Introduction
Introduction

As the title of the dissertation suggests, I am going to study how Shauna Singh Baldwin, a woman writer, writes an allegory of the body to interpret the history of nation and shows its trappings of masculinist hegemony from the feminist perspective. Her novel *What the Body Remembers* (1999) is a fictional narrative of the very act of remembering partition and its aftermath in the history of the nation through the body.

This thesis examines a literary account of the violence (torture, rape, abduction, murder and suicide) committed by Hindu and Muslim men against Muslim and Hindu women respectively, during the Partition of colonial India into the two separate nation-states of India and Pakistan. My argument will be that these acts of violence were acts that were symbolic of a metonymic equivalence between women’s bodies and national territory to produce the boundaries of the two newly formed nation-states. Furthermore, this symbolic act was possible only through the reduction of women to sexualized bodies and through the silencing of women’s voices and agency both in the acts of violence and in post-Partition nationalist histories.

I focus on three vital points in Baldwin’s novel *What the Body Remembers*. First, she uses the personal narrative of woman as an allegory of narrative of the nation by appropriating the concept of woman as nation. Second, she shows female body as a site of violence. Third, female body acts as a site of memory which serves as a weapon of resistance to critique the narrative of nation and history that have been constructed by men.
Before analyzing the text it is worthwhile to have an overview of Indian writings in English with special focus on women writers and understand the critical importance of Baldwin’s *What the Body Remembers* in the realm of postcolonial Partition literature.

An analysis of postcolonial discourse illustrates that it shares many similarities with Feminist theory, and for this reason the two fields have long been thought of as associative, even complementary. Firstly, both discourses are predominantly political, and these concern themselves with the struggle against oppression and injustice. Moreover, both reject the established hierarchical, patriarchal system, which is dominated by the white male hegemony, and vehemently deny the supposed supremacy of masculine power and authority. Imperialism, like patriarchy, is after all a phallocentric, supremacist ideology that subjugates and dominates its subjects. The oppressed woman is in this sense akin to the colonized subject (Ashcroft, et al., *Post Colonial Studies* 101). Essentially, exponents of post-colonialism react against colonialism in the political and economic sense while feminist theorists reject colonialism of a sexual nature.

Further, the theoretical trajectories of postcolonialism and feminism converge on the concept of double-colonization, first expounded in the mid-1980s by Kristen Holst-Petersen and Anna Rutherford in their *A Double Colonization: Colonial and PostColonial Women’s Writing* (1986). The concept draws on the observation that women are subjected to both the colonial domination of empire and the male domination of patriarchy. In this respect empire and patriarchy act as analogous to each other and both exert control over female colonial subjects, who
are, thus, doubly colonized by imperial/patriarchal power. As a corollary of this concept feminist theory holds that women have been marginalized by patriarchal society, and consequently, the history and concerns of feminist theory have paralleled developments in postcolonial theory which foregrounds the marginalization of the colonial subject. As has been historically experienced, instead of alleviating the oppression of women and ensuring their deliverance from patriarchal fold, postcolonial nationalisms entrench the power of patriarchy, so that women’s struggle against ‘colonial’ domination often continues after national independence. Postcolonial feminism, therefore, continues to analyze the perpetuation of gender bias and ‘double colonization’ even in post-independence states, seeing the persistence of neo-colonial domination of women in national patriarchies.

In addition, both women and ‘natives’ are minority groups who are unfairly defined by an intrusive, ‘male gaze’, which is a characteristic of both patriarchy and colonialism. Both categories of colonial subjects have been reduced to stereotypes such as virgin, whore, savage, heathen, infants etc. and denied a historicized identity by the system that entraps them. In recent times, postcolonial studies has reacted to this viewpoint and subsequently involved itself with the issue of gender, questioning to what extent this affects the lives of colonial subjects who also happen to be female. In her celebrated essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (1988), Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s critical investigation of “suttee,” the self-immolation of women on the funeral pyre of deceased husbands in India, reveals women’s predicament of being silenced between the double-oppression of patriarchy and imperialism. In this essay Spivak writes, “If, in the context of colonial production,
the subaltern has no history and can not speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow” (82-83). The fact that colonial oppression affected men and women in different ways should be recognized, as females were often subjected to double colonization, whereby they were discriminated against not only for their position as colonized people but also as women.

The main objective of this research is to examine the way in which recent studies of the Partition of India have begun to focus on people’s experiences and perceptions of this event from women’s perspective primarily because they were victims of both colonial power and patriarchy. It shows how, in this process of reconsidering the Partition, some historians have begun to criticize the existing history-writings based on the nationalist discourse, which analyzed only political developments among parties and politicians. The history of Partition as a memoir of the major politicians and intellectuals like Jawaharlal Nehru, Muhammad Ali Jinnah and others—who were memorialized and worshipped as founders and protectors of nations by the beneficiaries of Indo-Pak Independence—was challenged. To understand this new approach to the Partition, it is necessary to look at the development of South Asian historiography from the 1980s, and more especially, some important debates presented by the scholars of the subaltern studies group on the fragments, oppressed voice and silence in history-writings. Drawing their inspiration from the work of the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, they sought to provide a counterbalance to traditional elite histories of nationalism by looking at the role of subordinate groups. There was an attempt to write history from below. The celebration of fiftieth anniversary of Independence was accompanied by disillusionment with high politics and focus on popular experiences of violence and
displacement. Among a wide variety of contemporary Indian intellectuals, Aijaz Ahmad, Joya Chatterji, Veena Das, Mushirul Hasan, Shashi Tharoor, and Gyanendra Pandey have been influential in revising the historiography of the subcontinent’s partition and nation building. In order to discover the silences and gaps in history, scholars such as Urvashi Butalia, Ritu Menon, Kamla Bhasin, Gyanendra Pandey and Alok Bhalla, among others, began to explore how memory of events was constructed and reconstructed by different groups of people. They did so by interviewing the Partition victims and comparing their narratives with one another and also with other narratives in official documents and history books as well.

In *The Other Side of Silence* Urvashi Butalia points out that her aim was to focus on “the stories of the smaller, often invisible, players: ordinary people, women, children, scheduled castes” (11). She did this principally through interviews and oral narratives.

While the subaltern group mainly concentrated on the reevaluation of the role of Nehru and the Congress in the events of 1947 and the establishment of the Indian state, the feminists among them tried to evaluate history to assess women’s role. About the rethinking of Partition histories, Suvir Kaul points out:

> Sexuality and gender have a *constitutive* centrality here— as critical axes, they provide an understanding that does not simply supplement more orthodox historiography but interrogates and rewrites its narratives. (10)
The feminist historiography on gendered experiences of the Partition offers two important insights: Firstly, the ritualized violence inscribed on bodies by members of the 'enemy' community as a sign of conquest and humiliation of the \textit{Other}; secondly, how both men and women from one’s own community perpetrated sacrificial violence in the name of honour.

