

The Angst and Pangs of Partitioned Souls: A Study of Select Partition Novels

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Abstract

Partition Literature finds expressions in various cultural tropes such as dislocation, displacement, violence, trauma, and communal disharmony wherein the common thread which binds all these tropes is a sense of lost home. As an event, Partition remains a visible trace in the national space which shapes the collective conscious and unconscious of the people who witnessed it and who study its reverberations.

This paper intends to delve deeper into the historical and psychological aspects of Partition as a highly catastrophic event through Abdullah Hussein's *The Weary Generations* (Udaas Naslein) and Kamleshwar's *How Many Pakistan? or Partitions* (Kitne Pakistan?). This paper intends to understand these texts as being metaphorical in nature. Apart from their literary nuances, these texts also act as a microcosm of collective trauma undergone by the people who witnessed Partition and as a symbol of multiple ruptures that took place geographically on both sides of the border leading to the fragmentation in the respective psyche. These texts will be studied in isolation as well as in relation to the larger crisis that the nation was witnessing post-Partition.

The framework of the study would comprise revisiting Partition at the levels of dislocation, displacement, violence, trauma, and communal disharmony. Each of these cultural tropes will be analyzed along with the thematic reading of the understudy texts. In the process, the traumatic journey of undergoing and registering Partition both as a geographical and psychological rupture will be studied keeping in mind the concept of trauma which is understood as a severely disruptive experience that deeply impacts the self's emotional positioning and perception of the outside world.

Keywords: partition, violence, trauma, homelessness, identity crisis, communal hatred

The Partition of India turned out to be the most gruesome crisis in the history of the Indian subcontinent. This historical crisis was not just limited to being a catastrophic past but it also became the major reason for the emergence of both external and internal turmoils whose reverberations can be felt even today. The single decision of dividing united India led to a chain of violence spread across both sides of the border. The very first violence that emerged was the Great Calcutta Killing leading to the conversion of

Hindus to Islam and the rape of women by men of opposite religions. Not only this but there were riots at Noakhali, Bihar, and Gurmukteswar followed by the eruption of the war-like situation in Punjab leading to merciless killings by Muslims of Sikhs and Hindus in Rawalpindi, Lahore, Multan, and other places. In other words, the Partition of India changed the face of the Indian sub-continent due to the mass massacre, migration, and dislocations.

In terms of literary works, the area of Partition Studies is a large corpus that consists of fiction, non-fiction, poems, documentation, and drama. Though the catastrophic event occurred in the year 1947, it was only years after, roughly around the 1990s that novels and stories about the state of communal relations and violence appeared in the literary scenario. The subject matter of such works mostly revolved around the issue of how and what was to be represented in the midst of the multi-layered ruins that took place due to the division of the nation born out of the nationalist disruption between India and Pakistan. As a matter of fact, literary writings (novels) about the Partition gave rise to holistic themes wherein the issues of dislocation, displacement, violence, trauma, and communal disharmony pervaded the minds of the writers. Such texts became the written testimonies to the psychological crisis that common people were going through post-Partition and also included the nostalgia for the lost past.

Some of the seminal novels within the corpus of Partition Studies are *Train to Pakistan* by Khushwant Singh, *Sunlight on a Broken Column* by Attia Hosain, *A Bend in the Ganges* by Manohar Malgonkar, *Azadi* by Chaman Nahal, *East-West* by Sunil Gangopadhyay, and Jyotirmoyee Devi's *The River Churning* (Epar Ganga, Opar Ganga). Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* (1956) is the maiden novel that dealt with the theme of Partition. The novel comprises tones of sentimentality and subjectivity as he himself had witnessed the traumatic event. Therefore, this novel encompasses a touch of experiential essence. The novel portrays his angst about the violent events of Partition that divided a country and its people through the representation of compassion, love, and kindness of the Sikhs towards the Muslims of the village. Attia Hosain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column* deals with the representation of the ugly acts of communal violence through the struggle of the Indians against British rule turned into and other gruesome consequences. Along with being a political comment, this novel also analyses the human heart which has various ways of responding to moments of historical crisis. Manohar Malgonkar's *A Bend in the Ganges* has a self-explanatory title hinting at the geographical dislocation that even divided the rivers. The term 'bend' hints at the formation of borders, loss of homes, loss of loved ones, and division of Mother Nature herself. The novel focuses on the period from 1930 to 1947. While covering the span of seventeen years, the novel touches upon various historical events such as the freedom struggle for Indian Independence, the Second World War, and the Partition of India. Focussing on the last event, the novel represents the transformation of colonial India to post-Partition India. Chaman Nahal's *Azadi* focuses on the plight of the Muhajirs (refugees) who became migrants immediately after India's Partition. In all these novels, religion plays a vital role in shaping the private and public life of the characters hinting at the fact that the event of Partition gave rise to religious and sectarian politics leading to disharmony between the Hindus and Muslims. While reading these novels, one gets an insider's view of what India was before and after Partition, the latter being a continuous point of contention and discussion. Sunil Gangopadhyay's *East-West* focussed on post-Partition mass migrations – migrations that resulted in displacements, resettlements, and

