



ISSN 2455-7544
www.daathvoyagejournal.com

Daath Voyage : An International Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in English

A UGC Refereed Open Access Journal

Vol. 3 No.4, December 2018

Editor : Saikat Banerjee

Editor: Dr. Saikat Banerjee
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
St. Theresa International College, Thailand.



: An International Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in English
A UGC Refereed e- Journal no 45349

ISSN 2455-7544
Vol.3, No.4, December, 2018

www.daathvoyagejournal.com

Partition of India: Representative Narratives, Relegated Discourses

Nasib Kumari

PhD Scholar

&

Divyajyoti Singh

Assistant Professor

YMCA University of Science & Technology,

Faridabad, Haryana

(now JC Bose, YMCA Fbd).

Submitted 15 November 2018

Revised 22 November 2018

Accepted 27 December 2018

Abstract: The present study investigates some representative narratives claiming to define or describe the circumstances surrounding the partition of India. The literary probe aims to reveal any perceptible narrative assumptions, gaps and biases and thereby, to uncover discursive agenda that may be manifest or be realized through these texts. The study would explore the political dynamics and ideological strands informing literary and historical ventures. It aims attempts to bring into focus the marginalized history and show how competing discourses may use narratives to carry their weights or undermine their value depending on the intellectual opinion or beliefs held by the author/ 'author-function'. The study reveals how both fiction and non-fiction texts unwittingly or wittingly take sides made available in authoritarian discourse that favours the establishment in the region. Consequently, the narratives while condemning or lamenting the event still abet the historical fallacy that lead to the partition of India. The critical approach informing the study is mainly those that find texts to be as much of political as aesthetic 'constructs'. Thus, ideas from critics like Michel Foucault, Louis Althusser and Antonio Gramsci are found useful in analysis of texts under scrutiny. The study affirms the Marxist axiom that narratives and discourse work as part of ideological state apparatus.

Keywords: Partition, Narratives, Discourse, Marginalized, Historical fallacy.



Introduction

A plethora of books have been written on partition. Most of these are concentrated on the events that built up into a crescendo starting from 1945 and unfolded at breakneck speed in 1947 barely giving time to the people of Punjab to understand the course of the political whirlwind and tide of times that they were to become the unwitting part of. Yet, circumstances were manipulated in a way that undermined the long-held positions of people and made them either shun their cherished values or if they still held to them then to negate their worth. Punjab politics suddenly and even overnight changed from a politics of people at grassroots to politics of people in power corridors; from a democratic one to a dictatorial one; from one that addressed agrarian concerns like rural development to one that was hinged on urban concerns like religion.

The division depended on 'two nation theory' with the contention that the Hindus and the Muslims cannot live respectively as one nation since both have unmistakable social, social and religious characters.

The present study, however, goes back further into history and takes the period beginning with provincial dyarchy (1919) giving the indigenous population of Punjab a limited but considerably important right to govern themselves, it takes into account the administrative success of the Unionist Party, the ruling party of Punjab that had its nerve on the needs of the region and for this reason was based on the principle of 'economics' rather than religion.

How the people's perspective shockingly shifted to being religious from non-religious cross-community approached in a matter of months is a matter than needs investigation and which has been seldom dwelt upon by the regular researchers.

This unfortunate omission needs to be addressed and a narrative and discursive redress in this regard could or would guide future retrospectives on partition. A more intense retrospective may suggest a frame to view the events that is different from the current frame of religious schism. Even at present when the authors and readers look back at Greater Punjab, the basic premise of religious division seems to colour the whole approach.

Since, this frame, that reveals a view of Punjab from the socio-economic angle does not superficially seem to explain the picture of a Punjab torn asunder out of religious hatred or logically



Daath Voyage

: An International Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in English
A UGC Refereed e- Journal no 45349

ISSN 2455-7544
Vol.3, No.4, December, 2018

www.daathvoyagejournal.com

suit a landscape where immense bloodshed took place, it has never or rarely been employed to discuss the events or aid the analysis of the disparate incidents and occurrences surrounding partition. Nor does, the use of this frame suit discourses that thrive on and narratives that stem from religious schisms dividing people rather than cultural aspects that unite them. It was flung away when the momentous decision to execute the partition of Punjab was taken.

An Alternative Frame

The frame is the pro-*dehat* politics of earlier decades in Punjab where neither Muslim Leaguers or Congress, nor Hindu Mahasabha had any following. In fact, these national parties were concentrated to a few urban areas while the majority of Punjab lived in villages and faith in the leadership of the regional Unionist Party. For the purpose of the current study, both fiction and non-fiction works have been explored. In fiction, Bhisham Sahni's *Tamas*, Amrita Pritam's *Pinjar*, Khushwant Singh's *A Train to Pakistan* and Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy-Man* have been read and analyzed. The last narrative adds an interesting dimension to the study by working as a counterfoil to narratives coming from primarily Indian perspective –Hindu or Sikh- as it has been written by a Parsi author residing in Pakistan. Also, stories of Saadat Hasan Manto like 'Toba Tek Singh' and the 'Dog of Titwal' from the compilation with the title *Bitter Fruit* has been used to underline the dilemmas that people faced and the whole insanity that accompanied the administrative assumptions regarding the two-nations.

An important feminist critique of partition with many crucial narratives from partition to relief camps and rehabilitation and resettlement are provided in Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin's *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition* (1998). This work, along with, understanding of feminist critics like Gayatri Spivak who popularized the term 'subaltern' or of 'gynocriticism' as suggested by Elaine Showalter have been found useful.

Similarly, non-fiction narratives like Larry Collins and Dominique Lappiere's *Freedom at Midnight* and *The Long Partition* by Zamindar contribute significantly to an understanding of partition by shedding light on motives of the national leaders and forces propelling them to take decisions that went against the stability of the nations they were to head and made them agree to build nations on wrong premises- the fallout of which is current unrest in internal as well as foreign



www.daathvoyagejournal.com
affairs of these region.

