

Literature, Culture and Media
Prof. Rashmi Gaur
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology - Roorkee

Lecture – 54

Representation of Partition in Different Media: A Historical and Cultural Analysis I

Dear participants, welcome to this fourth module of this week. In the previous modules we have seen how the nature of media has evolved over a passage of time traditionally. In the beginning of the 20th century, the scene was dominated by the print media as well as the broadcast communications.

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- Media has changed human interaction over time
- Printed media (Journalism, Fiction) and broadcast communications (Radio, Television) have given over to the Social Media
- Different media have their codes and conventions which help the readers/audience to take away a particular meaning and connotations
- Rooted in culture and linked with a particular time frame
- Incidents are revisited as media changes, providing fresh perspectives, associations, helping us reevaluate the ways we look at the past and our memories of it
- Case Study of how different media have covered the Indian Partition over a passage of time, articulating the attitudes of different generations to it



In the print media, we had newspapers, other journalistic activities, writing of fiction and in broadcast communication, we had radio as well as television and these two mediums have also had a significant influence on the way people look at things happening outside themselves but gradually they have given way to the social media. Different media as we have seen earlier have their codes and conventions which help the readers and audience to understand a particular connotation and take away particular meaning.

We can also say that whereas media influences culture, it is also rooted in the culture of a given time and it is always invariably linked with a particular timeframe. As media changes and develops different events of human history may be revisited. A fresh perspective can also be

developed, fresh associations can also help us to re-evaluate the way in which we look at the past and our memories associated with it.

Because media has developed a capability to look at the past event from a different perspective which was not possible earlier. As a case study of this concept, I have taken up how different media have covered the Indian partition over a passage of time. What are the media which have covered this unfortunate incident of our history and how the different attitudes showcased in different media are able to articulate the attitudes of different generations towards it.

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- According to the census reports, In 1947 the literacy rate of India was just 12% (<https://www.census2011.co.in/literacy.php>)
- Trust of masses in the printed word
- Cultural construct awarded a certain awe to the print medium, which showcased the social insecurities and political anxieties of the days preceding the largest ever forced migration of population in human history, and the demographic dislocation it entailed
- People who had survived it or witnessed it, tried to exorcise this past through memories
- Literary representations and recreations in different media helped people to recover some of the "lost density of life" (Asaduddin)



When India gained the status of a free and sovereign nation in 1947, the literacy rate of our country was abysmally low. Census reports indicated to be just about 12% and therefore it was but natural that the masses had placed a deep sense of reverence and trust in the value of the printed word. Cultural constructs had awarded a certain awe to the medium of print, anything which is included in the newspaper was considered to be the truth by the people.

So, we find that the contemporary print medium showcased the social insecurities as well as political anxieties which were preceding the largest ever forced migration of population in human history and the demographic dislocation it entailed. People who have been able to survive partition or people who had witnessed it, try to exorcise this past through memories. Literary

representations of this unfortunate event as well as recreation of this event in different media helped people to recover some of the lost density of life.

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Three Generations, Three Perspectives

- Contemporary media and short stories
- Memories with an oblique distance – screen of fiction, individual loss, bravery and romance. Novels, Films, PTSD of survivors; how do victims and perpetrators cope up with the memory of those turbulent and acrimonious times
- Attempts to capture different shades through recordings and memoirs etc., attempts to prepare a post-historicist documentation of how successive generations remember and relate to the legacy of Partition—Novels, Films, Memoirs etc.
 - Partition remembered and memorialized through memorials, Partition museums, preservation and collection of historical documents, personal artifacts, memoirs, diaries

After the partition we have now reached practically the third generation of our country and we find that these three generations look at the representation of this incident through media with different perspectives. The first generation of contemporary media reported the incidents as they were unfolding and most of the time, we find that in literary responses people were writing short sketches and stories.

The first name which comes to our mind is that of Saadat Hasan Manto in this regard. In the second generation of media efforts we find that people were able to view these memories with some type of an oblique distance. A screen of fiction came between the memory of this loss as well as its representation, the memories of individual loss, bravely and romance were normally presented through different fictional pieces.