re-adjustments. The hyphen in the title indicates continuity/discontinuity between East and West Bengal. Sunil Gangopadhyay attempts to portray East-West Bengal not just as separate spaces, but also tries to represent that elements of continuity and fluidity are also present which can be analyzed through memory, nostalgia, and finally accepting the new identity of a refugee. Jyotirmoyee Devi's novel *The River Churning* majorly incorporates a gendered reading wherein the protagonist is a woman and is a refugee as she is forced to leave her native place in East Bengal and shift to West Bengal where she has to go through physical and psychological violence. She is limited to a body and does not have an identity of her own. The title of this novel also brings in the angle of Nature's lament at the widespread violence. All of these novels have portrayed the pain of Partition in their own respective ways. However, one thing which binds them all is the disturbance the event of the Partition created at psychological, ideological, gendered, and philosophical levels. These novels discuss the temporal and spatial disorder that pervaded the minds of the people both pre and post-Partition.

As an event, Partition remains a visible trace in the national space which shapes the collective conscious and unconscious of the people who witnessed it and who study its reverberations. When the conscious and unconscious mind of the people (with respect to their response to Partition) becomes the major line of argument, the concept of collective trauma takes the center stage. The two seminal novels which are considered to be microcosms of the collective trauma undergone by the people who witnessed Partition are Abdullah Hussein's *The Weary Generations* (Udaas Naslein) and Kamleshwar's *Partitions* (Kitne Pakistan?). These novels are symbols of multiple ruptures that took place geographically on both sides of the border leading to the fragmentation in the respective psyche of the common people. These novels have generated self-reflexive modes of novelistic testimony in the immediate aftermath of widespread and multiple forms of violence born out of Partition. Here, it is noteworthy that the titles of these novels vocalize the age-old trauma that is associated with Partition. As a matter of fact, though the decision to divide the country was a shock to everyone, its seeds got rooted beforehand only with the events like multiple divisions of Bengal and riots at other places. Through the title *The Weary Generations* (Udaas Naslein), Hussein hinted at Partition being an event that gave rise to inter-generational trauma wherein several generations both before and after Partition felt the trauma of being homeless, losing one's motherland, losing one's loved ones, and being constantly under the fear of being killed. Through the title *Partitions* (Kitne Pakistan?), Kamleshwar treats Pakistan as a metaphor for dislocation hinting at the countless number of schisms that took place on both the geographical and psychological levels.

This paper attempts to understand *The Weary Generations* and *Partitions* as testimonies to the collective trauma that took place due to Partition. To trace the collective trauma, this paper attempts to analyze the texts at the levels of dislocation, displacement, violence, trauma, and communal disharmony. Starting with dislocation: it took place at two levels, the geographical and the psychological. Moving on, displacement: it encompasses the entire process of migration resulting in mass homelessness. Violence and trauma are yet again outcomes of the division having various manifestations in the form of murders, rapes, and suicides which further lead to psychosomatic disorders. The aspect of communal disharmony entails the sectarian politics associated with the Partition of India. Within this level, an attempt will be made to understand the volatile

concept of the nation which witnessed a significant amount of change and disintegrations post-Partition.