Another, interesting dimension is added to the study with inclusion of Islam's *Muslims against Partition of India* that highlights the plight and marginalization of secular Muslim during partition.

Real Democracy to Democratic Charade

Contrary to the touted belief that the subjects of Punjab were onlookers to the decision-making that went on corridors of power, the populace of Punjab was quite empowered and awakened one. Else, how could Punjab have been the hub of so many freedom movements? However, the historical fallacies that was propagated and gathered greater weight afterwards was to undermine the reality and even the possibility of people having any real power even in a democracy.

This region was a 'garrison state' during wars for the British, helped them with regular army recruitments and also served as the 'bread basket' of the Nation during peaceful times as in times of crisis. The people had exercised a right to vote during Provincial Dyarchy. They were not the 'gaping', 'idiotic' native concerned only with religion that has been showcased in 'orientalist' discourses and carried over by postcolonial narratives, nor were they the 'cruel' maniacs with suppressed sexuality finding a release during partition orgies.

The women of Punjab, especially in rural areas, were quite emancipated as they belonged to farming communities or farm-dependent communities having representation in economics of the region that allowed women greater space outside as well as at home, not being too subordinated to Brahmanical discourses of mainstream Hinduism.

Sikhism and liberal Arya Samaj strain of Hinduism along with local system of pan-village metasytem of ancestral worship 'dada khedas/dada bhaiya' (extant even today) with local 'pirs' were popular here-a syncretic tradition rather than a polarized or antagonistic ones.

The Historical Context

The repercussions of the great partition leading to the birth of two independent nations of India and Pakistan are palpable even now. In fact, the fateful year of 1947 has become a frame to think about every social issue that assails the two nations. The discourse that fuelled the division on communal lines and the narratives that survived and were circulated in mainstream literature spun around the events of this year seem to feed most perspectives on the Indian people and their



inability to live at peace with their own diversity. Ghada Ismail in an essay 'Representing the Past Between Historiography and Literature: An Overview' published in *Daath Voyage* underlines that 'Like historiography, literature has always been preoccupied with the process of representing past events' (103). This is especially true for partition literature. Yet comparing the horizon of expectation for the two disparate fields the scholar further notes that 'literature is not required to offer the kind of verification of facts that history is expected to do' (104). Yet both the disciplines show certain similarities when subjected to closer analysis as following Dionysius of Halicarnassus, it is noted that 'the historical text abides not only by its credibility, the verity of the incidents it depicts, but also by the rules of rhetoric, the factor which turns historiography into an art whose subject lies in depicting past incidents'(104). The incisive essay then highlights the skepticism that set in post-Enlightenment phase of intellectual history that refuses to invest faith in claims to 'objectivity' or absolute truths with EH Carr being a leading voice who understands that in selection and rearrangement of data 'the historian is giving the floor to an agenda' (105). It is affirmed that with the postmodernist confession of 'reconstruction' and 'representation' a tangible 'destabilization of history as an unquestionable discourse was brought about' (106). This leads to an exposure of the gaps in the narratives, whether literary or historical, and subsequent exercise to fill those gaps which eventually brings the marginalized narratives into perspective.

It is noticeable in the politics of this representation that the real aspirations of Indian people, their faith in development goals of the government of Undivided Punjab were ignored by the political leadership in the decisive phase just before the partition and that the narratives have continued to indulge in the neglect. The discourse and narrative that kept the Hindus and Muslims together in villages of Greater Punjab have been sacrificed to the altar of leadership of those who agreed to the Mountbatten plan. These were only 'representative' of Indian people in the narrow terms of British recognition. These select ones never had a majority mandate for them. The real leader of Punjab was a regional party that worked in tune with the ethos of the people of Punjab who mostly resided in the villages. Truly, religion is a luxury and religious disputes are guided by the elite who have leisure enough to broach up non-issues. For the farmer and youth of Punjab, the issues were economic.



All this, however, transformed with the destruction of the Unionist Party that had been the most popular party and also the party in power in Punjab before partition politics began to surface which was not until 1945. The premiere of Punjab Khizr Hayat Khan was able, secular democrat but had become isolated with the demise of the founding father of the Unionist Party Sir Chhotu Ram. Since, Unionist party had a majority of Muslims and the premiere was always fielded from the community, it became difficult for Khizr Hayat to counteract the agenda of Muslim League that began to tout a false idea of Unionist Party being an ally or off-shoot of Muslim League on the basis of numbers rather than ideology. Unionist Party had, in fact, been founded in 1923 by Sir Chhotu Ram with a Muslim leader Sir Fazl Hussain. Sir Chhoturam was much younger and remained the leading light of this cross-communal pro-peasant pro-rural domain alliance that gave Punjab the great Premiers like Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan and Sir Khizr Hyat Khan. This party brought new laws that strengthened the farmers and injured the politics of vested interests propagated by the well-off who only aimed to use the farmers and labourers for their own benefit.

This study will then seek to fill up the gaps left by mainstream historical claims and literary narratives that refuse to recognize the strength of the communal fabric of Punjab that was rent apart by personal ambition and divisive politics of Congress, Hindu Mahasabha and Muslim League encouraged by British who focused on 'national' level leadership rather than people. It will be an error to believe that Congress was not playing divisive politics- the CR formula and Mountbatten plan both came from that side of the table whether to pacify Muslim leaguers or to assuage British demands or unaccountable haste to have 'independence' at the cost of people. It was an opportunity to head a new nation state but an inopportune time as far as the safety and security of the people was concerned.

