy, personal dignity and agency. The denouement of the novel and the defiling of the ayah can be seen as reflecting symbolically the despoiling of the country.

Sidhwa succeeds in drawing out the most damaging effect of the Partition, the literal desecration of women on both sides of the conflict. Sidhwa recalls the chilling shrieks and moans of recovered women at the time. “Victory is celebrated on a woman’s body, vengeance is taken on a woman’s body. That is very much the way things are, particularly in my part of the world”.²³ She says of these women: “Terrible vendettas were enacted on their bodies, not so much to dishonour them as to humiliate the men of another faith.”²⁴

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Ananya Jahanara Kabir writes, “she is a woman who has written a novel, from an upper middle class perspective, about women whose lives were deeply affected by the Partition.....”²⁵

“The tension between the historical and fictional events inscribed in Sidhwa’s narrative suggests how the discourse of gender, class and nation overlap and converge to become increasingly restrictive of women’s agency as the country faces independence. Whereas before Partition Lenny observes how Ayah is able to deflect patriarchal expectations of monogamy and conjugality, after Partition, her actions are constrained and her agency and body governed by patriarchal struggle over land and identity. Sidhwa’s narrative practice seeks to destabilize patriarchal nationalist discourse and work against the practice of making women the ‘ground’ in struggles for post-colonial self-determination. At the same time it maps how women’s identities, far from being determined by discourse, are mediated, challenged, resisted or transformed by their desires and discontents.”²⁶

In her interview in “Spincycle” Bapsi Sidhwa observes: “I imagine that as women, consciously or unconsciously, we bring out the problems and discrimination women face and project our aspirations. I myself don’t like to preach about feminism but the ways the stories unfold illustrate their position in the family and in society.”²⁷ However being deliberately feministic, a woman writer essentially tends to depict the reality from the female perspective. It is this perspective which is missing in the Partition novels of the male writers.

What the Body Remembers

What the Body Remembers is the next novel taken up in this paper. “My writing seems to rise from a sense that there is something missing, a subject, a story, or an area that has

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received too little attention and *What the Body Remembers* rose from that same dissatisfaction. The Partition of India in 1947 into India, East Pakistan and West Pakistan has received academic attention, but you can count the number of novels in English about it on the fingers of one hand.... But so far, we haven't read novels in English that put Sikh women front stage and certainly none that are about the experience of these women during Partition.”²⁸

The protagonist Roop is a beautiful sixteen years old girl, when she is married in 1937 to a man twenty five years her senior. She already knows that he has a barren wife Satya, but agrees for the wedding. She is also confident that she will win over her husband, Sardarji, and his first wife Satya, a proud and combative woman. The rich and multi-layered narrative traces the fragmentation of India, from 1928 to just after the Partition in 1947, through the lives of Satya, her husband, Sardarji, and Roop, her co-wife.

The story is presented in dated chapters, and the main story covers the years 1928 to 1947 in Roop's progress. The profound terror of the Partition wounded their sense of family, community and country and changed the world for them. The upheaval of the Partition is projected with remarkable balance by the novelist. The novel certainly focuses sharply on the women in such turmoil, the characters finding themselves in a part of Punjab that has suddenly become Pakistan. The story of marriage is used as a metaphor for the story of both exile and uprootment from one's home, with the meaning of home constantly evolving and changing for both women.

Baldwin's Novel

Baldwin convincingly recreates the colour and customs of colonial India, with the characters, dominantly women, on whom she showers all her focus and attention, emerge fully formed and complexly drawn.

A major part of the novel is focussed on Roop as she confronts the challenges of bigamy and then the larger trials created by the violence that accompanied the Partition.