Before delving into the critical and layered analysis of the understudy texts based on the above-mentioned levels, it is imperative to understand the basic plot line of these novels. *The Weary Generations* focuses on three generations of the pre and post-Partition era. It examines the various aspects of the Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims. It is a novel that looks further back to the nineteenth century, tracing growing breakdowns in society as well as in personal relationships. However, the novel majorly highlights Punjab and its culture to the fullest. Apart from the focus on Punjab and Punjabi culture, the novel also discusses the major events in the history of the Indian subcontinent through the character of Naim who falls in love with a girl named Azra. At the beginning of the novel, Naim is innocent and lively. However, towards the end of the novel, he becomes weary. British imperialism was at its peak along with World War II brewing up simultaneously. In an attempt to establish his absolute hatred for the British, he got enrolled as a soldier to fight against Europe. After the war, his whole life gets changed and he loses his left arm. Further, the incidents of Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar and the April massacre in Peshawar also took place which further disillusioned Naim. Thereafter, India got divided in 1947 when Naim and his brother travelled to Pakistan and wherein Hindus attacked them. It is to be noted that the novel may be read on three levels: as an account of events revolving around the Partition of India in 1947, as a description of the portrayal of undivided Punjab, and as a love story that begins during British colonialism and ends after Partition. The novel progresses from pre-Partition peace to post-Partition chaos. Qurratulain Hyder's *River of Fire* (Aag ka Darya) is based on a similar progression wherein it talks about the gradual series of events that paved the way for India's Partition. The novel covers the historical timelines from the Mauryan Empire, the end of the Lodhi dynasty, the beginning of the Mughal rule, followed by British domination, and the Partition of India. To bring in the dramatic and fictive effect, the novel adheres to recurring characters with similar names and cyclical occurrences that give rise to continuity across the generations. Through this novel, Hyder attempts to indulge in both historical and literary analysis of events that led to the Partition of India. By referring to the timeline, she attempts to historicize Partition and by creating characters, she indulges in fictionalizing Partition.

If an attempt is made to understand the number of historical references that Hussein has given in this novel then it is imperative to first focus on the point that it has been divided into three parts. With different phases of growth and journey from innocence to experience which ultimately leads to weariness. The first part is set in locating one in colonial India and the rest two parts are set in *Hindustan*. Within this tripartite structure, the events that got due mention in the novel are the First World War and its effects on the Indian subcontinent, the tragedy of Jallianwala Bagh, Gandhi's civil disobedience movement, the Muslim League of the 1928 consignment, the Simon Commission and social revolts, the Partition of Bengal and Partition of the Indian subcontinent. In the opening scene of the novel, the readers are introduced to a ceremony called the *dastar-bandi* which is the ceremony of the Khan clan in Delhi. This reference hints at the unity among the Hindus and Muslims. Later in the novel, Naim is exposed to colonial India's class hierarchy when he returns to his ancestral village. Such incidents witnessed by Naim would give rise to the emotion of activism against British imperialism and feudalism in him.

The part of the novel wherein Naim gets recruited into the British army is a comment on the nature and consequences of war. The following dialogue between Naim and his childhood friend and fellow recruit, Mahinder, is a testimony to what war does to the human psyche.

‘That was different,’ he said after a few long minutes. ‘To avenge the blood of one of your own, even a rat can kill. Here we don’t even know the people. It is like killing a pig, or a jackal in the jungle.’

‘Well,’ Naim said, ‘that is what war is.’

‘Tell me,’ Mahinder Singh asked suddenly, ‘why are we here?’

‘Because of the war,’ Naim said. ‘The enemy has attacked.’

‘What, attacked our village?’

‘Attacked the British sarkar and their friends.’

‘What is it to us?’

‘They are our masters.’

‘Our master is Roshan Agha,’ Mahinder Singh said simply.

‘Yes, and the English sarkar is Roshan Agha’s masters.’

A brief hollow sound emerged from Mahinder Singh’s mouth. ‘How many masters do we have?’