The need of current times is to shift the frame and reinvestigate the overarching narrative and discourse of hatred. Non-fiction as well as novels on the subject by authors from Europe as well as Indian subcontinent on the subject has been considered. Both, the authors from India and Pakistan persist in some myths surrounding partition. They also represent events from their focal point across the border. Details of events are informed by a selective perspective but footnotes from the other side are accepted as concessions. The reader's empathy and sympathy both are evoked at



times but overarching affiliation remains with one particular religion as we participate in fortunes and fate of the characters derived from a particular community. The stereotype of the cruel native is allowed to prosper in all the accounts- native or foreign. The postcolonial prism offers a spectrum but there are many zones left dark deliberately.

Narrative Biases

Both, the authors from India and Pakistan persist in some myths surrounding partition. They also represent events from their focal point across the border. Details of events are informed by a selective perspective but footnotes from the other side are accepted as concessions. The reader's empathy and sympathy both are evoked at times but overarching affiliation remains with one particular religion as we participate in fortunes and fate of the characters derived from a particular community. The stereotype of the cruel native is allowed to prosper in all the accounts- native or foreign. The postcolonial prism offers a spectrum but there are many zones left dark deliberately.

Bapsi Sidhwa's *The-Ice-Candy-Man* is a unique text that approaches the subject of partition quite tangentially through the eyes of a little invalid Parsi girl who spends her time with her local governess and her coterie of admirers which spans across religions. The fact that the narrator is a child and belongs to a community that was not embroiled in the internecine religious feud of Punjab suggests a sort of truth-claim- she will be disinterested and innocent in her description of events. However, if the reader somehow did not care to read the biography of the author before embarking upon a reading, s/he would intercept subtle affiliations at various textual junctures regarding the nationality of the author. For instance, the scene about a train from Gurdaspur that has been ravaged: 'Everyone in it is dead. Butchered. They are all Muslim. There are no young women among the dead! Only two gunny-bags full of women's breasts!' (149. *ICM*).

If Khushwant Singh talks about ghost trains arriving from Pakistan in *A Train to Pakistan*, Sidhwa has her own parallel narrative description to counter or at least equate the claim. While Khushwant Singh would talk of Sikh Juggut Singh's courageous sacrifice of his life to create a safe passage for a train to Pakistan that carries his Muslim girlfriend and scores of other passengers to safety (190), Sidhwa will not have any such episode- imaginative or inspired by facts- incorporated in her text.



The author is not such an independent entity and in fact, even fiction writers have set limits for both reality and imagination- these are intangible and yet palpably there- vague, undefined yet perceptible. But to drive a more important or greater point home, it is not that authors across the borders do not agree that brutalities occurred but that they still would never come to a consensus on who began (it is always the other community) or who was the greater victim. As if to stress just that in narrative recounting/representation of brutality during partitions though quantitatively Hindu, Muslim and Sikh-all households are chosen yet more detailed description is given of atrocities when it pertains to majority community of a nation. So after a while, even if you have not known at the outset that Bapsi Sidhwa is a Pakistani national, you would want to check and you will find your conjecture validated; same is the case for Amrita Pritam in *Pinjar* who tells the tale of a Hindu girl abducted by a village Muslim before partition and who eventually, rescued another Hindu girl from her Muslim abductors during partition but herself choosing to stay with her Muslim husband deprived of her Hindu identity. In the course of her new identity as a Muslim, she realizes the inhumanity and brutality innate in religious orthodoxies. These appear stark when an insane woman, perhaps, raped and assaulted gives birth to a child- the villagers are so hard-hearted that they want to claim the child for their religion but abandon it to hunger and deprivation as it is a 'bastard' child, even taking it away from Puro who is selflessly fostering the child. The tale is beautiful, and full of pathos, closer to reality but still indulges in selective vision which comes naturally when one has to take a reference point on either of the two poles- Hindu or Muslim. Thus, the authors here despite their idiolects and personal styles, despite having independent subjectivities still appear to be subservient to discursive practices that Michel Foucault refers to as 'author function'. However, this does not really point to a scenario hinted at by Barthes who pronounced the death of the author where the biography of the author becomes irrelevant. In fact, discourse that holds sway on the author does so by the virtue of his/her position in the socio-political-economic mosaic. There are marked differences in the treatment of similar incidents by authors on either side of the Indian border- the authors take different perspectives while treating the same narrative incident/episode/event but by and large serve the established divisive discourse.



When India was partitioned, some sixty million of her ninety-five million Muslims (one in four Indians) became Pakistanis; some thirty-five million stayed back in India, the largest number of Muslims in a non-Muslim state' (4. Speaking for Themselves. *Borders & Boundaries*). For the leaders on the table, perhaps, it was a conflict-negotiation situation much as in the corporate boardrooms but for people it 'was an undeclared civil war, and since then we have had disputed borders in every country of South Asia(21. Speaking for Themselves. B&B).

The way the narratives are poised and the way these project the two leaders add up to tell tale signs of narrative rifts that stem from national rift. In Sidhwa's novel, for instance, the ice-candy man has a traumatic experience of waiting for relatives and witnessing a train full of corpses: 'For now the tide is turned- and the Hindus are being favoured over the Muslims by the remnants of the Raj. Now that its objective to divide India is achieved, the British favour Nehru over Jinnah'(159). It would be a rare chance for a text written by an Indian to admit any such favour during partition. This is another textual signal towards the origins and affiliations of the text/novel/fiction. Next, Sidhwa has used two hinges on which to place her narrative- one, rationality and logic, second, ethics. On both these fronts she finds injustice metted out to Pakistan/Jinnah/Muslims. The author asserts:

Nehru is Kashmiri; they grant him Kashmir. Spurning logic, defying rationale. Ignoring the consequences of bequeathing a Muslim state to the Hindus: while Jinnah futilely protests:

'Statesman cannot eat their words!'