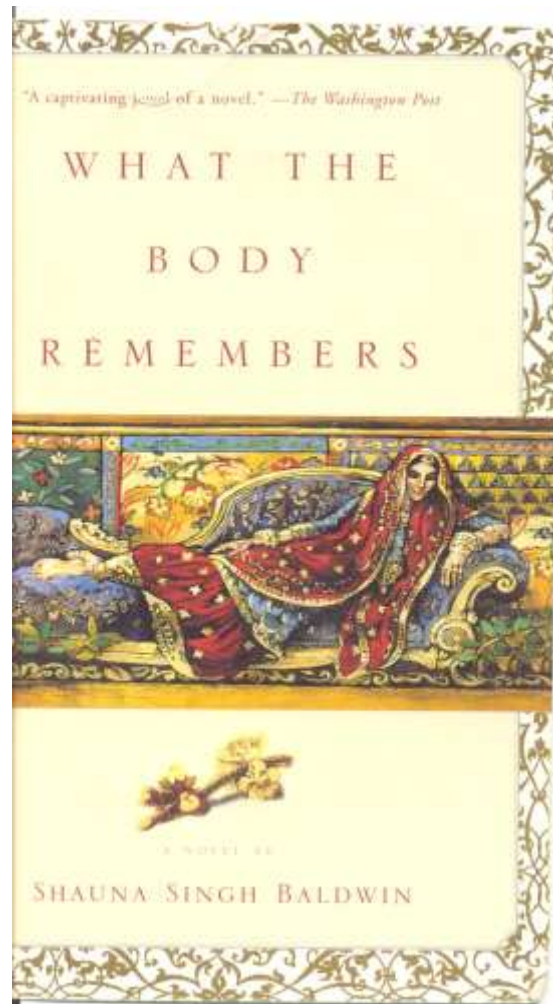
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In spite of all the beautifully done parallels between the two women, they are in the same situation in reality not only due to their marriage to the same man, but because they must survive in a world where the wishes of women usually come second to those of men. Satya and Roop so different in their personality and character yet live under the same fear and belief: the fragility of their security. Both find it difficult to remain within the carefully defined roles in Indian culture. However, though entangled within the restrictions of their culture, both manage to find a sort of freedom, at the end of the story. The chain of colonization is made clear in one of the novel's overt literary parallels: just as Britain controls and uses India, so do Indian men control and use Indian women.



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The novelist substantiates this observation quite evidently in the novel in various situations. Roop knows that she is married to give Sardarji sons, “for what a woman is made for” and therefore she always sees the danger of being sent back to her father in disgrace if she fails in this purpose, “where a man has tried two women for the perpetuation of his tribe, why not try a third? A fourth? What is there to stop him?” (p.218)

The pain that Roop experiences after she is separated from her babies does not belong to Roop alone but to all women who are the victims of this patriarchal set up, “think how my heart aches for words of concern, not for Sardarji’s second wife or for the mother of his children, but for Roop....men can’t imagine a woman’s world, they have to be told of her pain in words or they live in oblivion...they are their father’s children to do with them as he pleases. I who bore them am to be discarded, empty husk of no consequence now. They are his, not mine. His to give to her, his to care for, his to starve or shame or abandon,” (p.255) She believes that a “woman must choose the wisdom of lies over the dangers of truth.” (p.468) Thus she dwells upon the unenviable position of women in the society.

When Roop is fighting the panic and terror of searching for her family, who is dislocated during the riots and rampage, a familiar voice says clearly in her mind, “ We are each alone, though a crowd of our quom might mill about us, little sister. Always each woman is alone. Roop looks around mystified, hears of “women abducted, mutilated, always by *them* ---never by us. *Men etch their anger upon woman-skin; swallow their pride dissolved in women’s blood.*” (p.431) Poor women’s bodies remember, all the time, through all time.

Baldwin offers a profound message, a learning point in this context, “Guru Nanak says that all men are born of women, that the lineage continues because of a woman. The Guru says all women are valuable as princesses and should be called Kaur to remind men of it....she who gives birth to kings....there is none without her.” (p.330)

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The family of Sardarji is effectively used as a trope to Partition. The novel brings out the theme of estrangement and division at various levels: personal, political and metaphysical besides foregrounding the pathetic predicament of Indian women. It is self-division that leads not only to the particular neuroses of marriage but also culminates in the political violence of the country's Partition. Thus Sardarji's family becomes the metaphor for the Partition of India and Pakistan.