Naim laughed. ‘Well, it’s just the way it is.’ (Hussein 146-147)

Here it is evident that Naim starts to consider war and subjugation as being indispensable to life. It also reflects the onset of revulsion towards the masters. The revulsion further gets dependent when he witnessed the massacre at Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar in April 1919 where thousands of unarmed protesters were gunned down by the British and the April massacre in Peshawar’s famous Qissa Khawani Bazaar in 1930 where dozens of unarmed protesters were murdered by the British soldiers. Due to such gruesome events, Naim turns into a character of self-driven individual towards the end of the novel. He starts to question ongoing circumstances when he was imprisoned after arrest for holding a public rally in Jat Nagar. Later, he turns weary after seeing the freedom movement. Naim’s weariness was the result of a series of events in which he participated. Starting from being a loyalist in the British Indian Army followed by being a revolutionary and a Congress worker, and finally before suddenly he became a refugee migrating to Pakistan.

Naim’s weariness is evident when he thinks that he had been far from brave in the war, that he had been afraid, that the fear had filled his body and soul, and that he had not stood up and fought in the face of mortal danger, and was never courageous. Gradually, he started to get distant from his life and denied to resume his duties towards his village or on Roshan Agha’s lands. Moreover, he stopped speaking and not even Azra could help him get out of his weariness. Therefore, *The Weary Generations* is about the struggle, the urge for freedom, moral courage to face a crisis, fluid identities, as well as about the ebb and flow of life. Naim becomes the microcosm of the collective weariness and suffering due to the division of the country. Therefore, *The Weary Generations* constitutes *udasi* or pervasive as well as rampant sadness carried over from one generation to another, from feudal past to partitioned present.

Kamleshwar’s *Partitions (Kitne Pakistan?)* portrays the machinations of the British Empire and how they contributed to India’s Partition. At the very beginning of the novel, Kamleshwar sets the tone of the novel through the literary device of foreboding related

to the problematic event of India's Independence and subsequent Partition. The is marked by the following lines of the novel:

Those were strange times. Days passed like neem flowers drifting to the ground
Days that resembled the yellow kaner blossoms. Days that seemed like endless
afternoons. And then came days bereft of any direction. Days, when the bleak
present strained to move into the future (Kamleshwar 1).

The novel presents India's history fraught with treachery, oppression, and colonial subjugation at the hands of the British. Though this novel begins as a discourse on the cause and the impact of the country's 1947 Partition, it enters into other 'partitions' such as the destruction of the Aztecs by European imperial forces, the atomic destruction at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the creation of Bangladesh, the ethnic cleansing in the Balkans, and the Talibanization in Afghanistan. The setting of the novel is inter-historical as Kamleshwar indulges in many random shifts through the historical events, Partition, and various other violence that occurred throughout human history. The narrator of the novel is an *adeeb*, a Hindi writer, and a historian. The *adeeb* also refers to the characters from epics like Gilgamesh and the Mahabharata at his court and narrates their sagas. Further, the novel talks about the *adeeb's* romance with Vidya, his extramarital relationship with a Muslim widow Salma, his family and health, his wife, and his daughter. Moving on, there is a story of a middle-aged Sikh male Buta Singh, and his marriage to an eighteen-year-old Muslim girl Zainab and focuses on their tragic marital relationship. This is followed by the love story of a raped Sikh woman Surjit Kaur and Muslim ex-officer Tannu's love toward their respective hometowns, Multan and Gangauli. Another incident that is a part of the novel is the rape of a Bangladeshi woman by Pakistani and Bangladeshi police during Bangladesh's war of Independence in 1971. So, it is evident that Kamleshwar has touched upon various manifestations of different kinds of geographical divisions and their consequences.

Moreover, *Partitions* also portrays the specific divisions in the form of caste and religion that are an inherent part of the Indian subcontinent. Caste and religion act as fissures that have been governing the social reality of India and which have been portrayed by the novel vividly. The novel also transcends subcontinental realities by focussing on other divides that have plagued the world and caused immense suffering. In a way, this novel universalizes suffering by showcasing the different episodes of dislocation, trauma, displacement, violence, and communal disharmony. The court of Adeeb comprises the victims of South Africa's apartheid, of Pakistan's politics of the 'mohajir' versus that of the Punjabi, Sindhi, Balochi, and the Pakhtun, of North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) military politics.

