CHAPTER-VI

AZADI

• CHAMAN NAHAL

6.1 Introduction

Chaman Nahal’s Azadi (1975), the major most novel on the theme of the Partition, offers the most inclusive handling of the enormous tragedy to date. Exclusive of a few novelists like Khushwant Singh, Amitav Ghosh, Salman Rushdie, Balchandra Rajan, Attia Hosain, Raj Gill, Manohar Malgaonkar and Sharf Mukaddam, so far there in no one who has critically fictionalized Partition-tragedy as a major important theme. As a consequence of this the number of foremost novels is very small and,

…of all the attempts made so far, Chaman Nahal’s Azadi is the most ambitious one.¹

The novel depicts picturesque feature the calamitous episode that was enacted on the Indian soil instantaneously before and after the announcement of the British in June 1947 to vacate India after partitioning it. The novelist recreates in flamboyant detail the consequences of the Partition with reference to a Hindu family as they journey from Sialkot in Pakistan to Delhi, the capital of India. The novel comprises three parts- The Lull, the Storm and the Aftermath - that represent correspondingly the beginning, the middle and the end of the great event. The focus of the novel is on the demarcation of the psychosomatic consequences of the Partition on the individual and universal planes.
In this enthralling novel, Chaman Nahal portrays:

_The truncated independence of India with atrocities and horrors accompanying it, was no doubt a traumatic experience for the people, particularly the Punjabis._ \(^2\)

‘Azadi’ a chronicle novel, considered as Chaman Nahal’s magnum opus,

…_presents a brilliant close up on the profile of communal violence in Punjab._ \(^3\)

The incredibly commencement of the novel depicts a short of an unanticipated tension that prevails in the Punjab. It begins with that tale fat date, third of June, 1947, when the Viceroy, Mountbatten, is to announce the division of the vast sub-continent. The Punjabis are still buoyant that the leaders – and particularly Gandhiji – would never allow the division of the country. That day they accumulate in the house of _Bibi Amar Vati_ and are shocked to listen with gulp of air the announcement made by the Viceroy and agreed to by the Indian leaders without compassionate for the Hindus and Sikhs living in west Punjab that is going to Pakistan.

The Muslims, nevertheless, commemorate their predictable freedom very victoriously. Being anxious with joy, they run amuck and kill Hindus and Sikhs and plunder their property, abduct and rape their women, disfigure their children, burn their houses – and what not. The uprooted inhabitants of the _land of the five rivers_ commence their demonstration in the direction of India as they do not have any place now in the _land of the pure_. Millions of refugees migrate to India and vice versa.
6.2 Individual Plane: The story of Lala Kanshi Ram

Resting on the individual plane, Azadi is the story of Lala Kanshi Ram and his family living in Sialkot, and on the universal plane, of the people exaggerated by the Partition. Lala Kanshi Ram, the protagonist. A wholesale grain merchant in Sialkot has earned name, fame and destiny by working very hard. His son Arun a college student and his beloved wife, Prabha Rani make his familial life quite happy. The first four chapters of the first part the lull very closely accustom us with Lala Kanshi Ram who is a distinctive Indian of the time and whose idol is Mahatma Gandhi. Through statement of belief he is a nationalist Hindu living in the Muslim – majority Sialkot. He loves his land and it is at this juncture in Sialkot that his father and forefather lived. The British, according to him be obliged to quit India and give azadi to the Indians he writes:

Like any other Indian, he had a prejudice

against the British. He hated them for

what they had done to his country and

wanted Azadi. 4

However, the political atmosphere in the country is in utterly chaos the Punjabis are kept under perpetual tension and the Muslims as well as the Sikhs fail to guess anything about the Partition. The selfish leaders play their role very shrewdly, only few men sitting and deciding the fate of the millions. The Arya samajist Lala hopes to achieve freedom with an undivided India.
The Lala speaks in Panjabi and writes in Urdu. For him Urdu is not the language solely of Muslim. In his mind there is no grudge against the Muslim, but he is aware of their attitude towards Hindus and Sikhs. He has firm faith in Gandhi and is sure that he will never agree to a division of the country. However, he is deeply worried that,

…everything will be ruine if Pakistan is created.  