Statesmen do (159).

She adds detail to prove her point:

'They grant Nehru Gurdaspur and Pathankot, without which Muslim Kashmir cannot be secured. However, Sidhwa never really questions the lack of logic in the very demand for Pakistan on basis of religion- a political territory based on religion is itself not a modern or scientific or rational idea. She highlights the dandy and vain image of Nehru to buttress her notion and then compares and contrasts this image with that of Jinnah. The former, relying on personal charms to achieve success and the latter, being upright and stiff.



‘ Nehru wears red carnations in the buttonholes of his ivory jackets. He bandies words with Lady Mountbatten and is presumed to be her lover. He is charming, too, to Lord Mountbatten. Suave, Cambridge-polished, he carries about him an aura of power and a presence that flatters anyone he compliments tenfold. He doles out promises, smiles, kisses-on-cheeks. He is in the prime of his Brahmin manhood.

He is handsome: his cheeks glow pink.

Jinnah is incapable of compliments. Austere, driven, pukka-sahib accented, deathly ill: incapable of cheek-kissing. Instead of carnations he wears a karakuli cap, somber with tight, grey lamb’s-wool curls: and instead of pale jackets, black *achkan* coats. He is past the prime of his elegant manhood. Sallow, whip-thin, sharp-tongued, uncompromising. His training at the Old bailey and practice in English courtrooms has given him faith in constitutional means, and he puts his misplaced hopes into tall standards of upright justice. The fading Empire sacrifices his cause to their shifting allegiances’ (159-160).

In this long comparison, Sidhwa never remarks that both are actually de-racinated natives having more of the English than Indian traits in them. Their background and education had brought them both closer to the governing than the governed. She conveniently forgets to point out that if not more, Jinnah was at least as particular about his dresses and appearance as Nehru. In fact, ‘Brahmin manhood’ of Nehru is counterpoised by the ‘elegant manhood’ of Jinnah- not Muslim manhood of Jinnah. Also, it is not Hindu manhood of Nehru but ‘Brahmin manhood’- the choice of words and use of vocabulary is conscious- it deliberately plays upon stereotypes that would favour a particular reading and circumvent another unfavourable reading.

Here, the wary reader would understand how Hindu is mostly projected as effeminate, similarly Muslim would have suggestions of parochial and orthodox. Therefore, ‘elegant’ replaces ‘Muslim’ in Jinnah’s description who however, is supposed to be the sole representative of Muslim interests. The ethical yardsticks are English- constitutional means, tall standards of upright justice, English courtrooms, rationale- to which only Jinnah holds when even the English seem to forget them.

These leaders do not seem to represent or understand the roots- their concerns as well as the concerns of the author are primarily urban and that is why, they can talk of districts as if these were



pieces of a pie. Here, Khushwant Singh's narrative is closer to the affected party and describe the incidents as they may have taken place on the turf and as they unfolded in villages. 'Mano Majra Sikhs and Muslims looked on helplessly (144). These people had been living together peaceful lives in their village and had kept on thinking that they could stay together like that forever till they found army trucks from either side forcing them to vacate the village. Only goons enjoyed in such times. It is a most unfortunate irony that leaders are more concerned about the land than people and the people in the aftermath do not even realize or articulate the extent of this deception. They passively fall into the trap of taking a decidedly Hindu or decidedly Muslim position- only endorsing their leaders' view that wrecked the most unfortunate moments on them.

The historical fallacy that partition was inevitable and the other logical fallacies that feed this notion are manifest in fiction as much as non-fiction of the subcontinent.

Thus, it is the 'ad hominem' fallacy working here as much as 'appeal to ignorance'. The personal attack works where ignorance about core issues and concerns is tangible; sometimes, ignorance is fostered as through incomplete debates and selective information. The 'Gurdaspur', 'pathankot', 'Kashmir' questions are all fascile given the fact that land and its people should not be detached since common origins, habitat, ethnicity, culture, and language are more important than religion. Here, the authors across borders fall in line with their leaders and persist in the error committed by the ones who lead them or rather misled them. No one could be satisfied with partition as everyone was getting something which was not theirs and losing that which was theirs. Though being an Indian reader/researcher/academician, it is well-neigh impossible to remain oblivious to Pritam's towering stature as a Punjabi writer, yet if you were actually an innocent or less-informed reader you still would apprehend an Indian Punjabi's voice in the texts- the approach, the treatment, the outlook, the descriptions of a similar setting are all so revealing.

The irony is that what are potentially situations of empathy are the ones that evoke greater hatred and keep feeding the divisive discourse that feeds the vote bank politics in these two nations. Men, women, and children on both sides of the borders went through similar brutalizing treatment at the hands of others but unable to understand the larger forces that had set the juggernaut rolling they persist on casting the people from other community in the role of perpetrator. That Punjab may



Daath Voyage

: An International Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in English
A UGC Refereed e- Journal no 45349

ISSN 2455-7544
Vol.3, No.4, December, 2018

www.daathvoyagejournal.com

have been an extreme example of political opportunism and self-seeking tendencies of vain politicians does not occur to the masses fed on discourse of religious hatred.