Through the reference to all the above-mentioned sufferings and hatred, Kamleshwar raises a pertinent debate in the novel regarding the emergence of violence from historical and communal disharmonies. Then Kamleshwar himself gives his own point of view that violence and hatred get propagated through the violent relationship with the past:

The past comes in handy to unite hatred, especially those painfully bitter memories that ooze and fester. History, which can provide remedial insights into the past, is often cast aside. The analysis of history, its perspectives on society often appease and serves to eliminate hatred. But the past spurns this logic of countering hatred. It merely weaves half-truths into tales of actual recollection

and perpetuates these tales for centuries. Hatred is a “school” where one begins by inflicting pain, humiliation, and suffering on oneself. Hatred then enriches the soil of ill will and strengthens the resolve of revenge. Similarity and uniqueness serve as the hallmarks of revenge whose practitioners speak in one voice, raise identical questions and offer the same arguments. This unity forges their identity. (Kamleshwar 83).

The novel also postulates ideologies that gave rise to dislocation, displacement, trauma, communal disharmony, and violence. In the novel, Pakistan symbolizes the different implications of different perspectives. For Jinnah, Pakistan was wrestling a nation for people to feel safe and secure. For the man who wildly pursued Zainab before she was rescued by Buta Singh, Pakistan was a metaphor of misogyny wherein Muslim women should stay within set boundaries and if not, the men are free to show them their place by sexually molesting them. For Buta Singh, Pakistan meant having a wife (Zainab). For the writer himself, ‘Pakistan’ symbolizes

an infectious disease’ and ‘as long as religion, race, caste, and imperialist ambitions continue to hold mankind in thrall, as long as the lust for power and supremacy thrives, this planet will continue to witness the birth and evolution of many Pakistans (Kamleshwar 181–182).

Therefore, it is evident how the novel deals with the religious repercussions of communal violence. For example, it offers an account of the four aspects of human nature necessary to bring psychological and social stability:

“All Hindus and Muslims are aware of the four things dear to every human being: the first is one’s religion, the second, one’s honor and pride, the third, one’s life and the life of one’s loved ones. And the fourth, one’s freedom and one’s ancestral property.” (Kamleshwar 311)

The novel also portrays the plight of women and how they were devastated and exploited due to India’s Partition and other invasions as well as divisions. This issue is evident through the narratives of Bilqees, Kim Huk Sun, and the Bangladeshi wife who raise the issue of injustice and the commodification of women. Bilqees symbolizes the case of Hyderabad’s Ameena, one of the hundreds of poor teenage girls forcibly married off to elderly Arabs for money. Kim acts as the silenced voice of Korean ‘comfort women’ who were forced to be sex slaves for the invading Japanese forces to be dumped after the men returned to their native place. The Bangladeshi wife acts as the metaphor for the violation of a woman’s body and rape as a medium of punishment. When Bangladesh was born, she got raped by the defeated Pakistani forces as punishment for their defeat. Before she can recover from the trauma, she becomes a medium for venting out the frustrations of the defeated forces. Through all these references, Kamleshwar has widened the scope of violence by contextualizing it across different cultures only to establish that human nature and human responses/reactions/repercussions of the crisis are similar despite differences in time and culture. Keeping this in mind, Kamleshwar has situated the event of India’s Partition within the broader concept of divisions at several levels.

Therefore, through this novel, Kamleshwar tries to delineate the meanings of nationalism-nationhood that holds contemporary relevance to date. By talking about global episodes of violence, this novel attempts to bring all concepts of nationalism

clubbed into one through the metaphor of Pakistan, Pakistan being the other. Kamleshwar has brought the other to the center so that all the dominant forces can be brought into the center and analyzed to the core to further understand the larger infliction of pain and suffering. One of the interesting ways in which Kamleshwar hints at the staleness in the overall ambience of India and Pakistan born out of Partition is through the prologue that he uses in his novel. The lines are as follows:

Suffocation overwhelms me in these closed rooms, when I throw open the windows, miasma engulfs me. (Kamleshwar xiii)