Another source that has played an important role in drawing scholars’ attention to popular perceptions of the Partition and violence is the literary texts, films, and television serials which depict this event. They have highlighted the hidden stories of violence and the silences in official histories, and recently have begun to attract increasing attention from historians and literary scholars. The consequences of the Partition have been explored by authors writing in the major Indian languages and all major narrative and lyric genres—poetry, short stories, novels, films and television serials.\textsuperscript{4} Here I seek to study Partition narrative-fiction by Shauna Singh Baldwin, who belongs to Indian diaspora.

Many of the world’s most successful writers of Indian origin live outside the country, and yet they set their books in India as Shauna Singh Baldwin does in \textit{What the Body Remembers}. Baldwin describes herself as a diasporic writer. In an interview with Amberish K Diwanji and Suhasini Haidar at rediff.com, when asked where she is from she answers:

I just don’t like being excluded from any country. I am certainly a part of India and I am certainly a part of Canada and I am also part American . . . I find we are in the third phase of Indian writing now. First we had Indian writers writing from India. Then we had
Immigrant writers. And now we have something called diasporic writers. We are all of Indian origin, but our perspective is different from that of Indian writers. Shashi Mootoo, Jhumpa Lahiri and I fall into that category.

The Sikh diaspora in Canada is particularly important in the context of the Partition as most of them migrated in the aftermath of the Partition and their families suffered dislocation and division as a consequence of the event. Shauna Singh Baldwin belongs to the Sikh diaspora and her ancestors too suffered partition. But as a writer she does not like the business of categorizing writers as to who they are rather than what they write. In an interview with Rich Rennicks on border.com, she says:

In North America, publishers and academics called people who write in English from within India ‘Indian writers’—although English is one language of many for Indian writers. Then came the immigrant Indian writers—people like Nirad C. Choudhury, Salman Rushdie, Bharati Mukherji, Bapsi Sidhwa, Chitra Divakaruni. Today diasporic Indian writers fit neither of these old categories. We are second generation Canadians and Americans of Indian origin.

It is indeed worthwhile to have a general overview of Indian English literature and discuss Baldwin’s place in it. With the coming of Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R.K. Narayan, the Indian English novel seemed to have begun its journey. In Mulk Raj Anand’s Coolie, the social disparity in India is laid bare. In
R.K. Narayan’s imaginary village Malgudi, the invisible men and women of our teeming population come to life and act out life with all its comic eccentricities and whimsicalities. In *Kanthapura* by Raja Rao, Gandhism awakes in a sleepy village down south. India no longer needed to be depicted by outsiders like Rudyard Kipling, E.M. Forster, Paul Scot and others. The perspectives from within ensured greater clarity and served a social documentary purpose as well. It seemed that the English language was made to be adapted to Indian cultural sensibility, and it facilitated a synthesis of the indigenous narrative traditions.

If the Anglo-Indian tradition of the Raj novels initiates the Indian English writing, the Indian stalwarts like Raja Rao, Mul Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan constitute the real first phase. The second phase of Indian novels in English seems to have begun in the nineteen eighties with the appearance of Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* in 1981. In the words of Joe Mee, “Its influence, acknowledged by critics and novelists alike, has been apparent in numerous ways: the appearance of a certain postmodern playfulness, the turn to history, a new exuberance of language, the reinvention of allegory, the sexual frankness, even the prominent references to Bollywood, all seem to owe something to Rushdie’s novel” (127).

That Rushdie ushered in a new era in Indian writings in English is beyond doubt. But attributing everything to a single, personal intervention would be a rather naïve statement, since many other immigrant writers from India who have made their mark are Nirad C. Choudhuri, Bharati Mukherjee, Bapsi Sidhwa, Chitra Divakaruni, Rohinton Mistry, Anita Rau Badami and many others. All of them engage with the problematic of the nation, national historiography, borders,
imaginary homelands, identity, origins, in-betweenness and the like. These postcolonial (also in the post-independence sense) writers, located in the globalized cultural space that is mediated by the English language, write back to home, as it were, and try to re-interpret the post-independent India for themselves and critique its colonial as well as postcolonial modernity.

While the first generation are called immigrant writers, second generation Canadian and American writers of Indian origin like Shauna Singh Baldwin, Shashi Mootoo, Jhumpa Lahiri are labeled as diasporic writers. It is this third phase of Indian novel of English to which Shauna Singh Baldwin belongs. The three phases of Indian writings in English seem to be in order since Baldwin sees herself within that framework. She says:

What matters is that most diasporic writers write about India and Indians with love instead of contempt, offering glimpses of a complex active people with high aspirations. Through our writing, we have certainly reinterpreted India for ourselves, revisited it and taken our readers with us. Diasporic writers have revisited the subcontinental history, as each ethnic immigrant and second generation group has done for their “old countries”. We have offered Canadians contemporary and historical comparisons between our two postcolonial societies, societies that still sometimes lapse into mental states of colonization and anglophilia. (“With Contempt or Love” 4)

Among others, nostalgia is a preoccupation of the diasporic writers. As they seek to locate themselves in the new cultures of the First World, they cannot cut off
their emotional and cultural affiliations with the world either they themselves, or their parents, or forefathers came from. Many of them re-discover their Indian roots and re-interpret their new self-identity. They negotiate between the adopted home in the First World and the home left behind in India across geographic, linguistic and cultural borders. They transform and transgress geographical, cultural and historical borders with their works. Their re-discovery is accomplished, at times, in terms of delving into the colonial and postcolonial histories of India, and interrogating the major social and political events and discourses. Such a wish for knowledge must have prompted Shauna Singh Baldwin to set *What the Body Remembers* in colonial India. In fact, *What the Body Remembers* is the retrieval of a true story as it is to a degree the story of Baldwin’s grandmother.⁵

Themes of emigration, exile, cultural displacement also feature in the diasporic writings prominently. The first thing is the diasporic person’s obsession with the diasporic condition of psychic and cultural existence. The evaluation of the social psyche of an exilic population is a major concern for these writers. The female diasporic writers like Baldwin in *English Lessons and Other Stories*, Jhumpa Lahiri in *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999) and *The Namesake* (2003), Chitra Divakaruni in *Arranged Marriages* (1995) deal with the problem of Indian Diaspora such as cultural alienation both from the host society and the native society, problem of adjustment of the diasporic woman with the new world and the resultant tension in human relationship. The attempts at re-imposing Indian cultural traditions on the fully acculturated children at times result in disastrous consequences such as misunderstanding, conflict and separation.
Diaspora writings also raise questions regarding the semantics of home and Nation. For the first generation immigrants India continues to be their “home” though they live in foreign land as is the case with Gogol’s parents in *The Namesake*, or Meena’s parents in Meera Syal’s *Anita and Me* (1996). The first person woman narrator of “Montreal 1962” and Devika in the story of the same name in Baldwin’s *English Lessons* (1996) find it difficult to accept Canada as home and adapt to life there. In Monica Ali’s novel *Brick Lane* (2003), Chanu, who is a straggler in a London’s East End ghetto, is still obsessed with his Bangladesh home, much to the chagrin of his daughter Shahana.