The writer portrays the threat of violence on women with immense sensitivity. The car in which Roop was traveling with her children, a maid- servant and the driver was stopped by Muslims. She feared of "dying young without ever reaching Delhi, about to be raped, mutilated like the woman whose breasts were cut off, or made to recite the Kalima." (p.421) She managed the situation by trying to look as haughty and commanding as Satya. Her maid Jorimon was attacked by a "charged mass of men, grunting like animals in the dark. "Roop pounded with clenched fists at the men as hard as she could..." (p.421) In those few minutes of terror Roop had learned, that there are so many things men can do to women that are so much worse than death.

Finding her way through the violence surrounding her everywhere Roop wonders in frustration, "Is this the India we fought for? She is like a woman raped so many times she has lost all count of the trespassers across her body. Who will rescue and pyre the bodies of my quom? What use now to be Hindu, Sikh, Muslim or Christian, what use the quom, the caste, the compartments that order our lifes?" (p.422)

When Roop reached the station to receive Sardarji, she "sank to her haunches with shards of eyes piercing through her veins" to see the train smeared with blood and windows smashed. She feared Sardarji dead and lost her mental balance temporarily. She continued to wait for Sardarji for days witnessing every bloodied train from Lahore. She heard several news and stories of raped daughters, naked Sikh women forced by Muslims to dance before mosques, naked Muslim women forced by Sikhs to dance in the compound of the Golden Temple in Amritsar. "Everywhere on this platform, women

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pulled remnants of rags about the breasts- Satya would say they have learned shame, shame of their own bodies, from men of all faiths who cannot trust each other.” (p.432—34)

She could bear it no more; blood simmers to boil in her veins. In a state of unknown stupor she discarded all her clothes for everyone to see a woman’s body without shame. She wanted to scream, “See me, I am human, though I am only a woman. See me I did what women are for. See me not as a vessel, a play thing, a fantasy, a maid servant, an ornament, but as Vaheguru made me... If a man does not lay claim to my body, the country will send someone to do so.”(p 436)

The upheavals of the Partition are expressed in an admiringly controlled narration. The novelist is unobtrusively but deeply conscious of the truth that the trajectories of lives, with or without such disruptions, are always cruel, unexpected and appalling.

The other extremely heart-rending tale of victimization is of Roop’s sister-in-law, Kusum, who was found with each limb severed at the joint. Her body was sliced into six parts, then arranged to look as if she were whole again. But surprisingly the body had no signs of rape and no sign of self-defense. Jeevan, her husband was perplexed, “to cut a woman apart without first raping---a waste, surely. *Rape is one man’s message to another: I took your pawn. Your move.*” Jeevan continued to think what message could this be? Kusum’s womb, the same from which his three children came, had been delivered and ripped out. The message that he was given was, “we will stamp your kind, your very species from existence...this is a war against your quom...we take the womb so that there can be no Sikhs from it.” (p.447)

Ironically it was later revealed that it was none other than Jeevan’s father, Kusum’s own father-in-law who instead of handing over his daughter-in-law in the hands of the Muslims, put her life to an end. Many women like Kusum were killed by their own kith and kin to save them from dishonour. Either way woman was the victim.

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Kusum willingly went to her death just as she was offered it: 'for the respect of her community'. She represents millions of such women, all those daughters and daughters-in-law who had no practice of saying 'nahin-ji' or 'no-ji'. Those words drowned before they took shape or sound, in the blood that she bore within.