Novels and films which are based in the second generation of media representation is able to incorporate and represent the post-traumatic stress disorders of the survivors, how do victims and perpetrators also try to cope with the memory of those turbulent and acrimonious types. In the third generation of media growth, we find that there are attempts to capture differentiates through recordings and memoirs etc.

There are attempts to prepare a post historicist documentation of how successive generations remember and relate to what can be considered as the legacy of partition. And through novels, films, memoirs etc., we find that people are trying to remember and memorialise partition. So we find that partition museums, preservation and collection of historical documents, personal artefacts, diaries etc., are now being preserved.

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- The diplomatic legacy -- the unfinished business of partition, emergence of Bangladesh in 1971, politics of communalism: the alienation and division of population along religious lines; the history of communal riots since 1947
- The emphasis on recovering the lost subaltern voices of survivors, Partition literature as fictive 'testimony' (Tarun Saint)
- Media has depicted and also tried to influence Indo-Pakistan relationship -- various genres of media as an alternate channel of dialogue and communication for the two nations and their population
- Role of Partition literature in understanding events, commemoration of the horrific experiences and the narratives of survivors; oral history project archives
- Representation of Partition in contemporary media, film, history books, literature, social media



As we have had a personal and social legacy, there is also a diplomatic legacy, the business of partition has remained more or less unfinished as has been presented through different media and people and critics as well as certain media representations refer to the emergence of Bangladesh in 1971, a continued politics of communalism. In partition literature there is also an emphasis on recovering a subaltern voice of survivors which had been lost earlier.

And partition literature is also treated as a fictive testimony to a history of people. Media has depicted and also try to influence the relationships between the two countries and various genres of media are often viewed as an alternate channel of dialogue and communication for the population of these two countries. The partition literature also enables us to understand what had been the sequence of events, why does literature try to commemorate the horrific experiences through recording directly or indirectly the narratives of survivors.

What exactly is the purpose of creating oral history projects? So representation of partition in contemporary media, newspaper, film, history books, literature and social media now can be reviewed to see how the presentation of a particular event changes as the mind-set of the people changes and also as the media forms develop and influence the people who are now adapting to using them.

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Introduction: Media Perspectives on Partition

- Documentation of historical, political, cultural, sociological and literary perspectives of Partition and the post-colonial nation state
- Two major trends in movements in the Indian Subcontinent around 1947
 - Popular nationalist movement and mass mobilization against the colonial regime; eventually led to independence from the British
 - Counter-movement: widespread violence, bloodshed, cruelty, massacres and displacement of millions in the wake of Partition
- The media has been instrumental in shaping mindsets, opinions and sentiments of communities on both sides of the Radcliffe line since the bloody events of Partition
 - Impact on millions of common people



If we look at the contemporary media particularly, the print media which had governed this in around 1947, we find that there had been two major trends in reporting. There had been the reporting of popular nationalist movement and mass mobilisation against the atrocities of the colonial regime and it was covered till it ultimately led to independence of our country from the British.

And at the same time it also covered the widespread violence, bloodshed, cruelty, massacres and displacement of people in the wake of partition. The media is instrumental in shaping mind-sets, opinions and sentiments of communities on both sides of Radcliffe line, since the bloody events of partition and we find that this event had impacted millions of people.

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Academic studies of Partition

- Rise in studies since 1990s; reinterpretation and reconfiguration of the past
- Presentist interpretation of historical events -- Distance from the traumatic events of Partition affords a space for adequate meditation and reflection on the forces which contributed to widespread communal riots, looting, genocide, migration of populations in the wake of Partition, breakdown of communities, families and kinship networks, loss of property, assets
- Examples of some studies:
 - Political aspects that led to Partition (Moon 2005, Page 2005, Hasan 2005)
 - Gender perspectives on Partition (Butalia 1998, Bhasin and Menon 1998)
 - Partition and memory (Pandey 2003, Kaul 2001)
 - Representation of Partition in literature (Bhalla 2006, Saint 2010; 2012)



We find that there has been a rise in academic studies of partition since 1990s and we find that more and more critics are trying to reinterpret and reconfigure the past events in order to make peace with this particular memory and also in order to understand how it could actually happen in our history. Often we find that these studies present what may be interpreted as a more contemporary interpretation of historical events.