From this comes up the issue of identity in a big way not merely of the fictional characters, but also that of their creators themselves. The diasporic writers’ identity is constantly questioned. Jhumpa Lahiri refers to this problem in *The Namesake*. The protagonist Gogol attends a panel discussion about Indian novel written in English. The sociologist on the panel declares, “The ABCDs are unable to answer the question ‘where are you from?’ Gogol eventually gathers that it stands for American born confused deshi” (118).

As mentioned, different protagonists in the stories in *English Lessons*, *We are not in Pakistan* and *Interpreter of Maladies* face the problem of divided identity. Kiran Desai, too, in her celebrated Booker-winning novel *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006) tries to explore what it means to live between two cultures, which results in the loss of roots, tradition, meaning of selfhood, cynicism, of which Jemu Patel, the ex-Judge and the Brown Sahib, as Macaulay’s child, is a classic example. I choose to dwell on the themes of Indian diasporic writing not only because Shauna
Singh Baldwin belongs to it, but also for the reason that the diasporic conditions of life is comparable to those of the partition victims in so far as both types are concerned with the issues of emigration—forced or voluntary—and the attendant cultural displacement, divided identity, home and nation. In this regard Rosemary Marangoly George in her article "(Extra) Ordinary Violence: National Literatures, Diasporic Aesthetics, and the Politics of Gender in South Asian Partition Fiction" makes a significant observation:

But what, one might ask, is gained from reading Partition fiction through the lens of diaspora-plus-nation? Read in purely nationalist terms, Partition was a once-in-a-nation's-lifetime event: it was the downside of achieving independence for India and the cost of establishing Pakistan. Thus, in terms of national history this Partition is firmly in the past and will not be repeated . . . If we read them through a diasporic lens, such partitions and dislocations are routinely replayed from the beginning of settled societies to the present day. Framed in this context of trading diasporas, indentureship, evictions, forced/economic migrations, and dislocations, this Partition becomes less of a singular event in a national history and more liable to be repeated in varying form and degree. (141)

I will explore these issues in my subsequent chapters, but a biographical sketch of the author of the novel under study seems to be perfectly in order at the moment. Shauna Singh was born in 1962 to Sikh refugee parents (from what is now
in Pakistan) in Canada (Montreal). Her parents moved to India in the 1960s. “My father moved to India because it was not much fun being a Sikh in Canada in the 1960s,” Baldwin says, “So he went back thinking that was the place where he could wear his turban . . .” (qtd. in Methot). Shauna Singh completed her secondary school in India. She did her MBA degree from Marquette University and then moved to Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The move to the United States was forced on her when Canadian Universities failed to acknowledge her Indian degree.

Shauna grew up in India, a country which is proud of a distinctive traditional dress, but she spent most of her childhood in pants. She used to play polo with the army men. She exercised their horses in the morning and so was always dressed in breeches. These days she wears Sikh dress more often than not, but she sports short hair. “I cut my hair because otherwise I would have come out of school with an MBA and been given a secretarial job. I didn’t wear a nose ring either” (qtd. in Methot).

Baldwin is a mixture of three cultures—a born Canadian, raised as an Indian and settled as an American. Like her multi-cultural identity, her personality is multi-faceted. Her short fiction, poetry and essays have been published in literary magazines in the U.S.A., Canada and India. From 1991-1994, she was an independent radio producer, hosting an East-Indian American radio show “Sunno” (Listen). She also works as an information technology consultant to banks and data processing companies.

She has married Mr. David Baldwin, an Irish-American, and they are likely to have no children as she feels “the human race is not that worthy of being passed
Shauna Singh Baldwin’s place in the world of fiction is quite new. She is an author of five books till now. Her first book *A Foreign Visitor’s Survival Guide to America* (1992), which she co-authored with Marilyn Levine, is non-fiction. It was written in the Pre-Internet era, as the name suggests, with the hope that it will serve as a guide for foreign visitors to America. Baldwin tells about the book in an interview with Lindsay Pereira:

You can read it as straight forward practical advice on how to prepare for your journey, rent an apartment, set up your new kitchen, find a job... or you can read it as a book that turns the anthropological gaze back on the USA, a country considered the norm in the world, to show that the USA is really the aberration. It reverses who is the looker and who is the lookee. (2)

Next, her fictional output began with a collection of short stories titled *English-Lessons and Other Stories*, which was published in 1996. It received the Friends of American Writers Award in 1996. Her debut novel *What the Body Remembers* (1999) won her the Commonwealth Writer’s Prize for Canada/Caribbean region (2000). It was also short-listed for Orange Prize for fiction, 2000. The book has been translated into eleven languages and has earned Baldwin praise, applauses and awards from different quarters. Her next novel, *The Tiger Claw* published in Fall 2004 was shortlisted for Giller Prize. In 2007, her new collection

“on” (qtd. in Trisha Sertori). She and her husband run a spy themed restaurant at Milwaukee called “The Safe House.”
of short stories *We are not in Pakistan* was published by Goose Lane. She is currently working on her sixth book, another novel.

Baldwin’s awards also include India’s International Nehru Award (Gold medal) for public speaking and the National Shastri Award, a silver medal for English prose. She is the recipient of 1995 Writer’s Union of Canada Award for short prose for “Jassie” and the 1997 Canadian Literary Award for a short story “Satya” which became the first chapter of *What the Body Remembers*.6

As a writer, though Baldwin’s literary output is not enormous, yet the range is quite wide. She chooses different parts of the world as the setting for her works. While she sets the novel *What the Body Remembers* in pre-partitioned India, in *The Tiger Claw* England and France constitute the setting. Her multi-locational and multi-cultural setting is evident as *English Lessons* is set in Canada, the U.S. and India, and *We are not in Pakistan* in various localities of Europe. Not only the setting, but the themes are multi-cultural. She writes about different cultures, and in the process transgresses historical borders too by setting *What the Body Remembers* in colonial India, *The Tiger Claw* in time of World War II, *English Lessons and Other Stories* in the postcolonial multicultural Canadian, American and Indian societies. She is equally comfortable in all cultures. In an interview with Kris Babe when she was questioned, “Do you as an Indian woman find that people expect a certain kind of writing from you?” Baldwin corrects, “Indo-Canadian-American Woman” (41).

Though a diasporic writer, her deep understanding of Indian culture, particularly the Sikh culture is marked in the novel *What the Body Remembers.*
Description of landscape, details of Indian customs, clothes and food abound in the book. Another feature of the work which draws attention is that Baldwin uses a lot of Indian words, but adds no glossary. In case of *What the Body Remembers* it was a condition of publication that no glossary shall be included in any language used to translate the novel. All the Urdu and Punjabi words are defined either by context or with recurring adjectives. If there is an English equivalent she gave it after the Indian word. Baldwin says in this context:

I am against glossaries because I find these, and the practice of italicizing non English words, are quaint hangovers from colonial times and should be dropped in our internet era. Nothing is foreign or exotic now, except if we continue to make it so. We do not use dictionaries to teach children new words, we believe context is the best teacher. Glossaries have never been provided for books shipped from Europe, North America to any where east of Suez, so we know it is possible and common to read novels about far away settings, times and cultures sans glossaries . . . . (Interview with Rich Rennicks)

She explains further, “This novel has no glossary or italics for Indian words, because I feel these break the spell of the story. And this book is not an attempt to explain Indian culture. Indian culture just IS in this book—and it is for the rest of the world to figure it out and enjoy it” (Author essay).