Such was the intensity of vacuum which got created in the minds of the people who were suddenly asked to leave their homelands only to be left homeless and wandering for peace and life. This prologue sets the tone of the entire novel as the following incidents amplify and justify the feeling of being stuck. Such was the toxic impact of Partition which neither let people survive nor die. This position of such an in-betweenness has been portrayed best by Saadat Hasan Manto in his short story "Toba Tek Singh" wherein he has deliberated upon the concept of 'no man's land' through Bishan Singh's character wherein his dilemma whether the village of Toba Tek Singh (post-Partition) falls in Hindustan or Pakistan becomes the metaphor of pain and trauma of displacement. This is the similar 'here-there' positionality that even Kamleshwar brings to the forefront by situating it in the wide arrayed historical references.

Both Abdullah Hussein and Kamleshwar have tried to understand the angst and pangs of India's Partition souls by bringing in the plight of partitioned souls across history and geography. The beauty of *The Weary Generations* and *Partitions* lies in the fact that these novels have historicized the occurrence (and repercussions) of displacement, dislocation, trauma, violence, and communal disharmony. By historicizing the events, the respective authors have tried to give space to a dialogue on how pain as well as violence are not sudden occurring and are inter-generational in nature. Moreover, during the events of chaos and disturbance (such as Partition), the role of God also gets questioned. Specifically, in the case of India's Partition, even the respective faiths are different leading to different Gods. Mario I. Aguilar, in his book titled *Interreligious Dialogue and the Partition of India: Hindus and Muslims in Dialogue about Violence and Forced Migration*, talks about how the theological dilemma of God's absence amidst such widespread disorder gave rise to further disorientation among the people. In the following lines, Aguilar has tried to approach the various dialogues in history (in this case, as mentioned in the understudy texts) taking into account those who lost their lives and history within this period of Partition and national crisis.

I must ask: Where was God in 1947? Was God retreating to Europe in the boats in which the Christian colonizers left India? Or was God present in the new Muslim nation that arose out of Partition with the name of Pakistan? Or was God only present in the divine manifestations of Hindu gods and blessed the birth of an independent India in 1947? Are there possibilities of forgiveness, reconciliation or rejection of forgiveness after the massacres that were conducted by Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims in the name of religion? (Aguilar 18).

These two novels have further problematized the concept of nation and nationality. Though Partition was one single event based on the concept of two-nation theory, it gave rise to multiple nations in the form of India and Pakistan. Within India, there were many

Indias and within Pakistan, there were multiple Pakistans which further led to riots and identity crises as well as inhumanity. While Hussein tries to understand these catastrophes through the metaphor of weariness (both inherent and external), Kamleshwar understands the ubiquitous violence and trauma through the metaphor of Partition. However, whether it is India or Pakistan, suffering, its articulation, and its intensity was the same on both sides. Nida Fasli has rightly expressed the universality of Partition pain and trauma in his poem "Here, As Well As There" ("Yahan Bhi Wahan Bhi"). The lines which reflect this aspect are:

The beast within the human is here, as well as there
Allah is the protector here, as well as there
Only the names of blood-thirsty monsters are different
Wastelands within cities exist here, as well as there.

These lines hint at the destruction that devastated the lives of all the people irrespective of sides. Nida Fazli considers pain and suffering as the biggest unifier despite the widespread fissures and schisms. Though the Partition of India led to divisions based on the political as well as religious interests of the groups in power, the pain and suffering could not be divided or cut into half. *The Weary Generations* and *Partitions* have expressed this fundamental and philosophical vacuum through a historical tracing of several events only to converge at the Partition of India and present an amplified version of its repercussions.