A distance from the traumatic events of partition has afforded a space for adequate mediation as well as a reflection on the forces which contributed to widespread communal riots, genocide, migration of populations, breakdown of communities, families, kinship networks, loss of property and assets etc. Some major studies which have come out take up a definitive perspective towards studies of partition.

The political aspects that led to partition have been studied by Moon, Page and Hasan and I am referring only to certain prominent and representative books which have come out. Gender perspectives on Partition have been presented by Butalia, Bhasin and as well as Menon. The concept of partition as it affects memory has been reviewed by Pandey and Kaul, representation of partition in literature is academically reviewed by Bhalla and Saint in their books.

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Political uncertainty and anxieties over the transfer of power (Covered in Print Media)

- Cabinet Mission announced in 1946. The British, The Congress and the Muslim League negotiate legal questions. Plan ultimately rejected
- Another plan: partition of Indian Subcontinent into two dominions was finally accepted in June; it was preferred over transfer of power to various provinces
- Mixed feelings about the Mountbatten Plan: Jubilation at Independence; but anxieties and uncertainty about Partition
- The political establishment failed to anticipate the repercussions: the migration of millions of population across borders



The political uncertainty and anxiety which preceded the transfer of power is covered in print media, we find that all the events which had ultimately led to the partition have been given adequate coverage although, with different perspectives in the contemporary print media. The Cabinet Mission was announced in 1946, the British, the Congress and the Muslim league negotiated legal questions related with it.

And this plan was ultimately rejected, another plan which came to be known as the Mountbatten plan later on decided on the partition of Indian subcontinent into two dominions and this was finally accepted in June 1946 and it was preferred over transfer of power to various provinces, there were mixed feelings when people came to know about the Mountbatten plan, there was jubilation at the idea of immediate independence and freedom.

But at the same time, there were many anxieties as well as uncertainties about the partition, the political establishments also failed to anticipate the repercussions of the migration of millions of population across borders.

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- The partition led to the division of the Punjab Province and Bengal
- Bitter communalization culminated into a whirlwind of genocidal massacres, arson, loot, rape of women
- The failure of the political establishment in containing mass hysteria and feelings of communal hatred and enmity turned more or less harmonious communities and neighbors to turn on each other
- Media reports represent jubilation of gaining independence as well as the tragedy of violence and its unchecked display of savagery



The partition has led to the division of the Punjab province and Bengal and there was bitter communalisation which culminated into genocidal massacres. The failure of the political establishment in containing mass hysteria and feelings of communal hatred and enmity turned more or less harmonious communities and neighbours to turn against each other. Media reports represent jubilation of gaining independence as well as the tragedy of violence and its unchecked display of savagery.

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Headlines about transfer of Power

- Newspaper founded in 1875
- June 4, 1947

In *The Statesman*, one of the oldest newspapers of India founded in 1875, we find that the headlines are about the transfer of power, this coverage also helps us to understand what had

gripped the psyche of the people at that time whereas the headlines in the statements seem to be neutral.

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Headlines about transfer of Power

- Indian, pro-Muslim League news paper



We find that there were other newspapers also who published the same information with a certain agenda and through a particular lens. In this particular paper, *The Star of India* we find that the headlines are about the division and welcoming it. It is also Indian paper but it had pro-Muslim league sentiments and supported the agenda of division of country.

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- Indian Newspaper
- June 4, 1947



In another Indian newspaper, The Times of India, we find that the facsimile of 4 June 1947 is related with the announcement of the division of country however, it is seen as a way out of the Indian deadlock.

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The reportage on independence itself on 15th and 16th August in newspapers is marked by jubilation, celebration and festivity and this idea of independence has overshadowed any other information in these newspapers.