It is by means of this fright that he puts the blame for the Partition mainly on Jinnah, Nehru, Baldev Singh, Rajaji and Kripalani. Intended for him it is Gandhi and Rajaji who are answerable for bringing Jinnah into light, who till 1944 was not a man of much importance. He is aware of Jinnah’s adamant nature and the increasing demands of the blood thirsty Muslim in the west Punjab, the Muslims start killing the Hindus, eternally aforementioned to the announcement of the Partition. The passage says:

*Once the Lala says to his wife,*

*Don’t you know the Muslim? There has*

*been much killing going on for the past*

*many months. Imagine what will happen*

*Once they’re in power.*

Though, the Lala still believes that Gandhi will never let it happen. He knows that,

Gandhi was shrewd who surely saw it all. He would not give in to such butchery.
If nothing else worked his fast unto death always did.\textsuperscript{7}

But the shocking announcement is made. The Lala’s son, Arun translates the speech of Mountbatten in a trembling voice to the people:

\begin{quote}
Partition! and made a gesture with
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
his hands of chopping a thing in
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
two. “Partition!” many voices
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
shouted out aloud and months
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
remained open.\textsuperscript{8}
\end{quote}

There is a poisonous lull in the hall where they are assembled and they do not inconvenience to additional listen to Nehru, Jinnah and Baldev Singh, as they are betrayed through these leaders are worried about their safety. Chaman Nahal seems to underscore the verdict of history as it was with orientation to those leaders who were answerable for the Partition - a few ruthless politicians - and not the millions of innocent people of the country.

\textit{Azadi} deals with the \textit{great betrayal}, the consequences of which, borne by millions of people of both religions. Time and yet again Jinnah, Nehru, Rajaji and Kripalani are blamed by the \textit{Lala} for the Partition. In the mood of utter agony. Reacts very furiously about Nehru and asks:
What had happened to his akal, his mind? Have Partition if there is no other way, have it that way- willing to make sacrifices. But what nonsense was this of no panic, no violence, full protection from the government, peace the main object! Had he gone mad? Didn’t he know his people? Didn’t he know Muslims? And why the partition in the first place? What of your promises to us, you Pandit Nehru?  

The use of the questioning marks suggests how powerfully the omniscient writer holds the leaders like Nehru responsible for the tragedy of the Partition.

On the road to what amount the Arya Samaji Lala, Sikhs and Hindus are angry is exemplified by the young and strong sardar Niranjan Singh, who wants to do,

...take out his sword and hack Nehru to pieces.  

This is in a way Chaman Nahal’s own anger expressed through his characters. He holds the leaders of the Congress, the League and the Alkali Dal, responsible for the Partition. The people’s reactions are, therefore, very vigorous and wild as they feel betrayed by the leaders. From such scenes, one gets an impression that it is not the suffering people that are speaking but the writer himself is commenting. It is sort of the writers infringement which is not so advantageous in creative writing like fiction when once the Partition is announced, what remains to be seen is an account of how the Lala, protagonist, is brought safely to Delhi and acquiescent with the Partition. Though, the scenes of love making of Arun with Nur and Chandani provide
emotional and lyrical cathartic relief against the background of this inhuman world of massacre and molestation. Or else, the entire novel is sad tale of heartbreaking human sufferings.

