CONCLUSION

Khushwant Singh, Manohar Malgonkar and Chaman Nahal deal with India’s independence and the holocaust that followed in the wake of the Partition of country. However, they do not merely give us historical document. Their purpose is to describe the impact of this national tragedy of the Partition on ordinary people.

The first published novel on Partition, *Train to Pakistan*, emerges out of the trauma of Partition. It opens with a reference to the severe summer of 1947 signifying the process of the world of man turning into a human wasteland. The scene is laid in India on the eve of Partition in 1947 when about ten million people are in flight – Hindus from Pakistan and Muslims from India. Nearly a million are killed in the large scale communal disturbances. Only Mano Majra, a small village, a microcosm of rural India, remains unaffected by the communal frenzy. But events move fast and the fate of the people in Mano Majra is affected by the catastrophic events of the Partition. Muslims of the village are evacuated to a refugee camp, later to be transported to Pakistan by a train. Hindu fanatics hatch a plot to blow up the train which was averted by Jugga and in the process he gets killed. His Muslim lover is saved and so do the Muslim passengers on the train symbolizing hope and light in the cruel world of darkness and despair.
If Khuswant Singh concentrates on the incidents around the tiny village, Mano Majra, Malgonkar, on the other hand, chooses a wider canvas. The action of the novel also begins in 1930s and extends up to the dawn of independence in August 1947, thus encompassing the history of a saga depicting the movement for independence, the World War and the Partition of India. Like *Train to Pakistan* Malgonkar’s novel is exact about events in relation to time and close to the facts. Besides this, Malgonkar also strives to show how gradually communal poison soured and embittered the lives of freedom fighters. Debi, an ardent terrorist, is arrested having been betrayed by a fellow terrorist, Shafi, who is a Muslim fanatic. Gian, a believer of non-violence is also arrested on the charge of murder. Both of them are sent to Andamans. After some time, helped by circumstances, they are back in India and undergo transformation as a result of their involvement in the events of the years preceding and following the Partition of India. The novel examines, at great length, the ideologies of violence and non-violence in the context of the Indian freedom struggle and their relevance to life. The novelist does not approve violence as a way of life, but at the same time, is not blind to the limitations of non violence as a doctrine. Finally the novel ends on a note of hope and a message that one finds fulfilment in the value of love.
In Azadi, Nahal’s purpose is to describe the impact of the Partition on ordinary people. He portrays the pain Lala Kanshi Ram and his family of Sialkot, now in Pakistan, go through due to Partition and their alienation from their own homeland. This reflects the suffering of the millions of people who are uprooted and forced to migrate to India. People sadly realize that they are unwanted in their own native places and that ‘Azadi’ brings only untold misery and an uncertain future. Nahal describes the excruciating experiences of the uprooted people in refugee camps and on their way to India, travelling on foot, in convoys and submitting themselves helplessly to violence of all sorts – arson, murder, abduction and rape. After arriving in India, much suffering awaits them, in their own free country, at the hands of an indifferent and callous bureaucracy. He does not take sides and blames both Hindu and Muslim communities for their sadistic animalism. However, what can be perceived underlying these horrifying experiences is the projection of the novelist’s optimism. Punjabis grieve more for loss of identity than the loss of life and property. Nahal understands this crisis of identity and portrays it profoundly than other Partition writers who either treat it superficially or ignore it totally.

Like Khushwant Singh, Nahal also witnessed the atrocities committed on the minorities after the announcement of the Partition. As
the practising lawyer of High Court in Lahore (Pakistan), Khushwant Singh and being the native of Sialkot, (Pakistan) Nahal – both of them have first hand experience and knowledge of the horrors of the Partition.

In a way these two novels (TP and AZ) can also be read as twin novels on Partition. The anger, bitterness and hatred found in *Train to Pakistan* and *A Bend in the Ganges* are not found in *Azadi* inspite of the fact that an individual family is concentrated to show the effect of Partition on it. This factor any way, shows that the loss is personal and deep (AZ). In the other two novels (TP and BG), the loss is general so there does not seen to be any intimate involvement. One is touched but not involved. Surprisingly, in *Azadi*, despite a feeling of intimate involvement, all bitterness and hatred seemed to have been mellowed with the healing passage of more than a quarter century after the Partition riots. So in this novel (AZ), published in 1975, Nahal is able to invest his theme with a rare humanistic insight and objectivity.