It is a pity that the CR formula that was dismissed as insane scheme was given sanctity by Congress and then fuelled by Mountbatten plan. Not only the British but all leaders who were on the table accepting the 'White Paper' had undermined people's faith. The people or the real representatives of the people had been conveniently dismissed or engulfed in the fire of communal hatred. For instance, Khizr Hayat Khan was insulted and dubbed a traitor until he relented. Secular leaders like Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan of North-West Frontier Provinces who had been an ardent admirer of MK Gandhi and Khizr Hayat Khan of Punjab's Unionist Party were isolated as their brand of politics became obsolete. To the misfortune of Punjab, it was either Lala Bhimsen Sachar or Gopi Chand Bhargav who became Chief Ministers of Punjab had a pronounced role in abetting violence. Evan Jenkins, Governor of Punjab at this time, shares the knowledge to this effect (36. Honourably Dead. Qtd B&B See Confidential Papers and Reports of Evan Jenkins. "Disturbances in Punjab". London: India Office Library, R/3/1/176). A Gujarati social worker involved in rehabilitation of women across borders shares her insights regarding difference between social fabric of Punjab and that of Gujrat during partition. In reference to Muslims, she remarks about Gujarati attitude and compares this to that demonstrated by people of Punjab. It is in fact, to be highlighted that the elite set that partitioned off Punjab hardly had a natal Punjab birth or upbringing: 'Look, I am a Gujarati. Among us, there was not much warmth for them. In our place, Gujarat, there were no Muslim zamindars or highly educated people, only farmers or artisans. They could not equal either the money or education of the Muslims of Punjab or UP. At the time of Partition when I went to Punjab for the first time, I realized that there was a lot of socializing and warmth between the two communities. They used to embrace each other and when they were forced to separate, they longed to see each other again' (B&B.76). This witness gain does not actually understand that even uneducated and illiterate peasants across communal lines in the Punjab villages lived together peacefully and that 'zamindara' in Punjab was a peasant proprietor and not necessarily a rich landowner as in other provinces of India. However, she hits the nail on the head



when she refers to economic reasons for the religious divide. “ The number of Hindus in Punjab was greater than the number of Muslims. Another reason could be that wherever the Hindus went, they exploited the Muslims. There were quite a few bania moneylenders who lent money at such exorbitant rates of interest that they were like blood-suckers. When an opportunity offered itself, they took their revenge.”(76 B&B). Again, the official historiography has done the people a great disservice by not recounting laws and legislations brought in by the Unionist party of Punjab that was the popular party before partition, a political party that stood by for unity, secularism and economic equality in Punjab till rampant greed of national parties and political opportunism of the so-called national leaders wiped this regional party out. ‘One cannot only blame the Muslims for subjecting Hindu women to violence, the Hindus also did it. In the Golden Temple 200 women were made to dance naked for the whole night in 1947. Not in the Darbar Sahib , but in its compound. And so many people were enjoying this unholy show. If I tell this to anyone they don’t like it, but these are facts. I will talk on behalf of women and will not deviate from this fact (76 B& B).” The sad part here is that , even women participate in divisive discourses that serve male interests forgetting that in all such events and incidents the women on both sides have to pay the heaviest price. They will be only pawns in the game of power politics and patriarchy on either side. This account by Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin recording witnesses and accounts not limited to partition but extending into details of the difficult and painful rehabilitation process is an eye-opener, especially at it sees the whole process not just from the perspective of authorities, or Hindu patriarchal discourse but from a feminist and Marxist perspective yielding a more complex but perhaps also more balanced view of the Partition and its aftermath.

Dismantling the Narrative: a Vehicle to Discourse

The present study compares the historical discourse that has been relegated (secular discourse) with the dominant historical discourse that favours partition. By referring to certain popular or canonized texts inspired by partition of India, this paper highlights how political powers prompt and support the discourse that favours their own establishment and continuity in power. It is observed that often narratives are vehicles of discourse. It is found that the narratives (as intended or controlled by the ‘author’ or ‘author function’) quite deliberately highlight some stories and



choose to gloss over others depending on the perspective the author favours. This perspective necessarily is one that does not unsettle the author or just simply buttresses his world view or his /her own experiences which of course, depend on his/her own position in the social mosaic found on the intersection of specific status related to gender, community, caste, religion and region. Thus, 'represented' reality emerges out of support for a certain ideology (in case, the writer is conscious of his political and intellectual alignments) or just outlook (in case, there is no recognized subscription/affiliation/affinity to any school of thought). The events chosen or rendered and their descriptions are not spontaneous, either are they just an outcome of aesthetic impulse or 'powerful emotions' as Wordsworth would assert but quite otherwise. Thus, selective perspectives are favoured over multiple focalizations in texts that claim to portray social situations. In this scenario, a pro-active reading will help perceive intellectual tensions.

Thus, there is an attempt to 'read against the grain' so that the reading is able to yield or suggest buried information considering that texts are constructs and deliberate productions. The above objectives have been outlined considering texts not just as aesthetic productions but as part of socio-economic and political agenda.

Critical Approach

The methodology for the paper is suggested by new historicist and cultural materialist approaches. Feminist and Marxist perspectives have been adopted to analyze and understand the narratives. Chiefly, Michel Foucault's concepts relating to 'episteme' and circulation of knowledge, Louis Althusser's delineation of ideological and repressive state apparatus, Antonio Gramsci's discussions on 'hegemony', the anti-canon theory, the new historicist acknowledgement of history as a 'construct' as in Louis Montrose and Hayden White have informed the study.

Since, the period under question registers a shift from imperial rule to sovereignty, the postcolonial themes and tropes also help the critical understanding. Therefore, Edward Said's perception of politics guiding Orientalist discourse in *Orientalism* as well as later works like Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffins' *The Empire Writes Back* or the *Intimate Enemy* by Ashis Nandy have guided the critique presented in the thesis.



