CHAPTER - VII
SUMMING UP

I. A RETROSPECT

The present study indeed underlines the fact that the 1947 Partition of India, one of the issues much debated in the historiography of South Asia, has been one of the important thematic preoccupations of Indian novelists in English. After an analysis of the Partition novels against the backdrop of political history in the earlier chapters, an attempt has been made here to conclude the study with a brief resume of the thesis, highlighting its main findings.

As a prerequisite to understanding the 'fictional' account of Partition, the Second Chapter— Historical and Political Background— which gives an account of events leading to the Partition, confirms that the Partition is a complex issue. Different schools of historians interpret it differently. But the present study, the focus of which is more on creative literature than historical writings, hardly deals with any of the complexities involved in the historiography of Partition. On the contrary, it underscores three crucial issues— Communalism, Nationalism and Imperialism— that were chiefly responsible for the Partition. In other words, the Partition was the result of a long-standing communal divide between the Hindus/ Sikhs and Muslims, an inherent flaw in the agenda of the National Movement and power-sharing formula by nationalist leaders, and more importantly it was the result of British Imperialist policy. But what historical accounts
give us is a partial picture of Partition. Their main concern is political history rather than the human aspect of it. If history records what happens at high level politics, fiction records what happens at the common man's or mass level. Historical writings interpret the flow of events and the role of elite leaders whereas fictional narratives essentially deal with the subaltern. The world of fiction is the world of the common masses. Besides, Partition was not only a political problem but also a human problem. It involved the precious blood and a life of a nation, affecting the fate of crores of human beings. Fiction deals with both of them. Hence, studying Partition fiction is essential to arriving at a holistic picture of the holocaust.

As Chapter third notes, Partition is one of the major themes in the Indian novel and seems to be the most sought-after theme, next only to the Freedom Movement in the history of Indian literature in English. But a comprehensive treatment of the theme appears rather late in the history of Indian literature in English; it was not to be until after almost a decade in Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*. It is significant enough to be noted that the theme appears either comprehensively, or marginally and very subtly in more than twenty-five novels. It is not a surprise if the potentiality of the theme invites many more writers in future. The chapter surveys the different Indian novels in English where the theme appears in different degrees of engagement and manner of treatment. In many novels such as Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*, Chaman Nahal's *Azadi* etc, it is a central theme. Here the choice of the theme seems to have been deliberate. In novels such as B. Rajan's *The Drak Dancer*, Attia Hosian's *Sunlight on a Broken Column*, and Malgonkar's *A Bend in the Ganges*, it is not a central theme but one of the significant themes.
In no Post-modernist novel does this theme occupy a central position. But novels such as Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* and Mukul Kesavan's *Looking Through Glass* marginally throw light upon only some of the aspects of Partition. It is interesting to note that many women writers have responded to the Partition. But in no novel does the theme appear as a major theme. Anita Desai's *Clear Light of Day* deals with it obliquely. Manju Kapoor's *Difficult Daughter* and Sauna Singh Baldwin's *What the Body Remembers* focus mainly on the women's story where the Partition is a backdrop.

The regional writers are equally sensitive to the poignant experience of Partition. The works of Saadat Hasan Manto, Ismat Chugate, Quarratulain Hyder, Rahi Masoom Raza in Urdu; Yashpal, Bhisham Sahni in Hindi; Kartar Singh Duggal and Amrita Pritam in Punjabi stand out in the history of Partition literature. Though the focus of study is not regional literature, three novels from regional literature have been briefly dealt with. Quarratulain Hyder's *A River of Fire*, narrating the story of Indian culture and civilization through the ages, shows the crippling effects of Partition and how it is a part of the up-and-down graph of Indian culture. If Hyder tries to locate the place of this tragedy in the long history of the nation from 4th B. C. to 20th Century, Amrita Pritam in her *Skeleton* looks at it from a woman's point of view. It is a powerful story of a woman as a Partition victim. Without idealizing the Sikh-Muslim relation Pritam depicts Partition as an acid test for the communities and individuals. Bhisham Sahni's *Tamas*, one of the best novels ever written on Partition, mainly deals with two aspects: public, i.e. communal politics, and private, i.e. an individual's (Harnam Singh's) story as a Partition victim. It is remarkable for its unbiased portrayal of Partition experience. Bapsi
Sidhwa’s *Ice-Candy Man*, a well-known novel on Partition from Pakistan, occupies an important place for many reasons. It provides an outsider’s view of the tragedy. Because Sidhwa is a Parsi novelist, but she was an eyewitness to the event. The novel offers a feminist perspective. Moreover, the employment of the first person narrative technique— Lenny, a girl modelled on Sidhwa herself— adds a note of authenticity, innocence and novelty to the novel. Thus, all these novels have each contributed much to the growing body of Partition literature.