A remarkable feature about both her novels is that history is the subject in both *What the Body Remembers* and *The Tiger Claw*. Perhaps a concern for culture
incited an interest in history. Set in pre-partition India (1928-1949), *What the Body Remembers* tells the history of the Partition from a woman’s point of view. *The Tiger Claw* is history of World War II told through the story of Noor Inayat Khan. Both the books are hailed as historical fictions and have earned Baldwin plaudits as a writer of Historical Novels.

Baldwin’s Historical Novels are significant as they help the personal narrative of women and invest with it a power of resistance to critique the narrative of nation and history that have been constructed by men. *What the Body Remembers* is the major subject of my dissertation as the novel represents body as a site of oppression, displays allegorical narrative strategies to overcome marginalization and entrapment through producing a variant narrative of the nation.

My dissertation provides a close reading of *What the Body Remembers* in the light of feminism and post-colonialism. As Baldwin’s protagonists are female characters and their resistance to marginalization and search for identity her main theme, she is often labeled as a feminist. *What the Body Remembers* in particular is a feminist novel as here women resist male power and history through body. About this the author says in a message to book club reader: “In some book clubs, readers have discussed *What the Body Remembers* as a feminist book and others as historical fiction, a partition novel and of course it is both assuming you define feminism as the radical idea that a woman is a person”. But she refuses subscribing to any extreme form of feminism. In an interview with Ben Patchsea, when questioned “Do you consider this to be a feminist novel?” she answers:
If the word feminist means the radical idea that a woman is a person and it is feminist to write a story with women protagonists, yes this is a feminist novel. If 'feminism' means the silly idea that men are the enemy no this is not a feminist novel, because as you see in the novel the colonized brown man, like other men has his own problems. I have to see them in relation to that dominant culture.

The Partition of India has attracted her more than any other events in history. The Partition constitutes the setting in *What the Body Remembers*. In *English Lessons*, the story “Family Ties” tells the story of effect of the Partition and her other stories also bear numerous references to it. While the Partition was a kind of civil war, international warfare (World War II) is the background for *The Tiger Claw*. In both the novels against the background of war and bloodshed, killing and murder are unfolded stories of love and estrangement, men’s inhumanity to men and to women.

Women occupy the center stage in her works as she intends to tell “her-story.” *English Lessons* presents an array of experiences related to primarily women of the Sikh community. Many of the stories are about their relocation in an alien land. Cultural displacement, identity crisis and the conflict between adopting a “Canadian” identity and holding on to one’s older identities are important issues for Baldwin’s characters. The unnamed wife (“Cat who Cried”), the narrator of “English lessons,” Piya (“Toronto 1984”) try to create their own identity. Devika struggles between adopting a Canadian identity and holding on to her own identity and creates her alter ego Asha.
The female characters in Baldwin’s stories are many and varied. “Rawalpindi, 1919” presents a traditional mother who while making chappatis is pondering her son’s departure for England. Simran in “Simran” is an educated girl whose dream of a Western education is thwarted because of an unwanted lover and a conservative mother. In “Droupadi Ma” and “A Pair of Ears” we get pictures of old faithful female servants. Thus, stories in *English Lessons* mostly dramatize the lives of Indian women. Only in “Nothing must Spoil this Visit” we find Janet a European woman married to a Sikh. *What the Body Remembers* features two strong female characters and documents changes wrought on women by culture. *The Tiger Claw* saves these preoccupations to an extent. The effect of culture on female protagonists is a recurrent theme in Baldwin.

Baldwin has a sympathetic portrayal of male characters as well. She doesn’t blame Sardarji for what Satya and Roop suffer in *What the Body Remembers*. “I can’t condemn my own men,” Singh Baldwin sighs over a cup of chai at Toronto’s Bombay Palace restaurant, “I may write about them with satire, or with a certain amusement, but I can’t condemn them. I have to see them in relation to the dominant culture. When I see them in relation to that oppression, I have to forgive them. Unfortunately” (Methot).

Gender discrimination in the subcontinent is a major concern for her as well. When Shauna Singh was born, her mother received telegrams, and they all said pretty much the same thing, “poor thing, you had a girl. Don’t worry, next time it will be a boy.” “So my mother named me Shahnaaz,” Baldwin says, “a Muslim name that means ‘That of which emperors are proud’. It was her way of saying,
‘Damn you all’” (Methot). Other concerns that Baldwin raises are the patriarchal ideology of the family, the insecurities of people who have been uprooted (from India to Canada and UK in *English Lessons*, from Pakistan (Lahore and Rawalpindi) to India (Delhi) in *What the Body Remembers*) and the privileging of the male child over the female. In “Lisa,” another story of hers, it was a girl and there were telegrams and letters of sympathy from relatives. A boy child is given preference in education in “The Cat who Cried.” The grandmother wants the statue of Saraswati to be placed in the boy’s room, not in the girl’s. In *What the Body Remembers* Roop’s father’s ambition is concentrated on Roop’s brother Jeevan. Sardarji marries (Roop) for the second time just to have a son. The theme of undervaluation of women as a part of social and cultural practice in a patriarchal society finds a central place in *What the Body Remembers* which I will have occasion to discuss at length in the dissertation.

The theme of adaptability and search for identity resonate throughout the pages of *English Lessons* and *What the Body Remembers*. *English Lessons* was an excursion into the lives of Indian women in a foreign land and their attempt to establish identity in the face of a competing and hostile alien culture. *What the Body Remembers* features the effort of the protagonists Roop and Satya to assert their identity in the face of masculine domination. I will elaborately read the resistance of Satya and Roop in Chapter III of the dissertation.