While many discuss the scientific method and objective approach of historians, Hayden White in *Metahistory* stresses the ‘art’ involved in historical writing. The chronicle is open-ended but there is a tendency to ‘narrativize’ the past, to tell it like a story with a beginning, middle and end. This involves omissions and inclusions so that a cohesive and convincing tale is told. At the same time, however, every historian seeks to achieve what White calls diverse kinds of “explanatory affect (sic)” (x. Preface). He delineates the strategies as ‘explanation by formal argument, explanation by emplotment, and explanation by ideological implication’(x). He further analyses ‘four principle modes of historical consciousness’ namely, Metaphor, Synecdoche, Metonymy, and Irony(x). He comments: ‘we are indentured to a choice among contending interpretative strategies in any effort to reflect on history-in-general’ (xii).But he maintains that a claim to greater authority cannot hold for any given mode as each mode only represents reality(xii).White also speaks of the eighteenth century division of historiography into ‘fabulous, true, and satirical’. First, was fictitious and inventive, next aimed at truth avoiding prejudice, and last, ironic. The present paper identifies and apprehends these strategies and modes that inform biographical accounts. And even images for public distribution. For example, Nehru is known to have admired Joseph Stalin, the communist premiere of USSR and styled himself on Stalin who created friendly images of himself for the impressionable minds of young children.

The objective here is to unveil the politics of image-building whereby these texts are circulated. Montrose in his influential essay ‘Professing the Renaissance: The Poetics and Politics of Culture’ discusses the historical and cultural determination of texts. There is an ‘acknowledgement that our analyses and our understandings necessarily proceed from our own historically, socially and institutionally shaped vantage points; that the histories we reconstruct are the textual constructs of critics who are, ourselves, historical objects’(23).

Montrose elaborates: ‘By the textuality of history, I mean to suggest, firstly, that we can have no access to a full and authentic past, a lived material existence unmediated by the surviving textual traces of the society in question...’. Montrose is concerned with human societies that have existing written records. It has been observed that history is dictated by the establishment and the incumbent powers. What is found valuable and what is superfluous, is determined by the authorities



prevailing at the time. This idea is affirmed by Hayden White who observes that ‘the very claim to have discerned some kind of formal coherence in the historic record brings with it theories of the nature of the historical world and of historical knowledge itself which have ideological implications for attempts to understand “the present”, however, this “present” is defined. White makes the following observation about a historian’s task: “in order to figure ‘what really happened’ in the past, therefore, the historian must prefigure as a possible object of knowledge the whole set of events reported in the document” (intro.x).

A major fallout of this ‘exclusion’ of native success stories, the stress on their ‘flash-in-the-pan’ existence and the emphasis on short duration or contingency of ‘good governance’ by natives in historical records is to deprive the present policy-makers of role models to emulate. The contemporary civil-servants lack precedents in sharp administration and continue to diet on stereotypes of native incompetence. The postcolonial era grapples with neo-colonialism and distress caused by native tyrants, fostering the myth of love for foreign yoke or the ‘natural’ inclination of the erstwhile colonies towards subservience to dictatorship. A pattern has been set that creates bureaucracy rather than civil servants and politicians rather than statesmen.

In his book *The Intimate Enemy* Ashis Nandy presents as a ‘cautionary tale’ (xi) he elaborates upon what he calls ‘the second colonization’ (xi). He speaks of the ‘colonialism that colonizes minds in addition to bodies’ and observes that ‘it alters their cultural priorities once for all’ (Preface.xi). Here, ‘their’ refers to the people in the erstwhile imperial colonies.

But then follows a purposive statement that severely undermines the objectivity of Nandy’s project: ‘it is the unheroic Indian coping with the might of the West I want to portray’ (xviii). He snuffs the candle he just lit and adopts one of the models he set out to critique.

Why does Nandy want to portray the ‘unheroic Indian’? It is, as if there is a dearth of heroes in the Indian history. Why is it that the admired Indian intellectuals consider mentioning the heroes of Indian independence retrogressive and low-brow? And when they think of names they cannot go beyond Mr. Nehru and Gandhiji. It seems that the rest of the revolutionary landscape was barren. At least, it has been rendered barren- the school text books have dropped the pictures and essays of all leaders-moderates and extremes slowly and steadily. It is a sad affair that stalwarts like Khan Abdul



Daath Voyage

: An International Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in English
A UGC Refereed e- Journal no 45349

ISSN 2455-7544
Vol.3, No.4, December, 2018

www.daathvoyagejournal.com

Gaffar Khan and Sir Chhotu Ram on one side and Bhagat Singh and Chandrashekhar Azad on the other side have become regional icons and denotative of caste pride rather than national pride.

White comments on the great credit that a historian possesses as opposed to a story-teller, while pointing out to the necessary 'invention' that is a part of making historical records: "It is sometimes said that the aim of the historian is to explain the past by finding, 'identifying', or 'uncovering', the 'stories' that lie buried in chronicles; and that the difference between 'history' and 'fiction' resides in the fact that the historian 'finds' his stories, whereas the fiction writer 'invents' his. This conception of the historian's task, however, obscures the extent to which 'invention' also plays a part in the historian's operation". Thus, presenting a critique of the historian's task, White claims that the difference between the fiction writer's enterprise and that of a historian's only ostensible not substantive.

In fact, in the current 'post-truth' era, the media thrives on debates, the schisms, the gaps, the lacunae present in all kinds of absolutist claims have become more glaring, more gaping.

It was an irony of fate that when Punjab was ready for its imminent sovereignty, its population was not considered capable enough. It is an irony that in fact it was the people of these very regions, Punjab and Bengal, who had played the most active part in the nationalist struggle and it was these regions where Congress had never had a majority and perhaps, did not mind sacrificing to Muslim League. Muslim League, like Congress, was in minority here, but could justify their claims to Congress and British who were eager to resolve the issue but not the problem. Though, there are narratives/ records that intend to compare the positions of Nehru and Jinnah, other prominent positions are completely left mentioned. For instance, the secular, pro-farmer, socio-economic –orientation demonstrated by the Unionist party that reigned in Punjab diarchy goes unacknowledged in most fiction and much non-fiction. The Unionist Party has stayed in Pakistan's psyche as an adjunct to Muslim League only due to the fact that the majority of its members were Muslims and in complete and deliberate neglect of the ideological differences between the two.