All the three novelists on Partition – Khushwant Singh, Manohar Malgonkar and Chaman Nahal – discussed Gandhian theory of non violence. If Khushwant Singh’s novel (TP) depicts brutality of the Partition, it also reveals humanity and compassion. Malgonkar’s concern in his novel (BG) is not merely the portrayal of the horrors of the Partition but also to show how violence form a strong strain in the fabric
of human character and that violence breeds violence. Having watched the Partition from an army man’s vantage point and having been taught, as an army man, to retaliate and strike back, he believed in tooth for tooth and blow for blow.

Nahal, like Khushwant Singh, watched the violence from close quarters and hence realized that violence cannot be an answer to violence. Through Lala Kanshi Ram (AZ), he stresses the necessity of human forgiveness, laying due emphasis in “affirmation of life”.

Nahal provides solution to victims of Partition (AZ), while the other two novels (TP and BG) have only discussed the problem. Nahal accepts the Partition as a fact and talks about the problem of rehabilitation rather than going into the political details.

Political oppression during the Internal Emergency of the 1970s, is theme of Nayantara Sahagal’s Rich Like Us. The novel gives a graphic account of harassment, misuse of power and injustice associated with the Emergency period. It also analyses the causes that led to declaration Emergency, impact of it on people and their responses to it. The novel firmly rejects the arbitrary distribution of power on the political level as was done during the Emergency. The deterioration in Public life is shown by focusing on corruption, expedience, political
violence, suppression of civil liberties, dictatorship, the politics of the personality cult and so on. The novelist illustrates how Emergency has done away with conscience and that it sets out to destroy all comment.

Those who support authoritarianism and have learned the art of praising the ‘Leader’, get all rewards as is evidenced in the case of Ravi Kachru who is promoted and posted in the place of Sonali, while she, for the lack of will to fall in line, is demoted and posted out. This is the beginning of her self-questioning. Sonali is thrown out of the system as everything is determined by the side you are on. She is marginalized, treated unfairly by the system but she does not lose heart. Thus Rich Like Us though, a bleak book, does not despair totally. Sonali survives and there is a hint at the end that the Emergency will end after all.

In Rich Like Us, the novelist gives dates and years exactly so that one can relive the period of Emergency, for instance, Sonali was born in 1937, was at Oxford in 1959 and signed the important file and returned it exactly a month and a day after June 26, 1975. On the contrary, the narrative frame work of The City and the River is mythical. One finds many parallels between the events portrayed in the novel and those of the Emergency period. These Parallels, however, are obvious and unmistakable. The City and the River is an allegory and it makes an obvious allusion to the National Emergency of the mid seventies. Arun
Joshi weaves a poignant tale of modern day politics and raises the novel to a level of politico-allegorical satire. The novel is structured around power struggle, behind-the-scene manipulations and intrigues. The novel portrays how the ruler wishes to keep every one under his rule and also the consequent repercussions.

The City and The River is ruled by the Grand Master and his Advisory Council. Grand Master, following a prophecy about the coming of a king, assumes himself to be the King. He demands absolute allegiance to him. However, boat people refuse to shift their loyalty from the river to the King. The headman, the leader of the boat men is arrested. All opposition is ruthlessly wiped out. The Grand Master gets ready for his coronation as king. But even before that, the river swells and destroys everything. The entire city is washed out. Still, the novel ends on a note of optimism, suggesting a hope of redemption. But one is not sure when this materializes in the process of the endless repetition and the periodic disintegration.

Thus all the five novels under study end on an optimistic note and they certainly enlarge the vision of the reader. While all the Partition novels hold out promise of regeneration and hope, this is found only to some extent in the novels on Emergency.