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LITERARY RESPONSE TO PARTITION IN PAKISTAN

Raju Jayasing Patole

Abstract: There were writers who migrated to Pakistan, simply because they were Muslims. Some of them were prejudiced and took up the pen to show the cruelties perpetrated by Sikhs and Hindus. Others, who were not from Pakistan, revealed a deep nostalgia for a state where Hindus and Muslims had dwelt peacefully together until the coming of Partition.

Keyword: Literary Response , Partition Narratives , tragic happenings .

INTRODUCTION

Sadat Hasan Manto (1912-1955), one of the most famous (and controversial, too!) Urdu short story writer migrated to Pakistan and wrote number of all-time classic short stories on Partition violence irrespective of religion or gender. His Urdu short stories are the most important Partition Narratives. Unlike the other Pakistani Urdu or English writers, Manto never takes sides, nor does he try to assert his newly-acquired "Pakistani nationality /identity, nor does he color the Partition violence as Hindu, Muslim or Sikh. *Siyah Hashiye*, *Khol Do*, *Thanda Gosht*, and *Toba Tek Singh* are just few examples of his all-time classic Partition stories. Qurratulain Hyder's *Aar Ka Dairyman* (1948) showed how interwoven the lives of Hindus and Muslims had been before Partition. The book reveals with rare intensity and immense sweep the experience of Partition that was a murderous attack on the millennial continuum of Indian history and civilization. However what is striking about this novel is that though it focuses on nostalgia and loss as the aftermath of Partition, Partition itself is dismissed in a chapter of simply two words: *Hindustan-1947*. Twice once in *Aag Ka Dariya* and again in *Akhri Shab ke Humsafar* translated as *Fireflies In The Mist* she writes about the years before and after Partition, but chooses to remain silent about the Partition years. Interestingly, Qurratulain Hyder's *Aag Ka Dariya* (The River of Fire) falls in the category of Pakistani novels simply by accident she is sitting in Karachi where she had migrated from India. Instead of a Pakistani ideology, she projects the bewilderment of a migrant who finds herself in another land quite by chance. Her other Novel *Mere Bhi Sanamkhane* (My Temples Too") published in 1947, was able to capture the anguish of a group in Lucknow whose dream of a United India was shattered by the grim and tragic happenings in 1946-47"what was there for them to celebrate at the fateful midnight hour or at the dawn of Independence?" Similarly, in a preface to *Raqs-i-Iblis: Inqilab 47 Ki Ek Khuchukan Dastan* (The Dance of the Devil: A Grisly Story of Uprising of 47) (1950), M. Aslam makes it clear that he is writing the novel to reflect the cruelty of Sikhs towards Muslims. However, despite the several stories of Hindus and Sikhs cruelties to Muslim-this partisan novel does not show Muslim cruelty to Hindus or Sikhs -Aslam suggests that, even in the midst of the horrors and madness of Partition, individual friendships cross religious divides. Naseem Hejazy's *Khak aur Khun* (Ashes and Blood, 1949) is a far more moderate book than *Raqs-i-Iblis*, but it too shares the author's partisan attitude towards