Shauna Singh Baldwin denies that her characters, or any Sikh women for that matter, are weak or victimized women. About her female characters she says:
Religion says that we are equal, but the Sikh woman still puts her man forward as the head. None of my heroines are victims though. They have ambitions and are well armed. For instance, Satya has arrogance and experience, while Roop has beauty and fertility. Ambition creates their circumstance and they are able to get what they want. (qtd. in Sodhi)

*What the Body Remembers* is the first novel in English where the story of the Partition is told solely from the point of view of Sikh characters and two Sikh women Roop and Satya occupy the forefront. Baldwin says:

If you had predicted that I, a second-generation Canadian living in Milwaukee would write a book set in colonial India, in the area that is now Pakistan, about a Sikh woman in a polygamous marriage, I would have said, “Me?” But this novel chose its writer. Its characters, two women and a man, their husband, demanded that their story be told. (Author Essay)

Shauna Singh Baldwin chose to write about the Partition of India, as it were, rather than herself consciously searching for a contemporary theme and setting. Dearth of literary materials on the subject of the partition from woman’s perspective, she found, was motivation enough for writing the novel, for she says:

I can count novels in English about Partition on the fingers of one hand. So every story about Partition fills a huge gap in the universe of possible narratives. Perhaps we can eventually learn enough from telling the story so that it can’t happen ever again, in the Balkans or
anywhere else in the world. There will never be enough novels either by Indians and Pakistanis or by diasporic Indians and Pakistanis to tell the tales of each of 17 million people who became refugees as the two countries celebrated their independence from the British. There will never be enough novels to tell the tales of those who died—5 million people. (Author Essay)

Being a woman of Sikh community, whose ancestors were victims of the Partition, she felt a kind of responsibility to raise the curtain from this sordid face of the freedom won at midnight. In an interview to Rich Rennicks she explains further:

My writing seems to rise from a sense that there is something missing, a subject, a story, or an area that has 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. For instance, Khuswant Singh’s *Train to Pakistan*, Bapsi Sidhwa’s *Cracking India*, most recently Manju Kapur’s *Difficult Daughters*.

Her concern about it necessitated writing the book. However one can very well see that Baldwin leaves out many novels and short stories written in Urdu, Hindi and Bengali in the subcontinent some of which are already available in English translation, and restricts herself to only a few in the English language. She does not take into account English novels like Attia Hosain’s *Sunlight on a Broken*
Column (1961), or Anita Desai’s Clear Light of Day (1980), or Meera Syal’s Anita and Me (1996).

For my dissertation, when I began to look at the specific historical incident of the Partition and the fate of women in the larger context of postcolonial historiography and feminism, I came across the writings of Urvashi Butalia, Ananya Jahanara Kabir, Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin. These esteemed South Asian feminist scholars are considered to have pioneered a feminist historiography of India’s Partition and shed light on the stories of the women victimized during that time. The stories were forgotten by the community and the women were silenced in the collective memory of the nation for a long time. I shall have the occasion to refer to Butalia, Menon and Bhasin repeatedly in this dissertation as I find them very relevant in the context of revisiting history of women during the Partition.

It is worthwhile to throw some light on Urvashi Butalia’s The Other Side of Silence (1998), to which Baldwin has acknowledged her indebtedness in writing What the Body Remembers. Subtitled “Voices from the Partition of India,” Butalia’s work is a product of more than seventy interviews she conducted with the survivors of the Partition. She retrieved the marginal voices of women and dalits in particular, which had never been heard before. Butalia has always had a deep suspicion of the specious claims of objectivity and positivist truth which conventional theories of history make. When these become man’s histories, these create the illusion of possessing great truth value for narrating the true story of the nation. She described her book as a personal history that does not pretend to be objective (my emphasis).
She writes in her book that “some 75,000 women were raped, kidnapped, abducted, and forcibly impregnated by men of the ‘other’ religion” (45). Women jumped into wells to drown themselves so as to avoid rape or forced religious conversion; fathers and brothers beheaded their own daughters and sisters and other female family members so that they would not fall prey to dishonorable fate. Thousands of women were ‘martyred’ in order to ‘save’ the purity of the religion. Historical accounts by male historians have not addressed this dark underside of history of the Partition. “The history of partition was a history of deep violation—physical and mental—for women” (131). My reading of *What the Body Remembers* will attend to these thematic concerns in Baldwin.

Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin’s *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India’s Partition* (1998) is another important book to understand the cultural context of the Partition narratives and also Baldwin’s novel. The book begins by describing how women were led to commit mass suicide, had their breasts, hands or feet cut off, and were raped or kidnapped in the course of the Partition violence. But its central subject is the ‘recovery’ of women—Hindu and Sikh by India, Muslim by Pakistan—in the immediate aftermath of partition. The book itself is an act of recovery or restitution of personal histories: it moves between a series of oral histories and analytical comments which probe the histories (as recounted to the authors). Its protagonists are women who were repatriated and women who organized the repatriation.

A large number of writers have revealed the bloody underside of freedom, the pains of divided families, the agony and trauma of abducted women,
the plight of migrants and the nightmarish experiences of hundreds of people who boarded the train in order to run for safety, but did not complete the journey as they were killed on the way. Some of them, like the stories by Ashfaq Ahmad, Mohan Rakesh, Rajinder Singh Bedi, Lalitambik Aantherjanamor, Intizar Husain, and novels like Jhoota Such by Yashpal, Aadha Gaon by Rahi Masoom Reza, Tamas by Bhisham Sahni, Epar Ganga, Opar Ganga by Jyotirmoyee Devi, Aag Ka Dariya by Qurratulain Hyder, A Heart Divided by Mumtaz Shah Nawaz, strike a note of hope and redemption. On the other hand, Guzara Hua Zamana by Krishna Baldev Vaid, Ice-Candy Man by Bapsi Sidwa, Looking through Glass by Mukul Kesavan, Basti by Intizar Husain, Udhas Naslain by Abdullah Hussain, short stories by Manto, Umm-e-Ummara, Qudrat Ullah Shahab and K. A. Abbas end on a note of hopelessness. However, despite the differences these groups of works forming a literary tradition and a canon of the Partition imaginatively recreate a pre-partition world of tolerance and harmony among communities in villages and small towns that were lost all too suddenly by the demonical communal frenzy unleashed by the Partition. All these works of fiction focus on the cultural process of relatedness within which identities of Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims were negotiated together with their distinctiveness and differences. The differences occasionally caused friction, but never the communal violence of a phenomenal scale which the Partition triggered off. None of these works seems to suggest that the Partition was a logical consequence of communal hatred. All in fact point out that the Partition came about rather suddenly, without sufficient social and historical reason. Indeed, much as these works re-live the moments of loss, rupture, trauma and pain caused by the mayhem and displacement, their writers, who either experienced the painful
partition and suffered loss, or heard about it from the partition survivors, are still able to gaze at a past of Hindus and Muslims co-existence with a lot of grace and forgiveness.

Evidently, literature, rather than any narrative of social and political history, truly evokes the sufferings of the innocent, whose pain is portrayed in concrete, experiential terms, and it is literature that makes a lively representation of human reality than any book of history. In this context, Alok Bhalla makes a pertinent observation:

The best of them [novelists who have written about the Partition], however, do not repeat what the historians already know that there was violence of such fiendishness that each reminder of it still comes as a shock to our decencies and still violates our sense of a common humanity. Instead, they seek to make connections with the social and cultural life of a community in its entirety within a historically specific period. That is why these fictional accounts, unlike narratives of the historians which move with certitude towards a definite end, contain all that is locally contingent and truthfully remembered, capricious and anecdotal, contradictory and mythically given. Their endings too are various. While some manage to find their way out of the realms of madness and crime, others either mark out the emotional and the ethical map of our times with indelible lines of screams, ash, smoke and mockery, or
cramble into shocked silence. ("Memory, History and Fictional Representations of the Partition" 3120)

Indeed, it would be no exaggeration to say, as Mushirul Hasan suggests, we really have to board the *Train to Pakistan* to discover the implications of what happened before and after the fateful, midnight hour ("Memories of a Fragmented Nation" 2667). When Nehru was imagining the nation making tryst with a glorious destiny, thousands of people crossing the border also had their tryst with a destiny that was malevolent and bloody. Their stories capture the madness and poignancy of the moment. Attia Hosain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column* discovers how the movement for a home for the Muslims in the form of Pakistan split families on communal and political lines and created fears and uncertainties in the minds of people. To read her novel is to feel "as if one had parted a curtain, or opened a door, and strayed into the past" to re-live the trauma of the Partition (Anita Desai, Intro *Sunlight* 2). We have to turn the pages of *Difficult Daughters* and *Cracking India* to hear the silent and silenced agony of women who experienced a death-in-life situation and even something still worse.

