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As I end this note, many names and faces flood my mind. I remember Dr. Uday Kumar, our M.Phil teacher, who introduced me to Critical Theory. He opened a whole new stimulating world for me. Whenever I attempt to do any research, I have lot of precious memories of his lectures to guide me. We were indeed fortunate to have him as our teacher. Same feeling goes for our other M.Phil. teachers, Professor Raj Rao, Professor Vidya Netrakanti and Professor Prashant K Sinha. They were instrumental in laying down a sound academic foundation in me.

Finally, as I close, I would like to emphatically state that although my guide, co-guide and other teachers have been instrumental in shaping up of this work, the shortcomings in this work, if any, are entirely mine.
PROLOGUE

With some hesitation and deliberation I embark on this journey down the memory lane and try to trace the path which led me to this topic of research.

One fine day, I went to attend a guest lecture at The Women Studies Centre in the University of Pune. I went for the lecture and felt it was like a home coming for me- I had a very strong feeling that this is where I belong or at least would like to belong. Immediately I enrolled myself for a one year certificate course in Women and Development, and later on for a one year diploma course the following year. Those two years were extremely fruitful in terms of building a personal and political ideological base. I learnt the courage to ask questions and understood that positing the right questions was more relevant than searching answers. The Centre, no doubt, presented me with a sound knowledge body but more important was the right attitude of open enquiry. Even more importantly, it was then that I started becoming aware of the subtle connection between one’s personal location and one’s ideological position.

I did a lot of introspection and emerged with some honest conclusions-

i) with gender studies I had entered the discipline of social sciences and humanities. The feminism I had understood here was very different from the feminism I had seen through the corridors of Literature. 

ii) I had now crossed the threshold of disciplines and felt now doing research based entirely in one discipline would be betraying the commitment shown in crossing over.  

iii) The second conjecture did not necessarily mean that I had the competence of interdisciplinary research- I had to be reasonably good in two disciplines which was a tall order. 

iv) However difficult the enterprise of working on an interdisciplinary topic seemed, I owed it to all my teachers of Women Studies to make this daring attempt.

During my course in gender studies, I had done some work on partition literature and some on Romila Thapar’s *Shakuntala*. These two papers had sown the seeds of the importance of a text as a social document, and the importance of the Indian Partition in all its varied aspects. The ideas started developing and I finally geared up myself to work on this topic.

I needed two solid anchors for this and I was fortunate to find them in the form of my two guides. I approached Professor Sinha as I had worked with him for my M.Phil. He is an ideal guide in the true sense and I enjoyed a good rapport with him. I was hesitant as I was armed with an unconventional topic. To my relief, he was extremely
supportive once he realized my passion for the topic. I was elated as a child would be when her father agreed to hold her hand and accompany her on a new path, indulging in her wishes! I was overjoyed by the confidence he showed in me, it gave a sturdy support to this daunting task at hand. I couldn’t believe my good luck when Dr. Vidyut Bhagwat read the rough draft of my research proposal and said, “Finalize this and go ahead, I will be your co-guide.” Dr. Bhagwat patiently led me through the new area of doing research in gender. She has been exemplary in showing how one’s subjective personal location should not be discarded in the enterprise of ideology but how it should be critically looked at objectively and used as a valid and powerful tool of inquiry. In our discussions I was often surprised to realize how one’s personal location seeps through invisibly and colours the so called objectivity and rationalization. I was taught by her to acknowledge it and use it to its advantage.

I have been very fortunate in my teachers and guides, this work has been possible due to them but the shortcomings in my work, if any, are entirely mine. They are to be attributed to my poor ability and not to my lack of sincerity. This is because I have been passionately sincere about this work for more than a decade. I really have an emotive commitment to my topic, I don’t know whether it weakens or strengthens the academic rigor but I am proud to accept, admit and acknowledge it. I feel that if I make a sincere and honest attempt to understand The Indian Partition through the paths of literature and history, I might be offering my humble service to our nation.

I would like to state my position and location of the present research clearly before I conclude. I am not rejecting or leaving my primary discipline of literature and nor am I claiming any competence in the discipline of History. At the same time I also do not claim any ideological commitment to gender studies. Then where do I stand? I define myself as a student with the core discipline of Literature, trying to enter and understand the discipline of History with the support and means of gender studies and New Historicism in the context of Culture Studies. This attempt at research is located there. I want to sincerely understand if an interdisciplinary study brings out an enriched understanding and if it so, to see how and where history and literature meet each other, and what is lost in this entire enterprise if feminist perspectives and New Historicism are not used.

I feel that the disciplines of literature, psychoanalysis, philosophy, history, culture, anthropology and women studies have a lot to share in terms of issues, ideology and epistemic base. I personally feel that I gained a lot by not remaining in the narrow
confines of any one discipline because culture is the area where all these disciplines have very fertile common spaces, fruitful in terms of future interdisciplinary research.

Postscript: I cannot conclude without expressing a deep sense of gratitude to Bhagwat madam for being instrumental in bringing out this piece of personal – academic biography ‘out of me’.