Lala does not go to India soon after the declaration of Partition. He continues to live in Sialkot only because he has a deep attachment with the land of the five rivers. Resembling a real Congress leader, he believes in living with the Muslims looking upon them as brothers. The young generation of Sikhs and Hindus on the contrary, ready to pay the Muslim in the same coin, but the Lala like the Mahatma, tries to maintain peace through non-violence in his locality. The Muslim, still, are very happy to get their long-cherished dream fulfilled and celebrate their victory by talking out huge processions. One such procession enters the Trunk Bazaar of the Lala, after some negotiations with the Deputy Commissioner and the Superintendent of police. Here the reactions of different characters are clearly discerned and their attitudes defined. The Police Inspector, Inayat-Ullah Khan, takes side with the Muslims and threaten the Hindus. But the Deputy Commissioner, who is a Hindu, is disoriented on listening to the Viceroy’s announcement of the Partition. He asks several questions like:

*How do you cut a country in two, where at every level the communities were so deeply mixed?*

*There was a Muslim in every corner of India*

*Where there was a Hindu. And there so soon,*

*at such short notice.*

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Correspondingly, the nationalist Muslims are also traumatized by the announcement of the Partition. A nationalist Muslim like Barkat Ali is profoundly grieved at this bad news. The mixed and varied reactions of the various characters consequently make an interesting study.

The Viceroy’s pronouncement, as a result, changes the entire schedule of the Punjabis. On the individual level, it creates difficulties even in the love-affair of Arun and Nur. The love-affair of a Hindu youth and a Muslim girl though, seems to be only an idealised one as it was not practically reasonable in those times because of communal and political overtones, the irritated and enraged Arun, too, blames and leaders like Jinnah and Nehru, who rush into azadi hurriedly. Observe the antagonism and infuriation in his spontaneous reaction:

*He knew the conspiracy of politicians behind*

*the whole move. Jinnah and Liakat Ali Khan*

*were coming into an estate, as was Nehru. Why*

*else would they rush into at azadi at this pace -*

*destroy its unity? One would have to go around*

*with tweezers through all the villages to separate*

*the Muslims from the Hindu.*

As a result, Arun and Nur, and also Barkat Ali and Lala curse the hastily achieved freedom and the instantaneous Partition.
Moreover, yet a third point of view is provided through Bill Davidson, a British officer who represents a compassionate attitude towards India’s freedom. For him the decision of the Partition is:

... the most stupid, most damaging, most negative development in the history of freedom struggle here. \(^{13}\)

This represents the honest interpretation of the situation in India after the Partition of the part of some liberal Britishers. Davidson estimates the Indian leaders very objectively in the following lines:

\begin{quote}
You may sing songs in honour of Mountbatten,

as I believe you’ve started doing. But he has
duped you into a division of the country.
even Gandhi and Nehru failed to hold their
balance before him –Jinnah I never counted
for much. They have all fallen for handy prize,
not realizing the misery it will heap on the masses. \(^{14}\)
\end{quote}

Davidson consequently suggests that the Congress leaders like Gandhi and Nehru were successfully ‘fooled’ by Mountbatten who yielded to the stubbornness of Jinnah. In course of time. On the other hand, we see that almost all characters – Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims and the
British blame the Indian leaders for their hasty decision of the Partition. Accordingly, as in several other novels, in this novel too, one gets a true expression of the people’s righteous anger against the leaders.

The delineation of authentic massacre, nevertheless, begins from the last chapter of the first part. Till then there are portrayals of only intermittent killings and molestations. It is on the 24th June, that the Muslim friends of the Lala kill a number of Hindus, and then it becomes a daily ritual. It is reported that Muslim refugees from India come to Sialkot in a heartbroken condition, telling the stories of molestations and massacre by Hindus and Sikhs. This provokes the Muslim to kill the Hindus who began to go to the refugee camps and then to India.