Originally titled *Partition*, Manju Kapur's *Difficult Daughters* locates the life of Virmati against a backdrop of political happenings before and after the Partition. The novel is different from other Partition novels in that it does not focus on the violence or communal conflict of the Partition, but on the impact of dislocation on women both on personal and national level, which is again closely linked with the issue of female identity. For its part, Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-candy Man*—which is also alternatively titled *Cracking India* (1991)—concentrates more
on the violence or communal conflict of the partition than on the fate of woman exclusively. In another novel *The Pakistani Bride* (1983) by Sidhwa and other novels, namely Amitav Ghosh’s *The Shadow Lines* (1988), Meera Syal’s *Anita and Me* (1996) and Anita Desai’s *Clear Light of Day*, the subject of Partition is only incidental to other pressing cultural issues like the fate of displaced women and men in the diasporic world, discontent of women in incompatible marriage, painful memories of loss, disintegration of families and the attendant emotional turmoil in the post-independent India, an imaginary geography as a compensation for a world where human beings have been separated from each other by artificially created cultural and political barriers. Zahid in Attia Hosain’s *Sunlight on a Broken Column*, or Saddan in Rahi Masoom Reza’s *Aadha Gaon* (1966) [translated into English as *Half-a-Village*], or people crossing the border in Khuswant Singh’s *Train to Pakistan* (1956) offer a vivid and powerful portrayal of a fragmented and wounded society.

The reason why *What the Body Remembers* becomes the subject of my dissertation is that this novel has as its backdrop the Partition of India at the time of independence, which has emerged in recent years as a thematic pursuit both for literary writers and scholars. In her monograph titled *South Asian Partition Fiction in English* (2010) Rituparna Roy chose six novels, i.e. Khushwant Singh’s *Train to Pakistan* (1956), Manohar Malgonkar’s *A Bend in the Ganges* (1964), Bapsi Sidhwa’s *Ice-Candy-Man* (1989), Anita Desai’s *Clear Light of Day* (1980), Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* (1981) and Amitav Ghosh’s *The Shadow Lines* (1988) as the subject of her study. Baldwin’s *What the Body Remembers* is mentioned only in the passing in her work. The novel despite having won accolades
has not received major critical attention. Many reviews and stray articles on Baldwin’s works have come out in print, and many are available online. Nonetheless a full-fledged dissertation-length study of *What the Body Remembers* has not yet been attempted in India. As the desire to bring the story of Sikh women during the Partition to the forefront inspired Baldwin to write *What the Body Remembers*, the desire to bring the critical importance of the book in the realm of Partition Literature to the notice of critics and academicians motivated me to choose the novel as the subject of my dissertation.

Though Shauna Singh Baldwin’s *What the Body Remembers* is not a “partition novel” in the strict sense of the term like Jyotirmayee Devi’s *The River Churning* (1967) [ *Epar Ganga Opar Ganga* in the Bengali original] or Qurratulain Hyder’s *River of Fire* (1998 in English) [ *Aag Ki Dariya* (1959) in the Urdu original] or Bapsi Sidhwa’s *Cracking India* are (as it primarily focuses on the story of Roop and Satya), it is still mainly and explicitly about victims of this horrendous episode in the history of nation. This reading highlights that it is also concerned with women’s problems of coming to terms with their precarious fate and identity through ruptures and displacements of the Partition, a major event within the history of nation formation but a lived experience within female body and psyche.

Feminist body theorists have regarded female body as the symbol of representations of difference and identity. Feminist theorists like Luce Irigaray, Helene Cixous, Gayatri Spivak and others are interested in theorizing female subjectivity in all its diversity and multiplicity in answer to phallocentric constructions that continue to figure subjectivity as masculine and female
consciousness as lack. Female identity remains entangled in traditional networks of prescribed, seemingly monolithic and indisputable, bodily figurations. These bear the imprint of invading, alien connotations imparted by a male gaze, which turns the female body into a self-alienated, socially shaped and historically colonized territory. At the same time these culturally generated manifestations of a female body also carry the echoes of social practices aimed at containing and controlling women's bodies. I critique such practices in course of my interpretation of Baldwin's *What the Body Remembers*.

The famous feminist Helene Cixous endorses the importance of body and the need for its liberation from masculine trapping through writing. In “The Laugh of Medusa,” Cixous says:

> I shall speak about women's writing: about *what it will do*. Woman must write her self: must write about women and bring women to writing, from which they have been driven away as violently as from their bodies—for the same reasons, by the same law, with the same fatal goal. Woman must put herself into the text—as into the world and into history—by her own movement . . . . (qtd. in Greene and Kahn 85)

The body-consciousness is arguably the thematic centre of many female narratives, particularly if the subject is the Partition of the nation. To illustrate the premise I will present a feminist reading of *What the Body Remembers* that depicts body as a site of entrapment and a liability, and deploys allegorical narrative
strategies to overcome marginalization and entrapment through producing a variant narration of the nation.

I would like to argue in my dissertation that Baldwin’s narrative is as much a representation of female body through memory as an act of retrieving women’s memory, remembering and also re-membering and reclaiming from epistemic oblivion her body, particularly when the retrieval of women’s history is at stake and when pulling Sikh women’s history out from under Sikh men’s history is involved. I believe Baldwin’s attempt to disrupt a hegemonic account of the Partition in men’s history by a female literary representation is a significant contribution to the body of writings by women with radical agenda.