The Indian Partition novels in English in this study are divided into two parts— as early novels and later novels— for the convenience of the analysis. Khushwant Singh’s *Train to Pakistan* occupies an important place as it is the earliest comprehensive representation of the Partition. It traces the impact of the tragedy on a Punjab village. Out of the village crisis, what Singh creates is a romantic tale of love and adventure. He celebrates the values of love and sacrifice against communal fanaticism. The novelist has been successful in giving us an artistically satisfying work of great objectivity, historical authenticity and political insight.

B. Rajan’s *The Dark Dancer* treats the theme more or less on the same lines as *Train to Pakistan*, but in a different context. Kamala’s sacrifice in the novel seems to be a female counterpart of Juggut’s final act in Singh’s novel. Both of them uphold values of love and sacrifice. What is unique about *The Dark Dancer* is that it tries to perceive the Partition as a national tragedy. It illustrates through its protagonist Krishnan that a true Indian, whether he/she be a direct victim of the tragedy or not, equally feels the trauma. Though the focal point of the novel is the theme of cultural conflict, Partition
assumes equal importance. The success of the novel as a work of art lies in the assimilation of both the themes.

Reading Attia Hosain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column* is entirely a different experience of Partition. This novel is the first response of a Muslim writer to the Partition and the first woman's too in the history of Indian literature in English. The novel traces the impact of Partition on a Muslim family thereby giving a Muslim point of view of the Partition. Primarily a *bildungsroman*, the novel unfolds an objective picture of the dilemma of the Muslim psyche during that turbulent time. Hossain questions the adequacy of the Two-nation-theory. The novel is artistically very successful.

Manohar Malgonkar's *A Bend in the Ganges* looks at Partition from a politico-historical point of view. It tries to locate the consequences of the Gandhian national movement in Partition. Bringing out the dichotomy between violence and non-violence, Malgonkar shows how the Gandhian creed of non-violence ended up in the violence of Partition. In other words, it portrays the Partition as an irony of Indian political history by demonstrating how the joint effort of Hindus and Muslims against imperialism ultimately ended up in the division of the country. It is mainly accomplished through the portrait of Shafi, who, being a staunch nationalist first, later turns a communalist. There are also shades of Jinnah's personality in him. The novel is historically accurate, artistically excellent and highly readable.

Raj Gill's *The Rape* is one of the later novels on Partition published almost three and a half decades after the event. It is a compelling story of a girl raped by her beloved's father. Through the story of rape the novel shows the degeneration of human values during Partition.
Its main thematic concerns are— rape, love, violence and refugee problem. But the novel at times fails as a work of art. Political news, direct reproduction of material from newspapers, author's direct comment make it hardly a novel.

No novel on the Partition gives such a wholesome picture as Chaman Nahal's *Azadi*. In narrating a moving saga of a Hindu family under the impact of Partition, Nahal engages with universal themes such as identity crisis, exile, refugee problem and love at various levels. The merit of the novel lies in the fact that it begins as a Partition novel but ends in universality, transcending the bounds of a historical fact. With its affirmative vision the novel underlines the fact that life is worth living in spite of all misery. It is very well reflected through Nahal's major characters that search for order out of chaos. It is an extremely well written novel. It is no doubt a classic of Partition fiction.