Hayden White finds that a 'chronicle' necessarily involves the narrative effort involved in telling a 'story'. The structure of chronicle, though primarily determined by a time-line and the sequence of events and happenings, it still demands an imposed arrangement that makes an



imaginative appeal to the reader. It also makes a demand on the historian or annal writer to give his or record unity and coherence that comes with use of identifiable motifs. White observes: 'A chronicle by the arrangement of the events to be dealt with in the temporal order of their occurrence; then the chronicle is organized into a story by the further arrangement of the events into the component of a 'spectacle' or process of 'happening, which is thought to possess discernible beginning, middle and end. This transformation of chronicle into story is effected by the characterizations of some events in the chronicle in terms of inaugural motifs; of others in terms of terminating motifs; and of yet others in terms of transitional motifs'. Thus, the reader receives partial accounts, residue and vestiges of past, saved by the historian for his definite purpose, though he or she conscientiously gathers the facts, yet there is also an exclusion'.

Two-nation Theory, CR formula and resultant partition (1947-1955)

While C Rajgopalachari, a close associate of Mahatma Gandhi propounded the 'two-nation theory', it was VP Menon, another congressman who drafted the Mountbatten Plan, the acceptance of which led to the division of India. The plan was drafted to ensure that the newly created nations of India and Pakistan remained subservient to the British supremacy well-linked to the Commonwealth (*Freedom at Midnight*. 184-85). The Cabinet Mission Plan that followed was met with a 'vow of silence' rather than vocal rejection by MK Gandhi (FAM. 198-99). Jinnah was persuaded (FAM. 202). All this happened as an irony of fate as the Unionist party that stood between ambition of the great leaders of these conceding National Parties had lost its last bastion in 1945 with the demise of the peasant leader from Southern Punjab , Chaudhary Chhotu Ram. With Fazl Hussain, Sikandar Hayat Khan and Khizr Hayat Khan, he lives in the folk memory of this region as a supreme ideal of communal harmony and pro-active statesmanship.

As Congress began to support Mohammad Ali Jinnah with their own CR formula (formulated in 1944), Chaudhary Chhotu Ram, the founder of Unionist Party and minister had written a letter to Mahatma Gandhi warning him about the prospective horrors that lay waiting for common people, if credit was given to such a thesis as proposed therein. He noted that in C. Raj Gopalachari's opinion Bengal's Hindus and Punjab's Hindus and Sikhs have been treated as movable property that could be bartered as per the wishes of the decision-makers.



The discourse in the country never really could overcome the mammoth value two-nation theory had gained by its very realization and practice. These suggest that partition was a ‘necessary evil’ but it is a historian’s fallacy. The fallacy works by neglecting oral narratives and testimonies of the people.

refugees and ‘mujaheers’

On the other hand, as times verified, the ‘mass exchange of population’ – the alternative suggested by rival parties could only be part of a dystopian scheme. It gave birth to traumatized people displaced forever, rootless! In India, ‘refugees’ seeking refuge and in Pakistan called ‘mujaheers’- truly, it was not a matter of religion!

The same theory informed the Khalistan movement where the Sikhs asked for a separate ‘pure’ land just as Hindustan and Pakistan had gained their separate dominions on the basis of religion.

Alternative Narratives and Resisting Discourses

Mushirul Hasan is close to truth when he observes that the ‘decade preceding Partition frequently escapes historical scrutiny (introduction. 3). And he would have been still closer had he talked about the two decades before the Partition. Actually, in the assertion lies the key to the enigma of why such an important time was neglected. To the present authors, it seems to be a part of history that does not belong to the Congress or the Muslim League. The decades belonged to the Unionist Party. And to look back and concede that these two ‘national’ level parties had completely messed up in the province so much that it changed the geographic contours of the land as well as the people must be undoubtedly difficult. One cannot blunder into a tragedy of such mammoth magnitude.

To talk about the days, would be to admit that the two parties that actually got to decide the fate of Punjab’s populace had no popular base in the Punjab of the times.

However, rather than gloating in miseries of postcolonial depression and succumbing to a dehumanization by the powers these must by resisted by counter-discourse or at least looking for right frames to view past events.

The provincial government of Punjab that was constituted at inception of Provincial Dyarchy by Morley-Minto reforms(1919) comprising of Indians was supremely competent in



handling and improving the conditions of the province even during the Second World War that brought an agrarian calamity in its tow.

It was an irony of fate that when Punjab was ready for its imminent sovereignty, its population was not considered capable enough. The people should reclaim their past. It belongs to them.

Postcolonial writers on India do not celebrate Indian independence. They are too disheartened by the simultaneity of an infernal partition. Thus, postcolonial iconography in India with special reference to pre-partition and post-partition Punjab remains deficient. It remains a game of 'projections' or effacements whereby names and people are either immortalized or forgotten guided by *realpolitik*.

The historical fact and by corollary, the historical text is subjected to interpretation and the preservation of the text includes subjective choices in making, keeping and understanding history; value-judgments, inevitably, come into play.

A major fallout of this 'exclusion' of native success stories, the stress on their 'flash-in-the-pan' existence and the emphasis on short duration or contingency of 'good governance' by natives in historical records is to deprive the present policy-makers of role models to emulate.