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- In contrast to the jubilant mood in India, the mood in Pakistan was uncertain, somber and full of trepidation
- Process was rushed; whole new nation set up from scratch in two months
- Mountbatten on the difference between India and Pakistan in August 1947: "Administratively it was the difference between putting up a permanent building, a nissen hut or a tent. As far as Pakistan is concerned we are putting up a tent. We can do no more."
- *The Civil and Military Gazette*, published from Lahore, didn't report any news of independence or freedom on its pages on August 15 despite the formal transfer of power to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan on 14th August

<https://scroll.in/article/748690/how-indian-newspapers-reported-independence-and-partition-in-1947>



In contrast to the jubilant mood which is reflected in the Indian newspapers, we find that the mood of the print media in Pakistan was uncertain, sombre and full of trepidation. The process of

independence was rushed and the whole new nation was set up from scratch in two months. This idea of a tearing hurry is best represented in the words of Mountbatten, who in August 1947 commented on the difference between India and Pakistan. And I quote, “administratively it was the difference between putting up a permanent building a nissen hut or a tent. As far as Pakistan is concerned we are putting up a tent, we can do no more.”

The Civil and Military Gazette which was published from Lahore did not report any news of independence or freedom on its pages on 15th August despite the fact that the formal transfer of power had taken place on 14th of August itself in the Constituent assembly of Pakistan.

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The image shows the front page of 'The Civil & Military Gazette' dated August 14, 1947. The main headline reads 'KILLINGS CONTINUE IN LAHORE' with sub-headlines '22 Dead and 25 Injured on Tuesday' and '35 Fires blaze all day long'. Other headlines include 'Tara Singh Aka Sikhs to Desist From Violence', '70 Per Cent of Battalions in Right Dispositions', 'DIVISION OF INDIAN ARMY', 'TRIBUNAL FOR DIVISION OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES SET UP', and 'NO CELEBRATIONS IN WEST PUNJAB'. A small inset photo shows a woman, likely the speaker, in the bottom right corner of the slide.

- 14th August 1947
- Front page of Civil and Military Gazette

The 14 August 1947 front page of the *Civil and Military Gazette* showcases the violence which was still going on in Lahore at the time and the headlines cover only that there is no indication in these headlines of the front page about the transfer of power or the birth of a new nation.

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15 August 1947: Front Page
Page
(No report of Independence)

The 15 August 1947 front page also does not report the independence; it continues the reporting of the violence where it says that the whole city of Lahore has become a veritable sea of flames.
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- Reportage on Independence In Pro-Muslim League Newspapers

Reportage on independence in those newspapers which had definite pro-Muslim league leanings give a lot of emphasis to the creation of a new Pakistan along religious lines. Dawn says birth of Pakistan and event in history and the similar tone is dittoed in morning news also.
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Delay in Relay of Partition News

- Independence on 15th August
- But partition details were reported in media two days later
- Mountbatten had decided to keep the geographic details of partition of the Punjab and Bengal till after August 15, since, as he laid out himself in his report to London, "it had been obvious all along that the later we postponed publication [of the new border], the less would be the inevitable odium react upon the British" (Scroll)
- Ploy to put the responsibility for partition violence and massacres on newly formed India and Pakistan
- Delay over announcements only fuelled mass panic and hysteria



At the same time, we find there was a delay in relay of partition news. The newspapers were not able to provide this information to the people in a timely manner. Our country had gained independence on 15th of August but the details of the partition were reported in media only two days later. The public access to the editorials of the newspapers of these states is not easily available but still we find that it is a fact of history that Lord Mountbatten had decided to keep the geographical details of partition of the Punjab as well as of Bengal with him till after August 15.

Since, as he laid out himself in his report to London, "it had been obvious all along that the later we postponed publication of the new borders, the less would be the inevitable odium react upon the British." So his ploy was to save the British from criticism, it was a ploy to put the responsibility for ensuring wireless and massacres on newly formed governments of India and Pakistan.

So, delay over announcements only fuelled mass panic as well as hysteria amongst people because the uncertainties were averted.