The Lala, as told earlier, is not ready to leave for India; he is even reluctant to call himself a ‘refugee’ in his ‘own home’. He thinks:

\[I\text{ was born around here, this is my home. How can I be think refugee in my own home.}\]

This exposed his own attachment to his home though now it is going to become part of Pakistan, a foreign land, after the aberrant and forced division of the country. This is indeed a highly touching and poetic piece in this story. In the interim, the Lala’s shop is looted. He is also reported the brave part of Hindu Deputy Commissioner is murdered by his Muslim bodyguard. The Lala feels certain that the government itself is behind the atrocities and the massacre. The Muslims are overpowered by communalism and bent on killing the Hindus. Choudhari Barkat Ali puts it as:
Either the congress Muslims were a fraud to begin, with or they have changed sides. I’m afraid there is no organised body of Muslims denouncing what is happening in the city.\textsuperscript{16}

As an unbiased man, the Choudhari analyses the happenings in Sialkot in these words:

\textit{Whatever is happening here in Sialkot, things very much like that are happening on the other side too- let’s make no mistake about it.}

\textit{It is not the collapse of Congress Muslims in Pakistan, apparently it is the collapse of Congress Hindu in India also when refugees with stories of personal misfortunes land here, the politicians use them to their advantage to fan up further hatred.}\textsuperscript{17}
Choudhari Barkat Ali blames the unreliable politicians and the *Lala* blames the cunning British for dividing the country. And only after being persuaded by the Choudhari, do *Arun* and the *Lala* go to the refugee camp.

### 6.3 The Real Storm Begins

The ‘lull’ is over with *Lala Kanshi Rams* leaving for the refugee camp and there the real ‘storm’ begins.

*The lull of the book – I, has erupted into the full-fledged storm of Book II.*

The Book II gives detailed descriptions of the atrocities. As K. R. Srinivas lyengar writes:

*The ‘leaders’ had sowed the wind of communal suspicion and Partition was the result, like a whirlwind. The mad act of Partition was uprooting masses of humanity, mangling them and throwing them across the border heap after heap.*

As soon as the storm breaks out in the city, the *Lala, Choudhari* and even Bill Davidson get disheartened. In the refugee camp, the *Lala* receives the news of the death of his daughter,
Madhu who while coming from Wazirabad to Sialkot by a train is attacked and killed by some furious Muslims in addition to the news of the murder of her husband, Madhu’s death in the previous bluster to the Lala’s traumatized psyche.

It becomes, incredibly complicated for the Hindus and Sikhs even to walk in the open street. Everyone, who doesn’t appear like a Muslim is unclothed to see whether he is circumcised or not as,

... the acid test of being a Muslim lay in one and only sign- in circumcision.20

During malice of numerous complications. Arun and Suraj Prakash go to the Barkat Ali and then to the railway station to repossess Madhu’s dead body. Chaman Nahal renders the horrendous minutiae of the violence as below:

... dismembered limbs, dozens of them - legs and arms, and hands and thighs, and feet. The fire had consumed other parts of the bodies; it was the part which had not fully burned that stood out. And there were the skulls. Again dozens of them. Many lay face down, the other faced the sky, or looked sideways. Bare jaws, scooped out eye socket are gnashing teeth. Very often a skull cracked open with a popping noise, its bones disintegrating into the heap around. Since it was a quiet night, the sound came like crack of a rifle it was an unnerving sound. 21

The austere authenticity in such scenes, nevertheless, sounds more fabricated than fiction, but it is real history obtainable in the garb of fiction. This exemplifies the sentiments of horror and obscenity - Bhayanaka and Bibhatsa Rasas – in terms of prehistoric Indian poetics.

The Lala who had so far-flung been insisting on staying at Sialkot, now insists on leaving for India as early as possible. This conviction in the police, army, administration and even in humanity itself dies away. The shudders at the more expression of the word humanity and constantly blames the Congress leaders thus,
They should have devised means of mass migration
to begin with, before rushing to Partition,
Now they should at least keep their mouths
shut and not mislead the poor, credulous people.
Jinnah and Nehru were villains enough. This
President of the Indian National Congress......
Kripalani was the worst offender. More than
the others, it was he who was so loud about
the minorities staying where they were.22

Consequently, the Lala is persuaded of the fact that the men in power have bankrupt them. It is though, subsequent to the announcement of the Boundary Commission that the people in the Punjab become tremendously quick-tempered about their land and their emotions of anger and antagonism reach the highest terrain. All feel that they have been befooled by the British and betrayed by the leaders. Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs are equally wounded over the Award.