The novel is an assertion of the women's spirit, very pertinently portrayed through the disembodied voice of Satya that initiates and concludes the narration. This is a woman's perspective. Such writings become more intimate account of this most momentous event, because it was women who suffered most. It is precisely this intimacy of the victimization that makes such novels extremely powerful.'s

Anita Rau Badami's *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?*

One more such exceptionally powerful novel is *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?* (2006) by Anita Rau Badami. Her biggest challenge in writing *Nightbird*, Badami says, was "I wanted to humanize the facts, to give life and shape to the dry bones of history and to the randomness of reality."²⁹

The author realizes her objective by connecting the lives of three women whose destinies are intertwined by coincidence and the succession of violence. The novel encompasses a period of over half a century, from the years leading up to the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947 to the explosion of the Air India flight in 1985. The sequence of events moves between the personal and political effortlessly and the characters of three woman protagonists are naturally integrated to the drama and turmoil generated by the Partition of India. Her empathetic understanding of the expatriate world is certainly exceptional..

The best part of Badami's book, is her portrayal of strong, intelligent women endeavoring to make their lives meaningful despite the cultural and political upheavals. This is something that is largely absent and omitted in the novels of male writers of the Partition

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fiction. This novel is a substantial addition to the genre of Partition fiction that fills this vacuum, that is; a woman's experience of the Partition.

The novel does not merely concentrate on the violence on women during Partition but its aftermath as well. Encompassing the violence that was initiated with the Partition and continued till the assassination of Mrs Gandhi the novel emphasizes the reality that colonialism humiliated the men and they in turn humiliated the women. So whenever the condition of the society is weak or turbulent, it is the women who suffer the most. It gives men the vent for their frustrations and vengeance. It depicts how women, being extremely vulnerable, are easy targets of any form of oppression, humiliation, deprivation and discrimination.

Can You Hear the Nightbird call? is the story of three women: Sharanjeet Kaur better known as Bibiji in Vancouver, Leela Bhat, her neighbour from Bangalore and Nimmo, Bibiji's niece, who is orphaned by the violence that engulfed India after the Partition, and is now rebuilding her life in Delhi. The lives of all the three are once again devastated as the external political disturbances erupt and destroy the lives of these three women. The Nightbird is a bird, whose songs are supposedly a portent of ill-luck.

Starting with the Partition of India, the story follows with the sequences and events of the changing Indian political scenario with the two wars with Pakistan, separation of Bangladesh, fight over Kashmir, death of Nehru, Indira Gandhi taking up the reigns of the country as India's first woman Prime Minister, the demand for Khalistan, Indira's policies with regard to the Sikh community, the government's attack on the Golden Temple in the name of "Operation Blue Star", the culmination of the Sikh's bitterness leading to the assassination of Mrs. Gandhi, followed by the massacre of the Sikhs in the country. Less than a year later, Air India Flight 182, en route from Canada to India, explodes off the coast of Ireland, killing all 329 people on board. Two Canadian Sikhs were charged with sabotage.

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In this sense one can assert that 1947 alone was not the year of the Partition. It was in fact only the beginning of the Partition in India. All the events and incidents of communal hatred and violence and terrorism that India has been witnessing since 1947, can be traced to the Partition of India. Hence Partition cannot be viewed as a single event of 1947 but as one which has cast its sinister shadow on the future as well.

This escalation of violence in India reverberates in the Indo-Canadian community, pushing all the three otherwise resilient protagonists to disaster. Pa-ji is shot dead at the Golden temple in an attack by the Army leaving Bibiji thoroughly confounded and shattered. Nimmo's husband, her son and daughter are all slaughtered in the violence transforming her into a living corpse and Leela Bhatt was one of the passengers on board of the ill-fated Air-India Flight 182, hoping to visit her home for the first time after 18 years since her arrival to Canada.

This is one novel where women are in the front and centre of the struggles, transforming hardship and pain into power. In Badami's experience, women never talk about getting back [home]. Instead they are focused on keeping their children safe, cooking their family's next meal, and picking up the pieces of their lives. She strongly believes that women are resilient by their very basic nature. The three protagonists in the novel are inspired by a collection of survivor's testimonies published by People's Union for Democratic Rights/ People's Union for Civil Liberties in 1984 about the impact of the Delhi riots. One experiences these events through the lives, thoughts and understandings of these characters who endure the trauma of devastation. This is what can be appropriately treated as a novel of women victimization. The novel illustrates the impact of political and communal violence with propinquity and power that newscast and history records cannot.

