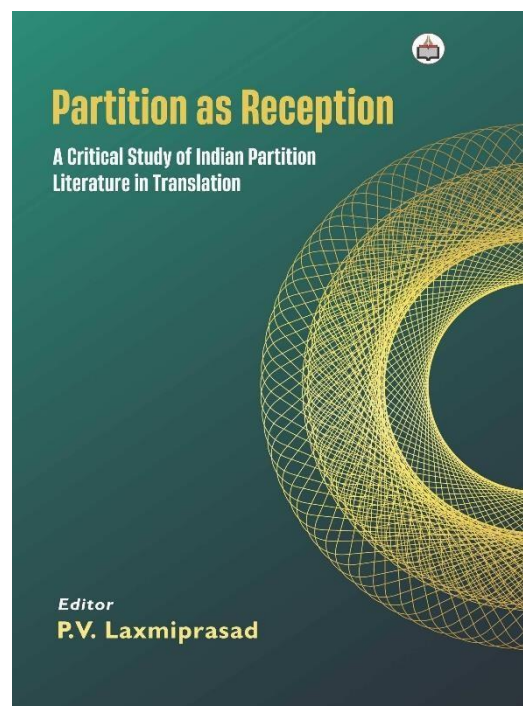


***Partition as Reception: A Critical Study of Indian Partition Literature in Translation*, Ed: P. V. Laxmiprasad, Authors Press, New Delhi, 2023, ISBN: 978-93-5529-493-7 Pp 122.**

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The book under review is entitled *Partition as Reception: A Critical Study of Indian Partition Literature in Translation* was edited by P. V. Laxmiprasad and published by Authors Press, New Delhi in 2023. Indeed, the title is usual arresting and tempting to find out from many dimensions. Indian Partition into India and Pakistan in 1947 was one of human tragedy in the country. It was divided on religious angles. The British divided them into two religious nations. Against this background, this critical volume has gained importance and in particular, Laxmiprasad selected translations in Partition literature for this book. The focus is on



translated texts on Partition. There are eight papers which are thoroughly edited. They are 1) A Village Divided – An Exemplification of Reza’s Faith in the Regeneration of Culture, Village and Home – Lily Arul Sharmila 2) Bhisham Sahni’s Tamas : Testimony to the Gritty Political Espionage – Sheeba S Nair 3) Ikramullah’s Regret: A Study of Two Novellas as Partition Induced Lessons in Equality Based on the Bond of Humanity – D. Gnanasekaran 4) Intizar Hussain’s Basti : A Memoir of Partition : Intermingled Subjective Memory with Collective Memory – Ayodhya Kalyan Jadhav 5) Revisiting and Remembering the Outre’ Tale of Woe in Muhammad Umar Memon’s An Unwritten Epic – Mary Josephine Jerina 6) Trauma of Aliya’s in the Novel The Women’s Courtyard by Khadija Mastur – R. Manimozhi and S. Karthik Kumar 7) Bhisham Sahni’s Tamas : A Symbol of Trauma, and Anguish of Partition -

Palakurthy Dinakar 8) Sadat Hasan Manto's "Toba Tek Singh": Diverse concerns of Partition Literature as Reflected in Translation --Tamali Neogi.

As a reviewer, I feel immensely excited to read the papers since my research area is Indian partition.

Lily Arul Sharmila observes that the novel *A Village Divided* is a fabulous piece of literary composition an autobiographical fiction a recordation of the life times of Reza's village in U P where there was a harmonious co-existence between Muslim and Hindus. Gillian Wright's translation was published in 1994. The social and political comments are entwined with specific regularity. Sheeba S Nair in her paper writes that the uniqueness of this Partition fiction is that it does not have a usual story line that narrates the story of a protagonist. Tamas has in fact no protagonist. If one has to find a central character around whom the story is spun, then it must be the riots. As a matter of fact, it is the series of riot that continue to take place in India after the Independence of which Sahni himself is a living witness kindled him to write this book. Sheeba concludes that Tamas lightens the cut how hollow is the very principle of secularism that India proclaims proudly about or upholds before the world. Sahni makes it clear that the common men seek peace and harmony but politicians and power mongering leaders and their disciples brew poison in the name of religion for their own personal gain. As long as the political scenario of India proceeds on the same path and as long as people like Murad Ali, the deadly instruments of the cunning leaders continue to exist, innocents like Nathu will unknowing set to fire the harmony of the great nation and what remains would be utter darkness (Tamas). The novelist ending the novel with politicians and Murad Ali setting out a peace campaign is very suggestive of the fact that peace will not prevail as they are the ones who pinch the baby while pretending to rock the cradle. However, it is a solace to find people like Rajo, Mir Dad, Sohan Singh light the lamp of tolerance and concern which try to extinguish the fire of hatred and illuminate the hearts with love which alone can dispel the darkness that has engulfed the great land. The love that blossomed between the Brahmin Praksho and the Muslim Allah Rakha has been offered as the only solution to extinguish the fire of communal hatred. But these are just streaks of light rays not ample enough to light and sooth the darkness engulfing the anxious hearts of neither the readers nor the author.