Although my dissertation is on a single book—which is perhaps reason enough for it to go on the defensive—I will expand the purview of the discussion of the themes and narrative modes of the novel by relating it to many other texts dealing in respect of the themes such as subordination of body, its resistance and the narrative mode of allegory. These works are, among others, Manju Kapur’s *Difficult Daughters* (1998), Jyotirmayee Devi’s *The River Churning*, Bapsi Sidhwa’s *Ice Candy Man* (1988). As regards the narrative process of remembering/re-membering, I will pay special attention to such texts as Toni Morrison’s *Beloved* (1987), Maheswata Devi’s *Mother of 1084* (1997) as well as some of her short stories to discuss deployment of woman’s body as a site of remembrance and resistance in embattled postcolonial situations. In this manner, my study of *What the Body Remembers* will gain both in intensity and amplitude.
I chose to work on a Partition novel for another important reason. The Partition is not an event of the past that occurred way back in 1947 once and for all, dividing the subcontinent into two nation states. It is a painful memory, a scar on the collective psyche of people affected by it directly or indirectly. It has been ever present in our lives in myriad forms. As Suvir Kaul comments on Train to Pakistan, “We hunger for these stories not simply because they address the religious and social divides of a time past but because they engage with painful contemporary realities; the effects of partition of India and Pakistan linger into today, and Mano Majras are still torn apart, literally and figuratively, as they were fifty years ago” (18). The inter-communal violence that resulted in the anti-Sikh riots of 1984, or the spate of bloodbath that followed the Babri Masjid demolition (1992) and also the Godhra train-burning incident in Gujurat (2002) have made us rethink partition as a recurring event with new inflections of communal divide, suspicion, absence of reason and restraint. The Partition is not just an event of the political division of people socially, culturally and emotionally living together, but a state of rupture endemic to India’s cultural psyche that breaks out into communal violence.

In 1984, the ferocity with which Sikhs were killed in city after city in north India in the wake of Indira Gandhi’s assassination was almost a re-run of the 1947 for them. As Urvashi Butalia puts it, “It took 1984 to make me understand how ever-present Partition was in our lives too, to recognize that it could not be so easily put away inside the covers of history books” (Other Side of Silence 6). In the winter of 1997, India and Pakistan exploded nuclear devices as mutual adversaries. A year later, soldiers of the two countries battled one another in the Himalayan cold in Kargil. Partition violence erupted all over again, re-enacted down to the mutilation
of soldiers' bodies. 1947, thus, seems to be dormant in the collective memory, erupting with slightest provocation. In a post-Sept. 11, 2001 world, the Partition has assumed importance because it has proved that it is dangerous to forget Partition as it again reminded the minority of the fear of the majority. As the US and Canada moved to avenge the crime of Sept. 11, 2001, vigilantes found a visual link between Bin Laden’s turban and the turbans of Sikh-Americans which followed hundreds of cases of hate crimes against Sikhs and then Muslims in a few weeks. Shauna Singh Baldwin was greatly affected by the post 9/11 world and wrote about it in several stories in *We are not in Pakistan* (“The View from the Mountain”, the title story “We are not in Pakistan”, etc.). In the interview with Diwanji and Haidar at rediff.com, Baldwin talks about the need to write about the Partition:

> And we have not dealt with what we did to each other. This was not state-sponsored violence. We don’t have anyone to blame this on. And if 1984 (when the Sikh riots took place) taught us nothing else, it should have taught us that this feeling is not dead. Or dealt with. Did the Babri Masjid riots teach us anything? No, because if you don’t talk about it, write about it, deal with it, it will still be out there.

Baldwin is not wrong to say that truth-telling might bring perpetrators of the violence out of anonymity towards personal responsibility. Baldwin’s novel, I find, is very important in the genre of Partition literature to sensitize us to the terrible human cost of trauma, loss of faith and trust. It alerts us to the dangers of communal passion that surround us now as much as they did in the past. She tries to
show us suffering on account of communal violence has remained unmitigated, for what is shown as happening then is still happening now. She, therefore, said that her “likely audience” are those who will find the work relevant to explore the impact the Partition has on our present. It also goes beyond time in its preoccupation with themes relating to the oppression of women that go unrecorded—an equally compelling reason for my study of the novel. Woman’s disgraceful position in a patriarchally structured and controlled society, her ignominy in an emotionally charged discourse of communal honour and her erasure from the history of the nation are issues she extrapolates from the state of affairs and chain of events leading up to the Partition. What is still more important is that she raises these issues to problematize India’s postcoloniality vis-à-vis women.

Nearly two decades ago, when post-colonial theory was freshly emerging with full of promise, Anne McClintock in her seminal essay “The Angel of Progress: Pitfalls of the Term Post-colonialism” (1994), remarked:

The term ‘post-colonialism’ is prematurely celebratory and obfuscatory in more ways than one. The term becomes especially unstable with respect to women. In a world where women do two-thirds of the world’s work, earn 10% of the world’s income, and own 1% of the world’s property, the promise of post-colonialism has been a history of hopes postponed. It has generally gone unremarked that the national bourgeoisies and kleptocracies that stepped into the shoes of post-colonial ‘progress,’ and industrial modernization has been overwhelmingly and violently male. No
‘post-colonial’ state anywhere has granted women and men equal access to the rights and resources of the nation state. (298)

The above statement which McClintock made in a register of political economy regarding the inequalities which women suffer inaugurates a Feminist and subaltern interrogation of patriarchy in the colonial world and thus lends post-colonial discourse a critical perspective on the bourgeois state. From this perspective one can discern that the same iniquitous social and political conditions that inhered in the pre-colonial and colonial periods plaguing women in the post-colonial era have continued into the present time. Patriarchy has survived many phases of history in India in different forms, for which reason Satya, a character in the novel, remarks in the epilogue: “Men have not yet changed” (538). Baldwin treats as mutual corollaries women’s experiences of oppression in the everyday life in patriarchal societies before the Partition and their precarious fate during and after this event that witnessed the birth of two wounded and bloodied nation states.

My dissertation will start from a major premise that women writers often use the narrative of female body in an allegorical schema of the nation to enable their women characters to understand the enormity of the meaning of their toils, sufferings and sacrifices in the interpretive frames of the community and nation rather than remain unaware of them. To be able to remember wrongs suffered in the past and to learn to ascribe larger meanings to their tears and blood is what women need most in order to overcome the state of subjugation and bondage to patriarchal forms of power that their bodies subject them to. I will show how women writers like Shauna Singh Baldwin and others have foregrounded the female viewpoint
from which springs the untold stories of oppression that women have suffered at the hands of men. If bodies of women suffer pain and humiliation at a corporeal level, it becomes imperative that these experiences are to be remembered individually and communally. For this reason I have studied in Baldwin’s novel the role of memory and commemoration in building up a woman’s narrative. In *What the Body Remembers*, Baldwin identifies the aporias and silences in the masculinist version of history, and replaces his-story with disconcertingly candid narratives of the pain and humiliation of women. In my analysis of the Partition, I have argued that in revisiting the history of the Partition in the novel from woman’s perspective, Baldwin has attempted at reclaiming the individual and collective voice of woman, recuperating her own story, which is a story of her body. What she achieves is the recuperation of woman’s body in a discursive manner.

Besides the Introduction, my dissertation consists of three more chapters and the Conclusion. Under the title “Allegorizing the Female Body: Woman as Nation in *What the Body Remembers*,” Chapter I discusses the transgression of semantic borders through allegory, which is a chief feature of female writing. More often than not women project the private onto the public. In the process the women writers employ certain recurrent tropes—metaphoric as well as metonymic—like nature, woman’s body, her womb, reproduction and childbirth, and rape to carry over from the private to public the dreams, desires and discontents of woman and inflect them in the larger cultural and political contexts of community and nation. In the allegorical scheme, for instance, Baldwin projects onto the communal and political antagonism between Muslims and Hindus as well as Sikhs in the pre-partition India the situation of bigamy in the traditional patriarchal society in
Punjab. This line of the study of the novel is necessary because Baldwin herself says *What the Body Remembers* is intentionally allegorical.