Sharf Mukaddam's *When Freedom Came* deals with how city atmosphere charged with communal fanaticism corrupted the rural experience. The novel illustrates this point by giving a contrastive picture of village and urban experiences. The novel may have missed the romantic tinge of *Train to Pakistan*, the comprehensiveness of *Azadi* and the artistic merit of both the novels, but it projects the secular and humanistic vision of some of the Partition novels.

Shiv K. Kumar's *A River with Three Banks* is one of the recent novels on Partition. Essentially a love story, the novel makes use of Partition merely as a backdrop to give a message of brotherhood. Kumar focuses on the religious dimension of Partition. Except that the novel has very little to do with Partition.

One of the aims of the study has also been to examine the fictional technique of these novels. These novels in their technique are very
much closer to the 19th century novels of social realism. Most of them such as *Train to Pakistan*, *The Dark Dancer*, *A Bend in the Ganges*, *The Rape* and *Azadi* are of epic dimension. Most of them have structurally well-knit plots. In some novels such as *Train to Pakistan*, *The Dark Dancer*, *Sunlight on a Broken Column*, *A Bend in the Ganges* and *Azadi* the art of characterization is remarkable and the characters are historically authentic while being lively and contemporary. The narrative technique in these novels, except *Sunlight on a Broken Column*, is omniscient narration. Though the dominant mode of narration in these novels is realism, at times novels like *Train to Pakistan*, *A Bend in the Ganges*, *The Rape* and *A River with Three Banks* are tinged with romanticism. Whereas a melodramatic approach is common to all, B. Rajan's *The Dark Dancer* relates the mythical war of Kurukshetra to the fratricidal war of Partition. Here *Train to Pakistan* and *A River with Three Banks* conspicuously make use of symbolism. Many of the writers here have used the English language for their creative self-expression and achieved a remarkable degree of success. Especially the efforts of Khushwant Singh, Attia Hosain and Manohar Malgonkar are a pointer towards the evolving idiom of Indian English.

II. As one of the important aims of the present thesis has been to identify thematic concerns of the Partition novels, the following is an account of the major thematic concerns of the novels under study. According to the study, the main thematic motif of the Partition novels is that they trace the impact of the tragedy on human life. The event affected human life at various levels; geo-politically, the nation was divided; socially, harmony between the communities was disturbed; domestically, families underwent trauma and psychologically,
individuals were torn apart. It is evident in the study that the main thematic preoccupations are disintegration of communities; family traumas; both physically and emotionally wounded individuals and their dislocation, migration, identity crisis; woman as the worst victim, and, then theme of violence and love.

Partition created fissures among communities, it led to "the radical reconstitution of community," and "produced new, congealed and highly exclusive senses of Hindu/Sikh and Muslim communities in India and Pakistan." The theme of disintegration of communities or sundering of social relations occupies an important place in many novels. Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* is a supreme example of it. Through a graphic picture of Punjabi village life, its ethos, mores, green pastures, tranquillity and social harmony, Singh narrates a moving story of Mano Majra Muslims separating from the Sikhs. Without idealizing the communal harmony of Pre-Partition days, he emphasizes the fact that Muslims and Sikhs lived together in communal harmony; the prayer of the Mullha at the Mosque and the Sikh priest at the Gurudwara go hand in hand. But as an anti-human force, the Partition puts a knife on social harmony and things fall apart. The whole activity of the village community is disturbed. Though Raj Gill's *The Rape* presents a picture of the animosity between the Sikh and the Muslim Community, its focus, unlike *Train to Pakistan*, is mainly on the Sikh way of life. It gives an account of how the Sikh community suffered during those days. Partition was the biggest crisis for the Sikh community. The fear of Muslim attack on the Sikh community, the protagonist's commitment to his community, the Sikhs as refugees, the community's bitter memories of persecution under Muslim rulers, the socio-cultural aspects of the Sikh community are all drawn very realistically. Though the novel realistically portrays
the socio-cultural aspect and gives more information about the Sikh community than any other novel, it lacks the lively picture of the Sikhs, as is presented in *Train to Pakistan*.