Gnansekaran analyzes two novellas in his paper on translation in Partition literature. This novella is a quietly persuasive account of how groups of people are incited to violence, and how the consciousness of power can incite a majority to behave with a minority. Maybe it does

not have the evocative power of 'Regret'. But 'Out of Sight' reveals a writer of courage and beauty. One hopes more of Ikramullah will come our way in English before too long. Both the novellas strive to give mankind lessons in equality based on the bond of humanity by eliminating all man-made divisions. Ayodhya kалан Jadav concludes that Partition showed us how common people suffer and become homeless. After migration Zakir does not forget the rich culture and tradition of India. An enormous treasure of Hussain's writing emerged from Indian soil. The references of Moharram, Christmas show the culture where people of Muslim community celebrate their festivals with pomp and vigour. Moharram is an inseparable part of Muslims, as a cult, its origin can be found in primitive society. Similarly, other festivals of Hindus, Sikhs and Christians show us a vehicle of happiness, a human belief, worship, and Indian values. This study would help the people to recollect the past memories and sustain our cultural heritage.

Mary Josephine Jerina through her paper analyses that the horror of partition of India and Pakistan is an historical event which has preoccupied the subcontinent's psyche. Though it seems to be a geopolitical factor, it has actually been a communal polarization, economic and political crises both in India and Pakistan. Many ideological works have been written based on Partition which has certainly enabled the contemporary readers to revisit and remember the knowledge of Partition. An Epic Unwritten, a collection of short stories drawn exclusively from Urdu represented by Indian and Pakistani writers belongs to the pre-partition and post-partition period. These stories narrate the personal, domestic experience and political crises of partition. Partition is the cause of the divide and rule policy of the British. As a Postcolonial nation both Pakistan and India have had many historical events and partition is the most memorable of all. Postcoloniality refers to the actual living condition of the third world countries after its independence from the imperial powers.

She concludes that the writings of Partition manifest the horrendous situation and evoke well the senses of a restless country due to communal riots and displacement. No doubt Man, in his reckless need for the enlargement of the boundaries of his empire have thrown the world into chaotic and irreversible disorder. Human species cling onto survival at a terrible cost of conflict. Alarminglly the conflicts in the world have become paranoid nightmares and man has to cope with the entire situation for survival. These writers through the magic of words confront the harsh reality with strength. As Matthew Arnold states:

And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and fight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night ("Dover Beach" 105)

The land which was once joyous and beautiful has transformed into a confused land fighting and diminishing the standard of life. The world has become a battlefield of people fighting in absolute darkness. Man is one among the many species of the world, if unpreserved the whole human race will become extinct. The sojourn of humanity is wretchedly hostile and impoverished and 'humanism' has shrivelled to the status of a noxious prejudice.

Manimozhi and Karthik Kumar highlights that trauma occurs as a result of a damaged, unstable psyche. The goal of trauma theory is to analyse the partition books from a traumatic standpoint. Trauma is derived from a Greek term that means "wound." Extremely stressful situations that exceed a person's capacity for coping and shatter a person's sense of self by rendering the victim helpless and vulnerable can result in psychological or emotional trauma. It leaves a mental wound that is challenging to recover from.

Khadija Mastur is an Urdu author who examines the process of dividing borders and graphically sheds light on the violent moments of the partition. Numerous fictional works, primarily in Hindi, Urdu, Punjab, and Bengali, as well as later in English, were inspired by the events of Partition. The Women's Courtyard by Khadija Mastur, which is sometimes referred to be a Partition Novel, gains strength as a feminist book. In a beautiful and subtle translation, Daisy Rockwell's English translation of this book captures the poignancy and force of Khadija Mastur's distinctive voice. Mastur's straightforward English style is skilfully translated by Daisy Rockwell, who also provides pace, simplicity, and depth. However, there are some areas of contention that may not only be due to translation but also to editorial decisions made by the publishing house. For example, in order to maintain the emphasis of the original title Aangan, Courtyard could have been a better translation. On the whole, it seems a strange choice to say that the courtyard belongs to women. One The story revolves around a Muslim girl named Aliya and her family as they navigate the height of the Indian Independence War. In this case, the family is the centre. The story gradually introduces the reader to characters like the oncepowerful grandmother, the eloped aunt, the ignorant uncle, the devoted servant woman, and so forth, until we realize that this is the system that controls the lives of the women in the courtyard as the Congress and the Muslim League argue inside the remote distance. The reader,

who at first craves information about the street-level civil war, gradually comes to realize that Aliya, Aunty, and the courtyard's denizens are stuck in a futile cycle of survival issues.

They conclude that through the afflicted women characters in this work, Khadija Mastur has depicted the social injustice brought on by the violence during the days of the Indian partition in the society. In addition to taking many lives as a result of the partition, the violence that ensued also wounded and negatively affected the people, killing their emotions. She skillfully captures the agonizing experience of the victim Aliya, who poignantly illustrates the injustice of the partition violence against the victims who were women. After encountering a tragic occurrence that leaves her feeling terrified, frightened, and helpless, Aliya is affected by traumatic stress. Long-term effects include intrusive thoughts, nightmares, and flashbacks to traumatic previous occurrences.