Muslims and Pakistan. Like *Raqs-i-Iblis*, *Khak aur Khun* stresses the treachery of the Hindus and Congress. It is motivated by the same anti-India/Hindu feeling as is *Raqs-i-Iblis*. Unlike Manto, who described the atrocities on both sides and showed that, when it came to cruelty, neither Muslims nor Hindus differed from each other, Aslam is intent on showing how Hindus and Sikhs barring a couple are the villains of the period. Abdullah Hussain, who also does not show Muslim atrocities, blurs the perpetrators of violence. Thus though Hussain describes the attacks on the caravans and the abduction, it is almost reluctantly that he does so Abdullah Husain's *Udas Naslein* (1962) shows a similar antipathy towards described the event of Partition. In Intizar Husain's novel *Basti* (1979) the 'witness figure' is a historian, who looks back to 1947, in the wake of the 1971 break-up of Pakistan, and the failure of the ideals that animated the Pakistan movement. Urdu novelists such as Abdullah Hussain in *Udas Naslein* and M. Aslam in *Raqs-i-Iblis* show, like faiz, the failure of Pakistan to live up to its promise. Mumtaz Shah Nawaz in 'The Heart Divided' (1957) showed friendships and love affairs that existed among Hindus and Muslims before the coming of 1947 Partition tore them apart. But neither Hyper nor Shah Nawaz depicts atrocities. While Shah Nawaz suggests that the Hindu Congress betrayed the Muslims, she is more inspired by the idea of Pakistan as a land of promise rather than as a place where Muslims had to go because of atrocities and communal attacks on them by non-Muslim. Meanwhile it is not just the Urdu novelist writing shortly after Partition who feels the need to explain Partition and justify it on political and religious grounds. It is striking that Bapsi Sidhwa and Mahmud Sipra (both NRPs-Non-Resident Pakistanis) both so different in background and temperament, should both have begun their first novels with a description of a train massacre. Sipra's 'Pawn to King Three' (1965) includes a vignette of Jinnah and explains his role in encouraging Pakistani Businessman. In Bapsi Sidhwa's 'Ice-Candy-Man' (1988), the narrator Lenny, muses about the absurdity of the Partition of the Indian sub-continent. Partition made people aware of their religious differences as Lenny says, "And I became aware of religious difference. It is sudden. One day everybody is themselves - and the next day they are Hindus, Muslim, Sikh, Christian. People shrink, dwindling into symbols" Religious identification did not stop there. Unfortunately, after Partition, the Need for identity, ethnic, linguistic, religious. Seems to become even more acute. If we examine the writings of Sidhwa and Sipra we see that, in

the need to establish their credentials as Pakistani writer, they both begin with the Partition and with the event which has become the symbol for the Partition in Punjab: the train massacre, which represented group action and senseless killing. At the same time, despite their difference, they both stress a more positive side to Jinnah than reflected in other writing from the sub-continent –though, recently (1990) both Shish Tharoor in 'The Great Indian Novel' (1989) and Mukul kasavan in 'Looking Through Glass' (1995) depict a more sympathetic treatment of Jinnah. Sidhwa's another novel, 'The Bride' (1963), as she told several people, was inspired by the story of a tribal woman who had been killed by her husband because of infidelity. This is another aspect of social history of Partition Horror killing. It prevailed on a wide scale during Partition days, especially among Hindus and Sikhs. This concept necessitates a gendered/feminist historiography of Partition of the sub-continent. In 'Ice-Candy-Man', Sidhwa strengthens her Pakistan identity even further by bringing in the Indian atrocities, committed in the Punjab, and by reappraising the character of Jinnah and attempting to improve this image, stress that the British supported the Indians and were deliberately unfair to both Pakistan and Jinnah. However Sidhwa rises above petty nationalism. 'Ice-Candy-Man' does not stress the two-nation theory behind the creation of Pakistan. In other words, Sidhwa does not stress the belief of Pakistani Muslims of the necessity of Partition and the creation of Pakistan. In fact, 'Ice-Candy-Man' suggests that religious and cultural difference are artificially created and deliberately fostered. In 'The Bride', Sidhwa recognizes the inhumanity that accompanies communal violence, but also suggests the need to ask for forgiveness and to give it. Unlike other Partition novelists and short-story writers, Sidhwa refuses to let women remain victims. Using the motif of rape and abduction associated with Partition, she again refuses to allow the raped woman to be discarded.

The new generation of Pakistani writers differs from the older ones on the two-nation theory. Mehr Nigar Masroor, another Pakistani novelist, asked that her book 'Shadows of Time' (1987) be printed in India. Though the Pakistani identity is obvious, the writer insists that human relationships, personal ties between people of different religions, cannot be denied. At the end, the narrator rejects Pakistan, not the Pakistan that has been initially created, but the fundamentalist Pakistan that it had turned into "She ties in historical events with her narrative juxtaposing history and fiction" Masroor, too, like Sidhwa, points out that Jinnah was pragmatic. What she sees as wrong was not Partition, but the direction that Pakistan took after the early death of Jinnah, One of the chief differences perhaps between Indian and Pakistani novels on the Partition is that despite all the sadness in Indian novels, there tends to be a sense of euphoria attendant on independence. This is not always so in Pakistani novels. Though Mumtaz Shah Nawaz's novel, 'The Heart Divided' ends on an optimistic note, she avoids the partition itself.

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