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So, we find that it is only on 18th of August that the Times of India and the civil and military Gazette published from Lahore have been able to talk about the actual lines of divisions. So we find that most of this violence could have been averted had Lord Mountbatten being able to share the geographical boundaries of partition in a timely manner with the Indian people.

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News on Partition of Punjab and Bengal

- East and West legislative assemblies of both provinces given free vote over the partition decision
- Due to communal tensions, legislators voted per their religious affiliation
- These internal tensions are palpable in the newspaper reportage on the partition of provinces:
 - Tone of headlines differ according to the ideological underpinnings
 - For comparison: the *Statesman* (a British newspaper); the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* (a pro-Congress newspaper) and the *Star of India* (a pro-Muslim League newspaper)
 - *The Statesman* (a neutral party) uses a headline which refrains from any value judgment.

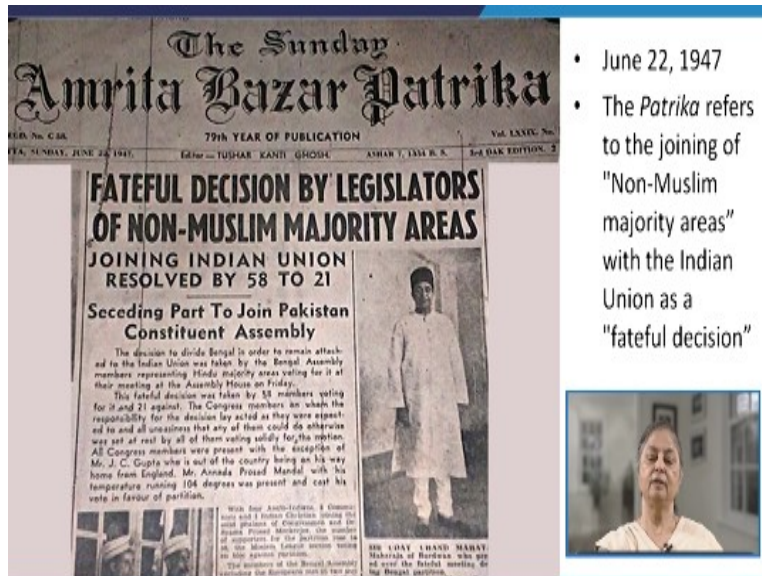


News on partition of Punjab and Bengal also differs as far as its coverage in contemporary media is concerned. East and West legislative assemblies of both provinces were given free vote over the precision of partition. However, due to communal tensions, legislators voted according to their religious affiliation and these internal tensions are also visible in the reporting of the

newspapers, the tone of headlines also differ according to the ideological underpinnings of these newspapers.

We can make a comparison between *The Statesmen*, the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*; the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* which was considered to be a pro-congress newspaper and *The Star of India* which was considered to be a pro-Muslim league newspaper represent the ideological tensions of contemporary days.

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The image shows a newspaper clipping from *The Sunday Amrita Bazar Patrika*, dated June 22, 1947. The main headline reads: "FATEFUL DECISION BY LEGISLATORS OF NON-MUSLIM MAJORITY AREAS JOINING INDIAN UNION RESOLVED BY 58 TO 21". Below this, a sub-headline states: "Seceding Part To Join Pakistan Constituent Assembly". The article text discusses the decision to divide Bengal and the role of the Bengal Assembly. A photograph of a man in a white kurta is visible on the right side of the clipping. A video inset in the bottom right corner shows a woman speaking.

- June 22, 1947
- The *Patrika* refers to the joining of "Non-Muslim majority areas" with the Indian Union as a "fateful decision"

On 22nd of June, we find that *Amrita Bazar Patrika* has referred to the joining of non-Muslim majority areas with the Indian union as a fateful decision.