If these two novels portray Sikh-Muslim relationship, Chaman Nahal's *Azadi* very objectively presents Hindu-Muslim relations. The novel shows that the Partition corrupted the social relationships; Ghani's relation with Lala Kanshi Ram is witness to it. But Nahal does not depict the socio-communal life as if there had been a complete collapse of cooperation. The Chaudhri's help to Lala's family, Hakim saheeb's praying for Hindu women, the help offered by the Jassar Muslims to Hindu and Sikh refugees—all these show the positive side of the relationship, without the least exaggeration. He shows the negative side of it in the case of Ghani and Rahamat-Ullah-Khan. Another unique factor Nahal handles skilfully is the economic factor which determined the community relationships. Historically speaking the Hindus dominated the trade and this haunted the Muslim mind and their socioeconomic position was threatened. This is very well reflected through the economically better off Lala and the weak Ghani. What is remarkable about *Azadi* is that it asserts the fact that neither of the communities is wholly responsible for the breach of the relations. Both share the guilt.

Among all these novels Sharf Mukaddam in his *When Freedom Came* presents a different community life. His problem is not the Hindu-Muslim conflict as such. He portrays the impact of the city communal virus on the rural community. By offering a contrastive picture of the urban and rural communities the novelist brings out the fact that village life was a peaceful and harmonious heaven where people of different communities shared activities in life; a Muslim
mother feeding a Hindu child illustrates this. But the coming of the city people corrupts it.

Further these novels trace the impact of the tragedy on families. Many families were dislocated during the catastrophe. It separated husband and wife, parents and children, brothers and sisters. The members of one and the same family became foreigners to each other; many lost members were not identified at all, and "there was hardly a family which survived those years without feeling perpetually threatened by the repulsive and ruthless." Many novels under study trace the impact of the tragedy on the familial world. Attia Hosain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column* narrates the disintegration of the feudal Muslim family. Partition divides even brothers. Some members of one and the same family opt for India and some others for Pakistan, and thus they become aliens to each other. Their ancestral house is turned into a place for refugees. This crisis within the family, resulting in divided loyalties, echoes the crisis among Muslim leaders at high-level politics.

If Attia's novel deals with the Muslim family, Chaman Nahal's *Azadi* writes the biography of a Hindu family during Partition. Lala's family here is twice victimized by Partition; first, immediate effects of it in Pakistan, second, aftermath of it in free India. The fear of Muslim attack, loss of property, friends and relations, being a refugee in one's own land are some of the problems the family faces in the newly created nation. It encounters the problem of displacement, rehabilitation, exile and the question of identity crisis in free India. Partition brings such a transformation in the family that all the members lose their ability to communicate. No novel gives such a moving picture of a family subjected to every bad effect of the Partition
as Azadi does. Though the focus of Malgonkar's *A Bend in the Ganges* is not domestic tragedy, Partition brings about a tragic disintegration of Tekchand's family. It is an aristocratic family totally unprepared for the consequences of Partition. Except Sundari the whole family is destroyed in the holocaust. The agony of the families depicted in these novels represents the agony of hundreds of families during Partition. Thus, these novels illustrate how a historical tragedy could be portrayed through the destinies and agonies of victimized families.

The most haunting effect of the Partition, to state the obvious, was on individuals. People degenerated to the inhuman level. They killed to live, raped to revenge. The very concept of man underwent a radical change. It created a sudden awareness of brutality in man. Many individuals lost faith in humanity; some turned into lunatics and some were bewildered by the catastrophe. Almost all novels here present the harrowing impact of Partition at the individual level.