The novel that covers the times of turbulence from the Partition to the assassination of the late Prime Minister Mrs Gandhi stands as the strongest evidence and conformation to

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the argument that whatever may be the cause, whoever may be the perpetrators the fact remains that it is always the woman who is on the receiving end of violence.

It was in 1984, that Bibi-ji and Pa-ji take the uneventful journey to Amritsar to the Golden Temple. It was the time when “Sant Bhindranwale is holed up in the temple complex with his followers and the government is out to get him”. (p.314). “Pa-ji had heard of the deeply conservative preacher named Bhindranwale, whose pungent diatribes against the government of India were earning him an ever growing following among the Sikhs. He had heard the stories that it was Indira Gandhi who had promoted Bhindranwale for political reasons and now he had fallen into disfavour with her. But he could not really believe that a village preacher, however charismatic, could have the power to create this kind of violence.....” (p.315). Regrettably he also did not realize and believe that this violence will consume him as well, because Pa-ji becomes a fatal victim to the firing of the police and the Army in the premises of the “Harmandir Sahib”.

Once back to Vancouver, Bibiji lost track of her life. The Delhi Junction was closed indefinitely. She was unable to use the bedroom she had shared with Pa-ji. The epilogue of the novel dated June 1986, portrays Bibi-ji as an old woman living in a dead house....with neither husband nor friend nor child, only ghosts and guilt for company”. (p.394-95).

Kanwar, Bibiji’s “sturdy, loving, lost sister” (p.7) was the direct victim of the Partition violence. While Sharan moved to Canada, Kanwar stayed behind in a land that would soon be split into two nations.

She talked about the impending Partition, in her letters to Sharanjeet: All her suspicions and premonitions of the Partition come true as Kanwar falls prey to the spreading violence. This is how Kanwar is victimized as recollected by her daughter Nimmo, who was very young at the time and witnessed the whole ghastliness of her mother’s death. These horrific memories haunt her throughout her life: “the morning had drifted by in

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silence, when Nimmo recalled it....there was a commotion at the far end of the mud lane....her mother came rushing inside the house and locked the door. She picked up Nimmo and lowered her gently into the large wooden bharoli of grain in the dark corner of the house....Nimmo heard fists pounding on their door....the sound of footsteps entering the house and insistent male voices. Her mother's voice grew higher and angrier. It altered and became pleading, and then abruptly she uttered a single scream, which turned into a sound like the one a stray dog had uttered when they found it dying in the gully behind their house. Then it ceased, that quivering animal whisper..... She had stayed in the bin for a long time, waiting for her mother to pull her out.

“Time lost its shape and meaning as she sat hidden in the grain. She sucked on her fingers, consumed by a terrible thirst ...she crouched there until painful cramps overtook her legs...she tried chewing a few grains, but they tasted like chalk and made her even more thirsty. To her shame she felt her bladder open and the warm liquid spread around her bottom... what was her mother doing on the other side? Nimmo had wondered beginning to panic”. (p.156-156). When her mother eventually opened the lid and lifted her out of the bin, Nimmo hardly recognized the dirty, bleeding woman who wept with a soundless, juddering agony.....still in the dark her mother pushed her into an inner room, drew the door shut...” never to emerge (p.154-56). This silence returned to haunt Nimmo again and again

Nimmo found herself adopted by the Sikh couple who had rescued her in the kafeela. She was eighteen when she married Satpal. Mother of three children now, Nimmo found herself settled into an uneventful existence. Yet the chalky taste of fear that had clogged her throat since her mother had thrust her into the wheat bin remained with her even now, even when she was a grown woman with a family of her own.