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- The Star of India highlights that West Bengal had voted for Partition

Similarly, we find that on the same date, the *Star of India* highlights that West Bengal had voted for partition, we will look at the representation of partition in the contemporary print media. (Refer Slide Time: 19:32)

Literary Representations of Partition

- Traumatic and disruptive event—brought in an era of uncertainty, displacement and migration
 - Around a million were killed
 - Around 12-14 million people migrated across the border; all in a span of few months
 - Collective violence, rape and massacres
 - Genocidal killings and retributive genocide in Punjab Province (Brass; Hansen)
 - Inscription of slogans on women’s bodies—form of orchestrated and retributive violence against the ‘other’ community
 - Episodes of ethnic cleansing in Punjab region to decimate minority population and enable population transfer
 - Devastating effects on the pluralism and syncretism of ‘Ganga-Jamni’ Indo-Islamic cultural and civilizational practices

A review of how this event has been represented through literature, partition has been a traumatic and disruptive event. It brought in an era of uncertainty and forced migration. In a span of few months around a million were killed and somewhere between 12 to 14 million people had to migrate across the borders. There were scenes of collective violence, rape and massacres, genocidal killings and retributive genocide in Punjab as well as in Bengal were seen.

There were inscriptions of slogans on the bodies of women which was considered to be a form of orchestrated and retributive violence against the other community. There were episodes of ethnic cleansing in Punjab region to decimate minority population and enable population transfer. There were devastating effects on the pluralism and syncretism of Ganga Jamni Indo Islamic culture and civilisation forms and practices during the days of partition.

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- “The long Partition” by Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali Zamindar
 - Not just a lone event in 1947
 - The legacy continues
 - A part of everyday life for millions—the survivors, families who were torn apart, or relatives that migrated across the border
- Neglected aspects of Partition
 - Experiences and narratives of abducted women
 - Divided Muslim and Hindu families
 - Addressing these issues in the recent past has reconfigured the historical archive

It is pertinent to refer to work by Vazira Zamindar, *The Long Partition* in which it has been claimed that partition was not a lone event which occurred in 1947. The legacy of partition has continued it had become a part of everyday life for millions of people, there were people who had survived. There were families who were torn apart, relatives who had to migrate across the borders never perhaps to meet each other.

At the same time, we find that there were several aspects related with the partition which remained underrepresented or deliberately neglected. There were experiences and narratives of women who had been abducted and raped, there were families both Hindu and Muslim which were divided and addressing these issues in the recent past has reconfigured the historical archive related with partition.

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- Revisiting Literature of the Partition has posed a challenge for the assumptions about the historical experience of 1947:
 - Examination of the moral and psychic motivations/drives that buttressed the madness of collective massacres
 - Modes of resistance to ideological frameworks which fueled such communal violence and hatred
 - Literature as a site for understanding the traumatic effects of the extreme forms of violence and cruelty
 - Enduring impact of Partition on collective psyche, collective unconscious and the social imaginary

Revisiting literature of the partition has posed a challenge for the assumptions about the historical experiences of 1947. We find that there is a re-examination of the moral and psychic motivations and drives that had buttressed and fermented the madness of collective massacres. What had been the modes of resistance to ideological frameworks which fueled such communal violence and hatred against each other? So, can literature is a site, try to understand the traumatic effects of the extreme forms of violence and cruelty which had been perpetrated during the partition days?

So, literature can also be understood as a record of the enduring impact of partition on collective psyche, collective unconscious and the social imaginary.

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- The role of novels and short stories on Partition to offer a testimony to the horrors of the violence, disruption and dislocation in the wake of Partition
- How Literature becomes the domain for the reconfiguration of identity in the aftermath of cataclysmic political events
- Literary narratives on Partition attempt to offer an insight on the social and cultural forces which contributed to the blood history
- Negotiation of public and personal memories of Partition in the light of the political history of Partition
- The mainstream historical documents versus the subjective and testimonial literary narratives focusing on the human dimension of loss, suffering and betrayal

The role of novels and short stories on partition offers initially a testimony to the horrors of the violence in the wake of partition. So literature ultimately becomes the domain for the reconfiguration of identity in the aftermath of cataclysmic political events. Literary narratives offer as an insight on the socio-cultural forces which had been responsible for generating this violence. A negotiation of public and personal memories in the light of political history of partition also informs the literary works written during these days.