Khushwant Singh very effectively presents the bewilderment not through its protagonist but Hukumchand, a subordinate character. Neither Juggut nor Iqbal are affected as much as Hukumchand is. Though he is not a direct victim, he sensitively perceives the tragedy and is psychologically wounded. Violence and death haunt his psyche. Hukumchand, a jolly man in Government when the novel begins, becomes gloomy towards the end of the novel. What the impact of Partition on Hukumchand illustrates is that a sensitive human being, whether he/she is or is not the victim of a communal riot, whether he/she loses any of their family members or not, yet suffered psychological and emotional tremors. Attia's *Sunlight on a Broken Column* presents individual Muslims caught up in the dilemma. Partition, of course, offered a choice for an individual to choose either
of the countries. But making the choice was not easy. Individuals were torn apart. They were sandwiched between two loyalties. This truth is very well depicted in the novel. The arrival of Saleem and Nadira, who have opted for Pakistan, in India as citizens of Pakistan illustrates what happened to those who had left their birth place and came back to it as aliens. In Manohar Malgonkar’s *A Bend in the Ganges* if Debi’s death in the communal riot shows what happened to freedom fighters during Partition, Shafi’s transformation shows how Muslim individuals were transformed due to the communal virus. Raj Gill’s *The Rape* depicts how Partition gave shock to individuals. Here the father of the protagonist rapes the beloved of his own son, which comes as shocking news. The trauma of Partition exercises such a deep psychological impact on the protagonist that he says, “The world is sick”(298) and in his hallucination kills Gandhi. No novel portrays the transformation of individuals due to the tragedy as vividly and convincingly as Chaman Nahal’s *Azadi* does. It deals with the existential predicament of individuals- their dislocation, alienation and identity crisis. Lala Kanshi Ram, at the cost of his physical dignity, achieves a new spiritual identity. His transformation is that he ceases to hate any. His wife develops hatred towards the Muslim community whereas their son neither ceases to hate nor begins to hate. All of them lose their very ability to communicate. Thus, there are many other minor characters like Niranjan Singh in *Azadi*, Lakh Singh in *The Rape*, who represent the victims of the catastrophe.

It is very important to note that among the worst victims of tragedy were neither a Muslim individual nor a Hindu/Sikh individual, but women of all these communities. As Urvasi Butalia writes, “The history
of Partition was a history of deep violation—physical and mental—for woman.4 Women, during the Partition, were abducted, forced to prostitution, raped, and killed. And as Gyanendra Pandey observes, “A good deal of evidence has by now come to light which shows that in instance after instance, women and girls had been repeatedly raped, passed on from hand to hand, sold, auctioned, cheered, petted, used, thrown away (...).”5 The most important thematic preoccupation of the fiction on Partition is the treatment of woman as a Partition victim. These novels depict the plight of women during Partition. Kamala in The Dark Dancer, Madhu in Azadi are killed in communal riots. Leila in The Rape is raped. Madhu in Azadi and Haseena in A River with Three Banks are abducted. Kamala, an idealized character, is the female counterpart of Juggut in Train to Pakistan. Leila’s rape and Haseena’s forced prostitution are heart wrenching. All these show what Partition did to women folk. Among these novels Malgonkar uses Sundari simply as a sex symbol. In no novel does woman occupy a central position. There is no female character that can be compared with Ayha in Bapsi Sidhwa’s Ice-Candy Man, or the female characters portrayed in Amrita Pritam’s Skeleton and in Manto’s fiction.