Conversely, somewhat delayed after the Award is announced, the respective government arrange for the transportation of their people. Although cultivate then there has been much killing. The Indian government sends military troops for the protection and safe emigration of Hindus and Sikhs. Then begins the episode of mass migration perhaps not witnessed by any period in history. The Lala is by now an absolutely broken man. In the illustration of the Lala,
one feels the struggle with which the sons of the soil were uprooted and flung away by the situation of the Partition.

The novelist describes the weird and wonderful slaughter committed not simply by the turbulent Muslims but also by the police, the military, and above all the government itself. On behalf of occurrence, the Camp Commander and military officer Rahmat-Ullahkhan who is first an entrepreneur and zealous Muslim and then an officer is awestruck by the beauty of Sunanda, wife of Suraj Prakash, and so,

...burns himself in the fire of Sunanda.²³

He tries to bribe Arun but with no success. Though, as soon as the procession comes in Narowal, this ex-maniac Camp Commander rapes Sunanda and gets his carnal yearning fulfilled.

The predicament of the Sikhs is the most unpleasant as it is extremely uncomplicated to distinguish a Sikh by his turban and beard. Thus by means of the fright of being recognised, many Sikhs cut their hair-off, through it is against their religion. Niranjan Singh, a headstrong Sikh youth refuges to cut his hair. The Lala tries to convince the Sikh to get his hair clipped, thus,

These religion are meant to be practised only

where human life exists. You can’t practice

them when beastly times prevail. And even

among human, they must be accepted with a pinch
At this moment, the Lala’s philosophy is *survival first, then everything else* The Sikh, resting on the divergent, remains unchanged and burns himself alive instead of considering his religion maligned. The novelist, thus, portrays the men who forget god and goodness and become more beasts, the pre-historic monsters. D.R. Sharma rightly evaluates the historical significance of the episode in these words:

>The way Chagall paints the horror and sadness in the lives of Russian Jews. Nahal prevents a brilliant close-up on the profile of communal violence in Punjab. Vivid pictures of the Raj, the coming of Gandhi on the political scenes the rumblings of the boundary-line between India and Pakistan and the exodus of different communities add to historical value of the narrative.24

Supplementary, it transpires on the procession in which the Lala is incorporated that it is not easy to escape alive from the clutches of the Muslims. The news of many more violence, rapes, train-attacks pours in and the military officer, Gurkha Jung Bahadur Singh prepares a perfect plan of migration. He decides to avoid all Muslim-dominated cities and villages but due
to the non-cooperation of the Pakistan government, the movement of the procession is delayed by several days. About this movement of the procession of the refugees Rama Jha says:

...the convoy of refugees crossing over Ravi River is history moving incarnate.  

Nevertheless, when on the first day of March, the migrants leave Sialkot, Choudhari Barkat Ali and his son, Munir, come to see them off. The relationship between Choudhari Barkat Ali and the Lala is like a refuge in the desert. The Lala is also traumatized to see some Hindus transformed to Muslim religion - Gangu Mull for instance, become Ghulam Mohammad only to save his life and proper on their way, they see the remains of the dead refugees at several places. They are frightened to see the skulls, skeletons and decaying human bodies. The heart - reeding interpretation of the assault is very pragmatic. Chaman Nahal describes the ghasty scene in these words:

*Most of the dead lay fully dressed only a*

*few women lay with their breasts exposed, with*

*a dead child next to the breast Most of the*

*children lay with their faces downward. The*

*men lay on their backs or on their sides, their*

*mouths open. Some women lay doubled up*

*like bundles.*
Major Jung Bahadur is persuaded that there must be a preparation following this attack. The helpless refugees are unable even to reduce to ashes the dead bodies. Now they want to reach India at their earliest. The first attack is followed by the second and then the third, killing hundreds of Hindus and Sikhs. By some means they manage to reach Narowal—hardly at eight miles of distance from India—on the ninth day. It is at Narowal that history witnesses such a behaviour of men that is shameless beyond imagination. The Narowal Muslims take out a parade of naked women on the main street only to disgrace the refugees. Note, how the novelist describes this annoyingly pitiable scene, in a Factographic manner characteristic of realism.