The Partition Blame-Game

An article published in *The Hindu*, Jan 02, 2002 under the rubric *The Partition debate* by Mushirul Hasan throws light on the situation: 'For Jinnah, the real and ultimate challenge was to translate his otherwise nebulous idea of a Muslim state into a territorial acquisition that he could sell to his partners in Punjab, Bengal and United Provinces. When the Lahore Resolution was adopted in March 1940, Jinnah hesitated placing his cards out in the open because he could not predict the reactions of his own allies in these provinces. But once the edifice of resistance crumbled, especially in Punjab after the deaths of Sikandar Hayat Khan and the Jat leader Chhotu Ram (both had kept the Punjab Unionist Party intact), and popular support for the Pakistan idea gathered momentum, Jinnah had no qualms in defining his future Pakistan'.

Though 'Divide and Rule' policy was not a shocker-it still found the Indians a sitting duck! Also the British policy of 'Divide and Rule' worked in the favour Jinnah. Jinnah was assured victory by the conflict of interest between various nationalist parties. The British worked subtly.



Though, generally, people wanted peace and later, even the British Viceroy Wavell vehemently looked for a way to ward-off rioting. The siege had been laid and the scene was set for a great fortress to fall or as Jinnah would propose, a theatre for the 'surgical operation on India' (qtd. in Rafiq Zakaria) was ready.

Mohammad Ali Jinnah was a Bohra Muslim from Gujrat. He was a barrister but came from a rich trading-class background. He became the League's president in the mid-1930s. Although, his beginnings were secular, Jinnah had begun to profess the idea of 'Pakistan' Punjab the 'cornerstone of Pakistan' (Talbot 235). According to Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali Zamindar, it was Choudhary Rehmat Ali who 'coined the word Pakistan as an acronym for Punjab, Afghanistan, Kashmir, Sind and Baluchistan' (243). In 1937 the famous Sikandar-Jinnah Pact took place at Lucknow. But it did not turn into anything material. Notwithstanding, Pakistan Resolution of the League was passed in 1940 (Talbot 248). Soon Sikandar Hayat Khan distanced himself from Jinnah on being counseled by Chaudhary Chhotu Ram. In 1944 Jinnah had another meeting with the Hindu leader of Unionist Party but the talks failed abysmally. Sir Chhotu Ram challenged Jinnah that if he could break even a single assembly member of his party to join Jinnah's ranks, he would hang himself in the Lyallpur (now Faisalabad) square. From this meeting to January 1945 Sir Chhotu Ram was on a blitzkrieg march from Peshawar to Hodal for awakening people to the dangers of communal politics and asking them to stay true to politics of economic interests based on common identity as peasants and farmers. Unfortunately, the incessant exertion took its toll as the leader who had high fever on returning to Lahore from a rally at Jhangh, now in Pakistan breathed his last.

Conclusion

Homogeneity of discourse has been advertised and circulated on both sides of the border, so that there is no apprehension of any other reality beyond the one that suits the order of the day or the powers that emerged. However, researches must be intrepid enough to be able to take sojourns into less habited zones. In all probability, it is from there that the hidden links will surface. Same is true for research on the partition of Punjab. The least explored areas are the most important because these do not fit the dominant narrative tradition or discourse. Most texts- non-fiction and fiction are part of the politics of representative narratives and relegated discourses, few are able to break out of



the set limits or the set contours. The gaps, however, need to be acknowledged and then filled with candid historical readings and more detailed contexts because the partition of India is not just about tales – it is about people. It is also not just about survival of tales and partition stories; it is about people living in these two countries. It is important to salvage the relegated part of history to salvage humanity hidden underneath debris of religious hatred.

Works Cited

- Hasan, Mushirul. *India's Partition: Process, Strategy and Mobilization*. Oxford University Press, 2001 (first publ. 1993)
- Hasan, Mushirul. "The Partition Debate." *The Hindu*, 2 January 2001. Online.
- Ian Talbot, 'Tiwana, Sir Khizr Hayat (1900-1975)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Oct 2006 <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/58644>, accessed Oxford University Press 2004-15.
- Ismail, Ghada. "Representing the Past Between Historiography and Literature: An Overview". *Daath Voyage: An International Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in English*. Vol 3. No.3 September, 2018. [www. daathvoyagejournal.com/imagebag/image358.pdf](http://www.daathvoyagejournal.com/imagebag/image358.pdf).
- Nandy, Ashis. 'The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism'. Oxford India Paperbacks, 2009.
- Sidhwa, Bapsi. *Ice-Candy –Man*. Chapter 20. Penguin Books. Penguin Random House India: 1988. 159-160.
- Singh, Khushwant. *Train to Pakistan*. Ravi Dayal Publisher & Penguin Books. 1988.
- Singh, Khushwant. Transl and adapted. 2009 *Pinjar: The Skeleton and Other Stories*. Tara India Research Press. 1987
- White, Hayden. "The Poetics of History". Introduction. *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth Century Europe*. By White. John Hopkins University Press. 1973. 1-42.



Daath Voyage

: An International Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in English
A UGC Refereed e- Journal no 45349

ISSN 2455-7544

Vol.3, No.4, December, 2018

www.daathvoyagejournal.com

- White, Hayden. Preface. *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth Century Europe*. By White. John Hopkins University Press, 1973. ix-xii.
- Menon, Ritu and Kamla Bhasin. *Borders & Boundaries: Women In India's Partition*. 70th Anniversary Edition. Women Unlimited: Kali for Women: 1998.
- Montrose, Louis A., "Professing the Renaissance: The Poetics and Politics of Culture." *The New Historicism Reader*. Harold Veaser. Routledge. 1994. (15-36)
- Nandy, Ashis. *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism*. Oxford University Press, 2009 .
- Zakaria, Rafiq. *The Man who Divided India: An Insight Into Jinnah's Leadership and Its Aftermath*. Popular Prakashan. 2001. Web. Google books.
- Zamindar. Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali. *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia: Refugees, Boundaries, Histories*. 1 st pub. Columbia University Press: 2007. Penguin-Viking: 2008.