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Some Pertinent Questions

- Need to resist identitarian and aestheticizing tendencies in fictional accounts of Partition in Literature
- Construction of testimonial voices in autobiographies, memoirs, semi-autobiographical accounts
- Witness accounts
- Interaction between personal and public memory
- How public and personal memory gets encoded in fictional accounts, survivor recollections and historical accounts (Tarun Saint)
- Creation of a alternative tradition of evaluating effects of political and historical events

Still we find that there are certain pertinent questions which remained with us. There is a need to resist identitarian and aestheticizing tendencies in fictional accounts of partition in literature, at the same time there is a requirement to construct testimonial voices with the medium of

autobiographies, memoirs, as well as semiautobiographical accounts. People have started to work in this direction and they are collecting the witness accounts also as well as interactive mode between personal and public memory has also been started after coming of the social media.

So, how public and personal memory gets and quoted in fictional accounts, survivor recollections and historical accounts is yet to be seen because there would be a creation of an alternate tradition of evaluating effects of political and historical aspects of partition.

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- Autobiographies and fictional texts about the partition as 'psychotestimonies' (Suresh Kamra 2002)
- Partition Historiography and literary criticism
- The possibility of aesthetic representations of Partition in the light the trauma of 'the long partition'
 - Can literature offer a space for the articulation of these varied accounts?
 - Can it offer new ways of reinterpreting history?
 - The relationship between literature and history
 - Literature's influence on the successive generations' approach to Partition history and its reality
 - Does literature actively construct the meanings of historical and political events in the collective consciousness?



The autobiographies which have been written by the survivors of partition as well as fictional text which have come out about it can be considered as 'psycho testimonials' about it. There is a possibility of aesthetic representation of partition in the light of the trauma of the long partition because the legacy is somehow is still continuing, so in this context literature able to offer a space for the articulation of these varied accounts.

Can it also offer new ways of re-interpreting history and then it also forces us to review the relationship between literature and history? What has been the influence of literature on the successive generations approach to partition history and its reality? And, does literature actively construct the meanings of historical and political events in the collective consciousness? So we find that at deeper study of partition literature should enable us to understand the significance of these questions.

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- Partition unleashed collective violence of an unprecedented intensity and magnitude
 - How to represent the utter breakdown of civilizational values
 - What to articulate amidst madness?
 - Literature's complex relationship with nationalist agendas in India and Pakistan
 - Writing about the partition uses language to depict both the effects of physical as well as psychological violence and disruption with the breakdown of cultural forms of communication between communities
 - The impossibility of registering and comprehending the experience of partition in its totality



And the extent of the impact of literature particularly in this context, partition has unleashed collective violence of an unprecedented intensity and magnitude.

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Experiences of Partition in The East

- Not adequately dealt with in Historiography and Literature
- Recent attempts to address the lacunae in partition studies
- Questions of historical memory and literary representations of the event
- More scholarly, literary and critical attention on the context of collective violence and genocidal killing in North and North-West India



The experiences of partition in the East Bengal as well as in Punjab have been reported differently. We can say that the experiences of partition in Bengal have not been adequately dealt with in historiography as well as in literature. There have been certain recent attempts to address this lacunae in partition studies because most often it is felt that the partition studies have been rather lopsided.

So, the questions of historical memory and literary representation of the event in Bengal are being reviewed and more scholarly literary and critical attention is being paid on the context of collective violence and genocidal killing in north and north-west India.

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- Anthology of stories about the partition experience in the East
 - *Mapmaking: Partition Stories from Two Bengals* (ed. Debjani Sengupta 2003)
 - *The Escape and Other Stories of 1947* (ed. Niaz Zaman 2000)
- Analysis of novels about the Partition in the East
 - *A Divided Legacy: The Partition in Selected Novels of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh* (Niaz Zaman 2000)
- Historical debate on the experiences of West Bengal's Muslim minorities
 - Joya Chatterjee's *The Spoils of Partition: Bengal and India, 1947-67* (2007)



Certain anthologies of the stories about the partition experience in the East which have come out are by Dedjani Sengupta and Niaz Zaman and analysis of novels about the partition in East has also been published by Niaz Zaman in 2000, the historical debate on experiences of West Bengal's Muslim minorities has also been taken up by Joya Chatterjee's book, the spoils of partition Bengal in India 1947 to 67 published in 2007.