Nimmo, Bibiji's niece, daughter of her sister Kanwar, can be viewed as a psychological victim of first the Partition as a child and an adult victim in the riots of 1982. She was orphaned in the Violence of 1947 and lives haunted by the memories of her mother being

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raped and then committing suicide. Ironically the past re-emerges during the riots of 1984 when she hides her daughter in the same way as her mother had hid her, but ironically fails to save her life.

Sometimes when she heard water running at night, she was reminded of her mother's furious washing, and her nostrils would fill with the smell of the pale violet soap...her fear was monstrous, silent thing that often woke her, sweating and shaking, from troubled sleep. It made her suspicious of everyone, even neighbours....how could she explain what it was like to have your life pulled out from under your feet, to wake up one day and find you have no family or home in the land your people had tilled for a hundred years?..... And as much as she tried, Nimmo could not rid herself of the memory of a pair of feet dangling above a dusty floor, their clean pink soles smelling delicately of lavender soap.” (p.158-59). While Kanwar is a victim of physical violence, Nimmo is a victim of psychological violence.

Quite incidentally, Nimmo too like Bibiji had always been an ardent admirer of Mrs. Gandhi and always defended her whenever Satpal voiced his dissatisfaction of Mrs. Gandhi's political moves and motives.

Soon his fears, about the rumours of the war became a fact. The country was at war. People fearfully discussed what would be the third war with their neighbour in the twenty four years since Partition. But Nimmo loved Mrs. Gandhi for her stubborn strength....and for the sense that she gave to women across the country that if she could survive so could they. This was a country of excesses, and “Nimmo was determined not to be a victim ever again.” (p.225).

But the unrest and discontent among the Sikhs was gaining power like whirlwind enveloping this minority community from India to Vancouver. The policies of the Congress party and government created an ill-will in the Sikhs. When emergency was declared in 1975, it only added to the displeasure especially of the Sikhs. Nimmo

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shivered. She found it difficult to believe that the woman she so admired, and for whom she had voted in two elections, should impose such a thing as this Emergency without good reason. The country must be in danger she thought. How quickly fear had sneaked into their small, peaceful world, Nimmo thought. How fragile is her safety.” (p.275) “Was the situation of the Sikhs in India so wretched? Could yet another division of the country heal the wounds that had been caused by the first one?” (p.292). The wounds that were caused by the Partition still fester and give rise to fresh suspicions.

The massacre and armed attack on the holy shrine of “the Golden Temple” intensified the dislike of the Sikhs for the government and led to the most shocking and horrifying incident of the decade; the assassination of Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguards. The retribution was achieved. This in turn triggered off the most savage rampage of Sikh massacre ever known. Nimmo stayed awake all night expecting violence to erupt out of the darkness. She could sense lurking it out there. She prepared herself to protect her daughter. The memories of the past, of the grain bharoli came flashing back. She locked her daughter in the steel almirah.. “It was the last safe place in the world that bin of grain...stay there my daughter... or they will get you.” (p.361). She saw a spire of smoke emerge. Choked by dread, she ran back inside and saw that the man had put the whole room on fire. A strong smell of kerosene filled the room and in the centre of the fire stood the steel cupboard. Nimmo heard herself screaming. “A high pitched stream of sound that seemed to belong to somebody else.” (p.362) Screaming all the time she raced to and fro but the fire wouldn’t die down. She frantically searched for the keys only to realize that the men had stolen the keys. The fire engulfed the almirah with her daughter shouting from inside. The flames leapt making everything blood-red and smoke-black.

Her son Pappu, who had left for the shop that morning, was also brutally burned alive and Satpal who was out of Delhi at the time met the same fate: “silently Satpal uncoiled his hair and waited trembling to see what further indignities they would inflict on him before they killed him. He wished he had the time to phone Nimmo once again. He thought of

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her as he had last seen her, standing in the sunlight; leaning against the door of their home. . . . he knelt while one of the men poured kerosene over his head, the acrid smell making him dizzy and nauseous. One man dropped a car tire over his head and jammed it about his shoulders, immobilizing his arms. Another lit a match to his streaming hair, wet with kerosene. The flames into his scalp, crept like a dreadful river down his face, licked at his eyebrows, his eyelashes. The heat burned his eyes and his last thought was that he could not even weep. He could not even weep.” (p.371)

Nimmo is transformed into a living corpse, falling into the deep abyss of senselessness. She is Nirmaljeet Kaur- “A woman damaged in places too private to see.” (p.399). Thus the novel has a gory ending.