Many of the kidnapped women disappeared into Private homes. A lone Muslim dragged a woman Away, and kept her for his own exclusive use.

Or he took her with the consect of other Muslims, converted her to Islam, and got married to her.

The rest were subjected to mass rape, at times in Public places and in the presence of large Gathering. The rape was followed by other atrocities, chopping off the breasts, and even death. Many of the pregnant women had their wombs torn open. The survivors were retained for repeated rapes and humiliations. Until they
were parcelled out to decrepit, wreck the aged,

the left – overs who could not find a wife, or

those Muslim who wanted an additional wife.

In the meantime more women were abducted and

The cycle was repeated all over again.  

Similar descriptions of the utterly inhuman and disgusting acts of the frenzied Muslims occurs on pages 296, 297, 307, 308 and so on. Making obscenities gestures, showering foul abuses, throwing spurt of sputum and odd articles, the onlookers follow the humiliated women.

The novelist’s presentation of these scenes of savage retaliation showing the uprooted migrant’s,

...with their spirits crushed, their moral shattered

is heart. Rending and stimulate the emotions of horror, pity, disgust and shame, the whole affair being a,

...river of obscenities.

The materialization of the brute in man is exemplified in such scenes. Definitely, when the demon in man surges up, mysticism in him is waterlogged and there relics only a,
What is scandalous is that the custodians of law—the soldiers and their officers—help the Muslims perpetrating in human carnage on the refugees. Chaman Nahal’s prose reaches a vigorous upsurge as he describes this scenario of violence—a fact which illustrates his participation in the Partition incident and the first-hand experience which is so humorously genuine.

At the moment here on the Indian side, the circumstances is not different from one on the Pakistan side. The Lala along with his family comes first to Amritsar and then on to Delhi, and witnesses indistinguishable scenes. The city of Amritsar looks as if it has been bombed from the air and there is total destruction of the Muslim houses and property. To his revelation and consternation, the Lala observes the parade of naked Muslim women in India too. Nahal establishes his objectives posture in this manner, signifying that during times of chaos, man irrespective of religion or caste or creed, becomes a brute without any regard for civilization or culture. At the Amritsar railway station they come across a train,

...with hundreds of slaughtered Muslims... and they were cleaning up the platform. It was a train carrying Muslims...who were massacred.  

The Lala sees that in India too, the police, the army and the government behave like their Pakistan counterparts. A dialogue between the Lala and Prabha Rani is very verbal of what was happening between the antagonistic communities. The novelist prevents the reality very objectively.
Whatever the Muslims did to us in Pakistan.

We were doing it to them here!.... But they

killed thousands of us without reasons, raped

Our women, drove us out of our homes, we are

doing the same – exactly the same.32

6.4 Metamorphosis - Aftermath of the Partition

The transmutation of the Lala makes an eye-catching study. He is profoundly moved by the plight of the Muslims in India, and keeps on threatening over the tragedy. On their way to Delhi, he shows the legendary Kurukshetra to his wife. He is deeply moved when the helpless Isher Kaur gives birth to a baby girl in the railway compartment. Though, during her labouring period, she is helped by the passengers. The Lala is thus unable to understand the complex nature of humanity and the complicated working of human mind. He remains silent and reserved. Even with his son and wife he speaks very little. He stops hating the Muslim, forgets the atrocities committed by them and even his daughter’s death. He looks tranquil and poignant. This transformation of the Lala is quite suggestive of what any meticulous human being. Irrespective of his religion. Caste or creed, would feel in the face of such barren in human behaviour. This illustrates the therapeutic purgation of human mind through the emotions of fear and pity, as it were, which the writer himself experiences. At this point, the characters acquire sublimation, which is rarely seen in other Partition novels. Sublimation through suffering according to the Aristotelian theory is the greatest quality of a tragic hero. While leaving Pakistan the Lala was full of hate and anger for Muslim. It is only after he observes the tragedy of the Indian Muslims,
his heat dies away and his anger is mitigated. His sublimation is nothing but an outcome of his heroic fortitude. About this change in *Lala Kanshi Ram*, D.R Sharma Writes:

*Although a victim of communal fury, Lala Kanshi Ram develops an insight into the world of violence and tells his wife at the end that he has “ceased to heat”. The utterance does not startle the reader, for it grows out of the protagonist’s heroic endurance of the ideal and his gradual awareness of the larger reality.*  

And this is, as Saros Cowasjee rightly puts:

*…human kindness, as it wades through blood with real message of the novel.*

Chaman Nahal voices the injured Hindu psyche through the *Lala* as he speaks angrily about Prime Minister Nehru. This bears a personal annoyance against the great leaders, as is seen on page 345. The novel is a sad commentary on red – tapism and corruption. The *Lala* is aggravated when the Rehabilitation Officer in Delhi demands a thousand rupees for a house.

*Drunk with the power of their office, they were impatient and intolerant and arrogant never before in his life had the Lala felt so exposed, so naked so defenceless.*
This corruption makes him hate the azadi of India and admire the Britishers. Once, he really weeps in the office of the rehabilitation officer, not in Pakistan, but in free India. This paradox of the situation is accessible in a very valuable manner.

The novelist describes the aftermath of the Partition in Book III of the novel. While stipulation the horrors of the Partition were not enough, tragedy of Gandhi’s assassination takes place. The priest of non-violence is killed by violence except a few considerate refugees like Lala and Sunanda, almost all blame the Mahatma for the Partition tragedy. The historical evidence is however, different: It speaks of Nehru, Patel, Jinnah and others as persons answerable for the tragedy. The mood of transformation and anger with reference to Gandhi was a common experience in those days. The novelist however has made Arun to advocate Gandhi. The discussion between Arun, Sunanda and Bibi Amar Vati after Gandhi’s assassination is significance studying.

Well, it is a good thing he is gone. He brought nothing but misery to us... It is all happened because of the Partition. And it was Gandhi other Congress who sanctioned the Partition, That’s not true Arun, felt he had to put the record straight:

_It was the other congress leaders, like Nehru and Patel. ‘They were his stooges.’ ‘No, auntie. You’re wrong there. In the final days, they didn’t listen to him._

Therefore, it is recommended that it is not Gandhi but the other leaders of the Congress who were responsible for the Partition. Further Nahal too, like Manohar Malonkar points out that the failure of the non-violent agitation of Gandhi lies mainly with the kind of followers he had.
In addition, *Lala Kanshi Ram* is Gandhi personified and goes through identical ordeals and sufferings. As Rama Jha says:

*He is deliberately modelled as a Gandhian character to register Gandhi’s death as a personal loss.*

The *Lala* takes Gandhi’s death very deeply to his heart. Also he endures several personal losses very bravely; he loses his daughter, his property, his shop and money, his friends and even the ability to communicate with his wife and son. Then there an artificial wall – a Partition – between the family members too. Thus is what comes out of *Azadi*. As Rama Jha rightly points out:

*The humanity stands still, this is what came out of Azadi. Men aspiring for Azadi are surrounded by the remains of death. The big ideal of non-violence was defeated in the fact of Partition and the continuing Hindu – Muslim riots are epitomized by the nature of Gandhi’s murder.*