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'Fictive Testimony'

Tarun Saint's *Witnessing Partition: Memory, History, Fiction* (2010)

- A paradoxical mode of truth-telling (Saint). Ability to resonate far beyond the immediate context of trauma and horrors of partition
- The slippery terrain of memory—creative recreation and imagination of real/actual events or experiences
- literary representation as 'fictive testimony'—site of individual and collective memory
- 'Fictive' testimonies articulate the tragic plight of refugees, and at times also chart the slippery moral terrain (the 'grey zone') traversed by victims turned perpetrators (Saint 3)



It is also significant at this point to refer to the work by Tarun Saint *Witnessing Partition: Memory, History, Fiction* published in 2010, Tarun Saint has used the term fictive testimony to refer to the literary representation of partition as a site of individual and collective memory. He suggest that the terrain of memory is slippery because one can creatively recreate and imagine the real or actual events or experiences.

Literature according to him therefore has the ability to resonate far beyond the immediate context of trauma and horrors of partition, fictive testimonies articulate the tragic plight of refugees and at times also chart the slippery moral terrain, the grey zone which is traversed by those victims who also turned into perpetrators of crime.

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- Ambivalent states in partition literature
- 'Existence of the grey zone ...makes the turn to memory a fraught move; hence the need for a critical testing of it'
- Counter narratives; assessment and voicing of alternative and neglected dimensions of partition history
- Confrontation with grotesque element of partition and its legacies



The partition literature also has certain ambivalence. There is an existence of the grey zone which makes the turn to memory a fraught move and hence there is a need for critically testing it, there are narratives and counter narratives, assessment and voicing of alternative and neglected dimensions of partition, history and therefore one has to confront with the grotesque element of partition and its legacies when one tries to look at how different media have represented it over a passage of time.

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Scholarly Studies on Partition Literature

- Body of literature and writing based on the import of the Partition, the events leading upto it, and its subsequent implications and repercussions
- Degree of coherence regarding the corpus of partition literature after several literary studies and criticisms in the 1990s
 - One of the earliest critical studies: Ramesh Mathur and M. Kulasrestha, eds. *Writings on India's Partition* (1976)
 - Survey of literature by a historian: Ian Talbot, "Literature and the Human Drama of the 1947 Partition" (1998)
 - Ed. Alok Bhalla's *Stories about the Partition of India*, vol. 1 (1994)
 - Mushirul Hasan ed. *India Partitioned*, 2 vols, (1995)
 - Ed. M. U. Memon's *An Epic Unwritten: The Penguin Book of Partition Stories from Urdu* (1998)



The scholarly studies on partition literature have also come out, the body of literature and writing based on the import of the partition, the events leading up to it and its subsequent implications and repercussions have been taken up by various Indian and Pakistani writers. The degree of coherence regarding the corpus of partition literature after several literary studies and criticism has grown in the 1990s and some of these books are listed over here.

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- Mazhar Hussain eds. *Partition of India: Literary Responses* (1998)
- S. P. Kumar, *Narrating Partition: Texts, Interpretations, Ideas* (2004)
- Jill Didur, *Unsettling Partition: Literature, Gender, Memory* (2006)
- Anjali Gera Roy and Nandi Bhatia eds. *Partitioned Lives: Narratives of Home, Displacement and Resettlement* (2008)
- *Writing Partition: Aesthetics and Ideology in Hindi and Urdu Literature* (2009)
- Ritu Menon eds. *No Woman's Land: Women from Pakistan, India and Bangladesh Write on the Partition of India* (2004)

So, we find that partition has drawn the attention of different media towards it. Whereas in the print representation, there is a showcasing of reality as it was emerging on a day to day basis. In literature we find that different types of reflections have been taken up depending on the

immediacy of the incident vis-a-via the person who was trying to represent it in literature, certain aspects of it we will discuss in our next module, thank you.