Palalkurthy Dinakar writes that Partition of a country is a very traumatic experience for the people of the land. They feel that they were uprooted and dislocated not only physically but psychologically. Partition divides the people as two opposite groups vertically. The Partition in India after independence drew a dividing line between Hindus and Muslims. They were like brothers and sisters but because of partition they have suddenly changed their mindset in an overnight and they started treating others as enemies. They were even ready to kill, rape and humiliate the members of the other group whenever the situation arises. Bhisham Sahni's *Tamas* is a passionate account of partition of India which is based on the riots of 1947-48. The novel tries to portray the atrocities of Hindus, Muslim and Sikhs on each other. It was written in Hindi and translated into English by three translators including the novelist. The novel bagged Central Sahitya Akademi Award in 1975.

Bhisham Sahni was one of the most prolific writers of Hindi literature. The novel tried to capture the actual events that took place in Northwest Province of India for which Sahni was the silent spectator. He expressed his anguish of the events to one of his interviews to Nomika Singh of the Tribune on 16th January 2000 as "I was a mute spectator to the mayhem of those times. Moreover, I was assigned the job of reporting the events to a local newspaper. Thus, I was privy to the plight of distraught refugees." The word *Tamas* indicates darkness and ignorance involved in the communal violence erupted during partition of India. Sahni used the title as irony of Indian people's mental state. He wanted to prove that all the people were in darkness during and after partition of India. There was no light, and nobody knew where should go or where were they going, for why were killing one another and why were they looting poor.

Partition promoted horrific bloodshed and the people were provoked by hooliganism and vandalism by miscreant people. Dinakar concludes that the concept of Partition is solely blood thirsty and creates the grotesque atmosphere in and around the area. Partition is not just creating a physical space between the groups by geographical separation, but it has created a psychological space and moreover the hatred and enmity among the neighbours also. 'The Government should take effective steps to bring the situation under control . . . Or...or, vultures will fly over the city.' This sentence had been worrying at his mind all morning." (48) Finally, Sahni concluded the novel that there were some rehabilitation programmes have been taken for the victims of communal riots.

Tamali Neogi is yet another critic who studied Sadat Hasan Manto's "Toba Tek Singh". The story "Toba Tek Singh" is set in the background of Partition of 1947. In the aftermath of Partition, millions were to uproot and relocate their lives. Manto brings out poignantly the confusion relating what actually was Indian territory and what was the territory of Pakistan. The sanity and rationality of the leaders of both the nations who held talks on population exchange programme 1950, are questioned by Manto since no border can separate one from emotional connections with one's motherland. The structural irony underscores the fact that perhaps the inhabitants of the asylum are saner than the political leaders. Manto in his story shows that in one such talk between the leaders it is decided that Muslim patients in India would stay or move to Pakistan whereas the Hindu and Sikh lunatics would be handed over to India. The story deals with the inmates of the "lunatic asylum at Lahore"; Bishan Singh and the fellow inhabitants of the asylum though suffer from mental illness are found to be saner than the inhabitants of the outer world. "The asylum is the representative symbol of the whole continent and madness a metaphor for trauma that people and refugees went through. The artificiality of border lines is exposed in the story as the lunatics seem to be reluctant to migrate from their native land on grounds of birth or religion. The point that is hammered in is, madness of Partition is more impairing than the madness of the patients. The story reveals how the innocent people become victims of political decisions and suffer loss of identities, unable to understand which language to speak in and which country to live in. The loss of belongingness is most poignantly portrayed in these words of Bishan Singh: "I don't want to live in India or Pakistan. I'm going to make my home right here on this tree"" (<https://www.criticalbuzz.co.in>). This is black comedy. The chaos that has come in the world of reason is adeptly portrayed by Manto through the seemingly nonsensical activities and utterances of the lunatics. Perhaps

sensible words cannot meaningfully convey the trauma, the madness of the period. “Uper the gur gur the annexe the bay dhyana the mung the dal of the Pakistan and India dur Fiftey moun” (Manto, 2011); Manto’s point seems to be that when the world seems to go mad, nothing but equivalent madness in the space of language and grammar can be fitting expressions of it. Tamali Neogi observes that the paper thus serves two purposes. First, it brings our attention to the lapses a translation may have due to which the original may suffer from some alterations. Next, the tragedy of Partition and related madness is attempted to be brought out in context of Manto's short narrative which within its small periphery aptly captures almost all the crucial issues concerning Partition and its victims.

Gitanjali Shree, the winner of Booker Prize for her novel *The Tomb of Sand* remarked that the past, present, and the future were connected, and “it is important for us to realize its interconnectedness”. “Memory is about remembering. Perhaps, writing is about not forgetting, about remembering things that had happened and how they are relevant even today. We must remember in order to shape our future,” she said. The wounds of Partition have not healed though we celebrated 75 years of independence.

Thus, Laxmiprasad has successfully worked on translations in Partition literature and edited it quite elegantly. All the eight research papers are of high quality and carry critical stuff. This critical volume appears just at a time when India was celebrating “Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav”.