In this Civil War neither sides wins: both are defeated. The greatest defeat, however is the defeat of non – violence.
As a result, during bad feeling of the histrionic descriptions of rapes and killings, and a romantic love, affair at the centre of the novel, Chaman Nahal has successfully projected azadi, as perhaps, the best novel on the theme of the Partition as regards the motif of love. It can be said that against the unpleasant background of violence and bloodshed, sex and romance are used as soothing and blamingle relievers from the tension. The Arun - Nur and Arun – Chandani affairs exemplify this. In addition, the sort of openness existing between Arun and his sister Madhu verges on incest and violates our sense of propriety. Arun’s recollections of his pleasant pastimes with Madhu and the elaborate descriptions of Sunanda’s charming beauty illustrate romance turned debauchery like Khushwant Singh and Manohar Malgonkar, Chaman Nahal, too, solves his problem by creating a hero Lala Kanshi Ram who symbolized the sorrows and sufferings of the affected millions of Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims alike. In this novel, not the mere events of horror but Lala Kanshi Ram’s reaction to them constitute the plot. Thus it is through the protagonist’s reaction to the horrors of the Partition, that Nahal has explored the nature of Azadi and the accompanying Partition. What he shows us as is the transformation in the nature of man in a crisis. Like Sharf Mukaddam, Nahal has been successful in presenting the marvellous psychological working of the tragic event on the people and, in fact, that is his special involvement here, his Azadi fabulously manifests the psychology of the victims of the Partition as exemplified by the Lala and others like Barket Ali, Bill Davidson, Arun and Nur, in its detailed delineation of the malady of the Partition and the psychological analysis of its offensive aftermath, Azadi excels all other novels.

It is the novelist’s task to present the situation of the Partition in terms of representative as well as individual characters, suggesting thereby the probable historical causes and affected of the holocaust. But most of our novelist have dealt with the subject in a for moralistic manner either stressing the romantic aspect of love, or by depicting the horror of killings and massacre, As in Train to Pakistan and other novels or in A Bend in the Ganges. Though the novels are blatantly pragmatic and picturesque in the presentation of incidents and details, they positively lack the seriousness and measurement of human psychology that we come across in a classic like War and Peace. A penetrating investigate into the mind of man or society gives a novel a lasting
power and not a mere documentation of facts and realities. The actions of the characters must throw light on human performance under different situations Azadi stands this test.

Himself being one of the participants in the action through the medium of the *Lala*, the protagonist, Chaman Nahal encounters the intricacy to keep himself off the action. His humorously genuine portrayal of the Partition tragedy is too true to believe in. And therein lies the greatness of the novel. The writers infringement in the story whether honestly as a commentator or through the medium of some character is certainly a flaw that mars the artistic finesse. But in novels on such a socio – political theme. This flaw is almost unavoidable. The novel convincingly reveals the catastrophic disaster with its contradictions and illusions, occasional acts of compassion and kindness and the sublimation of man in the face of all round adversities.

Whereas *Azadi* is a novel which is at once documentation and drama – picturesque and poetic, real and ideal, true and great – considering the novelists treatment of the essential aspects of the novel like plot, characterization and language, Azadi deserves the first place among all the novels considered in the study. To sum up in the words of lyengar:

*There is a controlled tension in Chaman Nahal’s narratives and his own envenomed memories as a victim of the partition have not, however, warped his sensibilities.* 39
References:

2. Ibid., p. 114
5. Ibid., p. 39.
6. Ibid., p. 41.
7. Ibid., p. 49.
8. Ibid., p. 63.
9. Ibid., p. 65.
10. Ibid., p. 66.
11. Ibid., p. 85.
12. Ibid., p. 96.
13. Ibid., p. 122.
15. Ibid., p. 130.
16. Ibid., p. 140.
17. Ibid., p. 140.
21. Ibid., p. 183-84.
22. Ibid., p. 211.
23. Ibid., p. 228.
24. Ibid., p. 251.
26. Ibid., p. 287.
27. Ibid., pp. 293-94.
28. Ibid., p. 296.
29. Ibid., p. 297.
30. Ibid., p. 320.
31. Ibid., p. 327.
32. Ibid., p. 338.
35. Ibid., p. 350.
36. Ibid., p. 367.
38. Ibid., pp. 116-117.