Two other important themes in these novels are the theme of violence and the theme of love. The portrayal of violence in Partition novels is inevitable, because Partition itself was a metaphor for violence and for its victims the bitter truth of the Partition lay in the violence done to them.6 To depict the Partition experience is in a sense to depict melodramatic scenes. Many novels here tell the stories of killing, rape, mutilation and arson. What is important is that though they deal with violent tragedy, no novel ends on a pessimistic or
gloomy note. They are characterized by humanism and an affirmative vision. The novelists achieve this through the theme of love. In fact, as M.M. Bakhtin thinks, “the novel is a love story.” In these novels love is one of the major themes and it is contrasted with violence. If the violent scenes set two warring communities against each other, the lovers in the novel come under one umbrella. And often, the love pair consists of a Hindu/Sikh boy falling in love with a Muslim girl. The love of Juggut and Noor in *Train to Pakistan* is a prototype followed in subsequent Partition novels: Debi and Mumtaz in *A Bend in the Ganges*, Dalipjit and Leila in *The Rape*, Arun and Noor in *Azadi*, Gautam and Haseena in *A River with Three Banks* redefine Hindu/Sikh-Muslim relations. If Jinnah says, “They (Hindus and Muslims) neither intermarry nor interdine together,” these love stories of the Partition novels assert that they not only intermarry and interdine but also sacrifice their lives for one another. In this way these novels seem to underscore the philosophy that love solves all problems. In this respect these novels can be placed in the tradition of humanistic novels as they celebrate human values.

Thus, the main thematic concerns of these novels are—disintegration of social relations, family trauma, individual problems, woman as the worst victim, theme of violence and love, to which larger issues like dislocation, migration, refugee problem and identity crisis come as corollaries.

III. However, the distinctive contribution of the Partition novels may be said to have been to the growing tradition of political fiction. The present study places them in the sub genre of political novel as political history.
First and foremost they are political novels because, historically speaking, Partition was primarily a political problem and as Panikkar says it "is a major political marker." It is obvious that the motif behind these novels is firmly rooted in politics. Though the concept of the political novel is complex, what M. K. Naik observes in a nutshell, after analyzing different definitions of political fiction may help us to place the Partition novels in that genre. After analysing the definitions of M. E. Spear, H. A. L. Fisher, Joseph L. Blotner and Irwing Howe, Naik in his essay comes to the conclusion that political fiction is "a piece of fiction devoted to a presentation of political ideas, or (...) a species of fiction in which action, characters and setting are all firmly grounded in politics." Naturally almost all these novels present political ideas relating to Partition politics. Characters in these novels express their opinion about the politics of the time. Action in these novels takes place during the politically turbulent place and time. Partition as a political event affects human life in these stories. Here the political problem creates a human problem. For example, the political decision to divide the country creates the problem of dislocation and migration. The impact of politics here brings about a transformation of apolitical communities as in Train to Pakistan, disintegration of domestic life as in Azadi and Sunlight on a Broken Column.

Among the novels under study, Khushwant Singh's Train to Pakistan, Attia Hosain's Sunlight on a Broken Column, Manohar Malgonkar's A Bend in the Ganges, Chaman Nahal's Azadi and Raj Gills's The Rape stand out as political novels. They explicitly deal with various political sides of the Partition and fulfill the essential criteria of political fiction. A detailed discussion of politics in these
The political milieu is dominant in a political novel. In this respect Manohar Malgonkar's *A Bend in the Ganges* is exemplary. It enacts the human odyssey against the backdrop of political events from the Civil Disobedience Movement to the Partition. Tracing the genesis of communalism Malgonkar depicts Partition as an irony of Indian political history.

The most important characteristic feature of the political novel is that its characters are engaged in discussing political ideas. The
characters in all the novels mentioned above discuss political ideas. For instance, the Mano Majrans and Iqbal in *Train to Pakistan*, and Bill Davidson and Munir in *Azadi*, discuss politics. *The Rape* discusses the role of the 'divide and rule' policy and condemns the failure of Indian leadership. *Azadi* recommends the Cabinet Mission Plan as an alternative to Partition.

Some of the novels here can be read as Gandhian novels which also come under the political category. *A Bend in the Ganges* examines the Gandhian creed of 'non-violence', as an alternative strategy to oust the British in the light of violence unleashed by the Partition. In *Azadi* Gandhi is discussed as much as Partition. The protagonist in the novel himself is a Gandhian hero. The novel presents Gandhi as a messenger of peace and Hindu-Muslim brotherhood. Lala Kanshi Ram and Chaudhru Barkat Ali's friendship is a testimony to it. In *A River with Three Banks*, Gandhi is portrayed against a religious background. There is an impact of Gandhi on its central character through which the novelist celebrates the Gandhian principle of "universal religion" (195). But, surprisingly enough, among these novels *The Rape* alone gives an unfavourable picture of Gandhi. The protagonist in the novel kills Gandhi in his hallucination.