Since the allegorical scheme of the narrative of *What the Body Remembers* centers around the idea of woman’s body as a metaphor of the nation, in Chapter II titled “Border, Bodies and Dismemberment,” the body-nation metaphor is further developed to work out larger implications of the borders that family, society and community impose on the body of woman. Woman’s body grows as an icon of the prestige of the community and sanctity of the nation framed within the limits/borders of purity and culture which is as ancient and pristine as Indian civilization. Thus the biopolitics of patriarchy with regard to female body is transformed into national politics. It arrogates to itself the right to control woman’s sexuality and reproductive capacity, invests it with national values and communal honour and represents woman as the signifier of the nation. Being iconically configured as a transcendental signifier of the cultural purity and the *izzat* of the community and *quom*, woman’s body becomes de-historicized. And yet, most ironically, it becomes a site of violence and dismemberment within the bloodied history of the Partition when the borders of the family and community are violated and the honour of the community turns into collective shame. When a foreign power dominates a nation, men gird up their loins to protect as well as control ‘their’ women and thereby discharge the moral obligation to restore the honor of the nation. Women are the cultural symbol of a nation’s boundaries and carriers of national honor. The borders of women’s bodies overlap with those of the nation. On their bodies men write stories of their triumph and defeat, glory and shame.
“Remembering and Re-membering: A Resistance Consciousness” is the title of my third and final chapter. Female body in What the Body Remembers is employed as a weapon of resistance and also in many other novels by women. I will discuss What the Body Remembers with reference to Toni Morrison’s Beloved and illustrate how both the texts use memory, “rememory” and remembrance to recollect and re-member women’s history. Baldwin finds resistance through body too obvious. In an e-mail correspondence I exchanged with the author she wrote to me, “I don’t know what you mean by ‘[woman] resists through body’—doesn’t everyone? We are all embodied, so how else are we to resist? We feel and express every emotion and purpose through body. We may be socialized to reject our bodies, but we have to live in them and use them” (22 May 2010). Remembering/re-membering is also a strategy that Mahasweta Devi adopts in Mother of 1084, although with different intent and effect.

The Conclusion of my thesis summarises the thesis in brief and mostly hints at the possibility of future research and writing in the field.

Also I have appended a Selected Bibliography to my work which includes not only the works cited and works consulted list, but also some other relevant books and articles in the area. I have followed the MLA handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 7th edition (2009) for compiling my bibliography.
Notes


2. In India the story of revisionist historiography is intertwined with the story of the *Subaltern Studies* volumes (its initial volume published by Oxford University Press in New Delhi in 1982, edited by Ranajit Guha) and the intellectual movement it represents. *Subaltern Studies* scholars include Ranajit Guha, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Partha Chatterjee, Arvind N. Das, Veena Das, Gyanendra Pandey, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Sumit Sarkar (Sarkar dissented the group later). They remembered Indian resistance struggles from the perspective of subaltern groups who were oppressed and silenced by the hegemonic structures of the British Raj and its Indian elite classes. See Ranajit Guha, ed., *Subaltern Studies*, vols. I-V (Delhi: Oxford UP, 1982- 85); Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, eds., *Selected

Some standard essays on feminist subaltern studies in particular include Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s “Can the Sub-altern Speak?” (66-111); Chandra Talpade Mohanty’s “Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses” (196-220); Sara Suleri’s “Woman Skin Deep” (244-256). See Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Theory: A Reader, Eds. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (New York: Columbia UP, 1994).

3. The Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR) sponsored two volumes of Pangs of Partition (2002) which encapsulates the contemporary trend in Partition Studies, juxtaposing the ‘historian’s history’ in volume I Parting of Ways: History, Politics, Economics with the people’s history in volume II, Human Dimension: Culture Society and Literature edited by S. Settar and Indira Baptista Gupta. The second volume is in the genre of ‘history from below,’ to bring in marginal voices and to recover the popular culture of the period and to focus on the fall out of the Partition. It draws upon reminiscences and personal narratives of contemporary writers and artists—Bhisham Sahni and Satish Gujral, an essay by Krishna Kumar on the portrayal of the Partition in school books of India and Pakistan and analytical essays on representation of the Partition in different literary works. Urvashi Butalia and Monmayee Basu recover women’s narratives of the partition experience by recovering the memories of ‘unknown’ women victims/survivors.


Many Films on Partition were made the most popular being, *Earth* by Deepa Mehta starring Aamir Khan, Maia Sethna, and Nandita Das (1999); *Gadar: Ek Prem Katha* by Director Anil Sharma and Producer Nitin Keni starring Sunny Deol, Amisha Patel, and Amrish Puri (Zee Telefilms and T-Series, 2001); *Pinjar* (2003), adapted from the novel by same name by Amrita Pritam, Directed by Chandra Prakash Dwivedi had Urmila Matondkar (in the role of the protagonist, *Puro*), Manoj Bajpeyi and Sanjay Suri in the lead roles; *Tamas* (1987), a highly acclaimed television film directed by Govind Nihalani, based on the classic Hindi novel of the same name written by Bhisham Sahni (1974), which won the author the Sahitya Academy Award in 1975. The film was first shown on India’s national broadcaster Doordarshan as a mini-series and later as one-off 4-hour-long feature film.

5. In an interview to Random House ca. Baldwin tells about the source of her book:
My grandmother, Raminder Sarup Singh, came from India to visit me in the USA in 1996. At my urging, she began writing a memoir—"for fun"—we thought. But it was a terribly painful exercise. She would cry and write, cry and write. As I was reading it, I became appalled by my own ignorance. How come I didn't know her story? I knew my grandfather's stories, but I'd never asked her to tell her story. Yet this was someone I had lived with off and on, then met every day for years. I knew nothing about polygamy, the Partition, surrogate motherhood . . . how was my grandmother's story unique and how was it like that of other women of the time? Back to the library. But the story had captured my imagination. One night, soon after my grandmother left, I woke up at 2 am and wrote a short story called Satya. It won the CBC Literary Award in 1997 and became the first chapter of What the Body Remembers. Meanwhile, my grandmother and I continued to correspond—her memoir has grown to about 70 pages, and is still in progress. I continued to read and research so I could ask better questions, and began interviewing her contemporaries. In 1997 my husband and I travelled to Pakistan, and visited my grandmother's village, Pari Darvaza, and the gurdwara where she was married . . . .

6. The sources of Baldwin's background and information of her works are from Suzanne Methot, "Lives of Girls and Women", Rev. of What the Body Remembers, Indigo Sept 1999, Quill and Quire 2004; Shauna Singh Baldwin's Interview with Lindsay Pereira, India Abroad April 2005, Reproduced, Sawnet-

7. *Cracking India/ Ice Candy Man* has been made into a major feature film, *Earth*, directed by Deepa Mehta (1999).