One of the contemporary repercussions of India's Partition is the emergence of the concept of postmemory within the larger corpus of Trauma Studies. Trauma Studies analyses texts in the light of trauma theory. Postmemory is one of the most important subsets of Trauma theory which deals with the relationship between individual and collective trauma, historical trauma, the phenomenon of absence/lack, meanings of perpetrator and victim, the existence of intergenerational trauma, differences between mourning and melancholia, and the rise of resilience to overcome trauma syndrome. In her book, *The Generation of Postmemory*, Mariana Hirsh defines postmemory as:

Postmemory describes the relationship that the "generation after" bears to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those who came before-to experiences they "remember" only by means of the stories, images, and behaviors among which they grew up. But these experiences were transmitted to them so deeply and affectively as to seem to constitute memories in their own right. Postmemory's connection to the past is thus actually mediated not by recall but by imaginative investment, projection, and creation. (Hirsch 5)

Abdullah Hussein's *The Weary Generations* and Kamleshwar's *Partitions* are testimonies to the phenomenon of postmemory as these novels were after Partition in 1964 and 2000 respectively and are 'narratives', 'stories', and 'images' of the fictional characters who act as the first generation victims to the 'generation after' readers of these novels. Moreover, the respective authors witnessed Partition with their own eyes which put them in the category of first-generation survivors. Their act of writing these novels acts as a medium of memorializing the events of Partition for the generations after thus connecting postmemory to the past mediated not just by 'recall' but by 'imaginative investment, projection, and creation'. In this light, the respective characters of *Naim* and *Adeeb* have portrayed to be carriers of individual trauma of being a war veteran and a

dislocated self who are also in the process of being microcosms of the collective trauma of all the people who belonged to his generations and after. Their characters give rise to questions like who or what is being remembered by whom and for whom, some of the most important questions pertaining to postmemory. In fact, the temporal gap between the occurrence of Partition and its repercussions (including its study) goes beyond linearity and sequential logic.

Being first-generation survivors themselves, Abdullah Hussein's and Kamleshwar's act of writing *The Weary Generations* and *Partitions* respectively can also be understood as a therapeutic act in the sense that the immediate occurrence of a traumatic event is difficult to be registered. Writing about the trauma of Partition in the form of novels later entails accepting the crisis after a temporal gap through the adherence to the continuity of memory and identity. Stephen Frosh, in the book titled *Those Who Come After: Postmemory, Acknowledgement and Forgiveness* refers to Lisa Baraitser's idea of intergenerational connections wherein she discusses the link between the experience of being affected by something which cannot be comprehended immediately and the series of reflections embedded in the mind to accept its reality:

Traumatic experiences are held to be too overpowering to be grasped as they occur, so instead they are somehow 'gone through' without being properly processed, 'becoming significant', as Baraitser puts it, only later on if it becomes possible to think about them in a calmer way, with more perspective or distance. (Frosh 4)

This brings to focus the relevance of reader-response criticism in the analysis of postmemory. Todd F. Davis and Kenneth Womack in their book titled *Formalist Criticism and Reader-Response Theory* state "Reader-response criticism devotes considerable attention to the act of reading itself, particularly in terms of the many different ways in which readers respond to literary texts." (51) In this light, the two understudy novels act as the modus operandi to understand the interrelationship between memories and postmemories of Partition wherein the former refers to the perspectives of the respective authors while writing them (to record survivor memories of the events in literature through writing) and the former refers to the response of the readers towards these novels (readers for whom the incidents in the novels are pieces of postmemories who further trace the aftermath of the Partition violence shared by different generations of survivors) thereby establishing a bridge between memories and postmemories. The role of postmemory in the light of Partition Studies pertains to finding answers to the unsaid and unclaimed trauma which the immediate victims and survivors faced. It attempts to know the stories of what happened after the mass displacement. Anjali Gera Roy, her book titled *Memories and Postmemories of the Partition of India* discusses that the role of postmemory lies in decoding what happened 'post' Partition. She refers to some of the fundamental questions which strike the minds of generations after people:

What were the processes initiated by the state to resettle refugees after the Partition? How did refugees negotiate with the state machinery to wrest rights and privileges? What were the networks they drew on to begin their lives anew? How did they negotiate with their new status in new regions and host communities? How did their assimilation into host cultures dispossess them of language, culture and a sense of belonging? How did they reconstruct old homes in new places? (Roy 12)

Abdullah Hussein's and Kamleshwar's *The Weary Generations* and *Partitions* propels the readers to find answers to the above-mentioned questions. These novels also act as a bridge between the past and present and between the present and the future both at the temporal and spatial levels.

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