Conclusion

After an analysis of these three women writers of the Partition fiction one can confidently affirm that they have produced such responsive works on the Partition that essentially evoke empathy and sensitivity in the reader (surely a female reader). Their concern for the predicament of women is so apparent. They have depicted the female sensibility so effectively. It is indeed remarkable to witness the fact that women writers write with a sense of analysis, interpretation and evaluation of their social, political and economic realities and produce writings that reflect their responses to the flux of experiences. This is very true of all the three women writers discussed in this paper. They have viewed the Partition from a distinct and different perceptual and emotional perspective. Though they have similar outlook on this historical event what is remarkably diverse is the approach that they are able to exhibit in displaying different ideas and feelings that are particularly sensitive to a woman. These writers have certainly projected themselves as ‘modern’ women who pride themselves on their thinking, take action, work, and create on the same terms as men; instead of disparaging them. They have succeeded in proving themselves their equals.

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The novels have tremendously succeeded in depicting as to how disenfranchised as sexual objects, communal commodities, and patriarchal property, by both nation-state and their relations, thousands of women experienced multiple forms of gendered and sexual violence during the Partition. These female writers were able to do this may be due to the fact that there are certain differences between men and women; their(women's) eroticism, and therefore their sexual world, has a special form of their own and therefore women cannot fail to engender a sensuality, a sensitivity which is of a special nature.

All the three female novelists share the similarity of employing female narrators to voice their various predicaments. Under this apparent similarity lies the rich diversity that is reflected in the narration. Bapsi Sidhwa tries to correct the imbalances and prejudices projected by the Indian writers, by depicting an alternate tale of victimization of the Muslims by the Hindus and Sikhs. She also specifically takes up the issue of abducted women through the character of ayah. Baldwin tries to project the predicament of women in a patriarchal society and elevates the gender inequalities. Standing apart from these two novelists, Badami intertwines the theory of nation and violence to the conflict between two nationalities. She also depicts how the women's body becomes a site of contestation between men of different communities during the riots. Further she focuses on the psychological violence which lacks strong presence in the first two writers. The protagonists of these novels undergo a metamorphosis which is very essential to depict the catastrophe of the Partition in the background. They emerge with a new identity, breaking the traditional barriers, social and ethical rules of the male dominated Indian society. They may not be heroic in the traditional sense but in the magnitude of their submission to the uncontrollable world around them.

It is remarkable to see how these women writers have written with an analytical sense, interpretation and evaluation of their social, political and economic realities and have presented writings that reflect their responses to the flux of their experiences.

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Keeping the arguments of patriarchy or feminism aside, one fact that emerges without any contradiction is that the horrors of the Partition with its throes and predicaments, has been the prime concern of the writers. We can find the wounds and scars of the Partition still fresh in our hearts even after several decades.

Explicating the religious madness with racial hatred and separatist politics that transformed man into beast has remained the first priority of all these writers. They have put the theme of human values being thrown to winds, men becoming homeless, lonely and alienated and strangers to their background over everything else. All other aspects have come next. They all have in essence conveyed that even in the stormy night of bloodbaths; people maintained their notes of brotherhood and love.

“The Partition novels represent the great strength of human love after the horrors of partition holocaust, the endless catastrophes and inconclusive miseries which plundered their happiness and filled them with notes of tragic pain. The novelists therefore, display their characters as the sensible, humane and generous messengers of human love and they stand as the torch bearers to the homeless refugees who have the fractured consciousness and the broken hearts.”³⁰

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