On the whole, these novels deal with communal politics, British chicanery, the role of political parties and leaders like Gandhi, Jinnah and Nehru. At times they give such an insight into the politics of the time that a student of political science and history may learn from them. Hence, what K. C. Belliappa says is true: "politics cannot be kept out of a novel that deals with Partition." *15*

Another important feature of the Partition novels as political novels is that they act as political critiques. They criticize the politics of Partition and present it as a negative force. In most of the novels it
is depicted as an antihuman force. It destroys the tranquillity of Mano Majra in *Train to Pakistan*, the family in *Azadi* and *Sunlight on a Broken Column* and individuals in all novels. What is significant enough to note is that in the history of Indian Political novels in English the tendency to criticize politics seems to begin with the Partition novels. Early novels such as Raja Rao’s *Kanthapura* celebrate politics.

Commenting on Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children*, Novy Kapadia says that it can be classified as “significant political history, similar to Khushwant Singh’s *Train to Pakistan* (1956), Manohar Malgonkar’s *A Bend in the Ganges* (1964), Attia Hosain’s *Sunlight on a Broken Column* (1961), Chaman Nahal’s *Azadi* (1976).” It is obvious that as political novels the Partition novels belong to the category of novel as political chronicle. That is, this kind of novel takes its material from history. Here the novelist has to be faithful to the historical events and has to transform the material of political history into an art form. Partition is a part of recent history. Novelists like Khushwant Singh and Malgonkar are historically conscious writers. All these novels document the flow of historical events with accuracy. A successful novel as political chronicle is one which transforms political history into an art form. In this respect successful partition novels are *Train to Pakistan*, Attia Hosain’s *Sunlight on a Broken Column*, *A Bend in the Ganges* and *Azadi*, as in these novels there is, what George Luckács calls, “the poetic awakening” of political history.

It is worth noting that the response of the Indian novel in English to Partition is not immediate. The first ever comprehensive treatment appeared in 1956 with the publication of *Train to Pakistan*. There is delay of almost a decade. Also as a central theme Partition occupies only a few novels. It is surprising that writers like Mulk Raj Anand and Bhabani Bhattachrya have come out with no novel dealing with
Partition, even though they were very much nearer to the holocaust. Also no novel deals with the Partition problem on the Bengal side. It is evident that later novels in the present study, except Azadi, neither throw new light upon the history of Partition nor are successful as works of art whereas all early novels are successful. No Indian novel in English, however, matches Saadat Hasan Manto’s fiction in tracing the impact of the holocaust on the individual psyche. No characters in these novels stand comparison with his Toba Tek Singh and a raped girl in ‘Khol Do’. The treatment of ‘love’ in these novels is stereotyped. From Train to Pakistan to the recent one A River with Three Banks it is the same story. In the love affair always the male is either a Hindu or a Sikh. This may show one’s biased attitude. There is a lack of ‘feminine sensibility’ in these novels even though the material on woman’s role in Partition is inexhaustible. A female-centred novel like Amrita Pritam’s Skeleton has yet to come in the arena of Indian literature in English. As political novels these novels fail to scale the heights of Joseph Conrad’s Nostromo, V.S. Naipaul’s The Mimic Men and the African political novels such as Chinua Achebe’s Things Fall Apart.

To sum up, the study drives home the points that the fictional narratives of Partition play an important role in the discourse of Partition as they prove complementary to the historical accounts. Their main thematic concern is the impact of tragedy on human life at various levels. Technically they belong to the nineteenth century novels of social realism; generically, they are political novels and they are characterized by humanism and an affirmative vision.
NOTES AND REFERENCES


8 Jinnah, quoted in Rajendra Prasad, *India Divided* (Bombay: Hind Kitabs Ltd., 1947) 1.


