

Chapter 4

Representing Migration and Territoriality: From Apocalypse to Cosmopolitics

Spectacular and violent territorial reorganisations marked the moment of India's freedom and the birth of Pakistan. Overnight, millions of people had to face the reality that they practically belonged to one of the two newborn nations – India or Pakistan, depending on their professed faith – and were required to migrate to still unclear national territories to save their lives. Writing on Partition is remarkable for its evocation of a deep, almost spiritual longing for a lost homeland and its soil.

Desh and *watan* are frequently used words that capture this yearning for one's locality that is equalled by nothing but an infant's wordless cries for its parents. Deportation or punitive exiling has long been the means of inflicting great trauma which literature aims to express and overcome: memory and literature are pointers to the fact that one literally carries within one's favourite place. Moments of depicting/remembering the birthplace one has left behind can thus be moments of a perfect *being-in-the-world*, attainment of the fullness not present in reality.

We can approach the issue with an insightful comment by the French philosopher Simone Weil: “To be rooted is perhaps the most important and least recognized need of the human soul” (41). The Bengali word *chinnamul* (literally “torn-rooted”) has its cognates in other Indian languages – the title of a Guajarati novel is *Mul Suta Ukhde*, for an example. The metaphor indicates a powerful cultural imagination of the bond between a community and the place it has inhabited for generations. Authorial positions on territoriality from the nineteen forties until the late seventies could be plotted within the available discursive frameworks of pre-modern *gemeinschaft* of peasant communities and the *gesellschaft* of national citizens. Most of the novelists sympathise with the organic community of peasants overwhelmed by the loss of their little patch of village land, which contained the dust of their ancestors and sprouted the unique life of their culture. I recognise this authorial position as critical of a Nehruvian nationalist attitude (which I elaborate later in this chapter), and inimical to versions of “communalism” practised by the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha and Akali Dal. Authors, who had witnessed the “shameful flight” of the imperial power after the Japanese invasion, felt compelled to question the self-professed territorial neutrality and guardianship of the imperial power. Such a discursive configuration, however, does not rule out the celebration of the creation of the new national territory of Pakistan. It is worthwhile to remember, however, that Muslim opinion on Jinnah’s thesis of a separate nationhood of Muslims was not uniform: men such as Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Husain Ahmad Madani and Muslim institutions such as

Jamiatul Ulema-i-Hind and All India Majlis-e-Ahrar opposed the two-nation theory. They clearly expressed their belief that nationhood must be rooted in the soil of the territory one inhabits, and not on religious identity or ethnicity (Qaiser 214-278).

Post-globalisation migrations that began in the nineties led to a rethinking of the question of *rootedness* – that is, territoriality – in relation to community and identity. Appadurai poses the problem in the following terms:

As groups migrate, regroup in new locations, reconstruct their histories, and reconfigure their ethnic “projects,” the *ethno* in ethnography takes on a slippery, nonlocalized quality, to which the descriptive practices of anthropology will have to respond. The landscapes of group identity—the ethnoscapes—around the world are no longer familiar anthropological objects, insofar as groups are no longer tightly territorialized, spatially bounded, historically self-conscious, or culturally homogeneous.... The task of ethnography now becomes the unraveling of a conundrum: what is the nature of locality, as a lived experience, in a globalized, de territorialized world?

(Appadurai 1991: 191, 196)

Novelists writing after the long nineties see Partition from a distance. In a changed world, globalization has brought about voluntary cosmopolitanism and complicated the issue of territoriality. “Something has happened to cosmopolitanism”, Bruce Robbins remarks in the opening of his introduction to

Cosmopolitics (1998: 1), as its connotations has shifted from a Kantian vision of a large-hearted “fundamental devotion to the interests of the humanity as a whole” (*ibid.*) claiming to be free from narrower claims of the nation or ethnic community. Commentators at the turn of the millennium insist that the term has to be stretched to include the new “transnational experiences that are particular rather than universal and that are unprivileged” (*ibid.*). Rabinow’s key article defines cosmopolitanism as “an ethos of macro-interdependencies, with an acute consciousness (often forced upon people) of the inescapabilities and particularities of places, characters, historical trajectories, and fates” (258). Appadurai cites Rabinow to remind the ethnographer of the “urgent need to focus on the cultural dynamics of what is now called deterritorialization” without privileging the authority of the Western experience or the models derived thereof (49).

This chapter proposes to explore how the post-nineties fictional representation rests on a changed understanding of migrations and territoriality. Old ideas of territorially fixed communities with localised cultures (which were the object of the colonial anthropological gaze) are challenged by a deterritorialized cosmopolitanism. Instead, the socio-political and cultural *location* of increasingly mobile communities in an interconnected world gets authorial attention. As Sangeeta Ray succinctly states, Cosmopolitics is

... a many headed hydra whose one demand is that it straddle both sides of familiar binary oppositions beginning with the most

obvious one of parochialism versus universalism. Rather than dismissing cosmopolitanism as a way of being that eschews the local, cosmopolitanism and cosmopolitics wants to bring into play particularities to balance the pull of the general in fact it is precisely the push and pull of the two sides of the binary opposition that flavors the new and improved cosmopolitanisms of today. (173)

Diaspora communities in our time are not always *victim* diaspora: educated, upper-class Indians have often preferred the orderly lifestyle of the West and are only very happy to leave behind their unpromising future at home to settle abroad (Lessinger 171). Though people have always migrated, the perception of space and territoriality has changed after globalization. As Appadurai (1988, 1990), Said (1979, 1986), Bhabha (1994), Clifford (1988), and others have pointed out, globalization is a cultural as well as an economic process: media and communication technology have advanced to such a level that places can be digitally replicated or fused. At the turn of the millennium, Indian-language TV channels have a global audience, video conversation has become user-friendly, and Indian merchandise is made readily available to consumers in the West. These cultural realities have complicated the issue of *nativeness*: whether the connection between place and identity is intrinsic to one's psyche, as conceived earlier, or capable of adapting, as the post-globalization relocations show, is open to debate. The focus on boundaries and physical migration has been transcended by a broader concern with the cultural displacement of people.

Diaspora and *hybridity* are two keywords of our times, which point at the productive merging of cultures and identities, leading to the creation of new forms of the self.

Before the long nineties, fictional representation of migration mostly responds to the sedentary metaphysics of the post-imperial nation. The novels usually offer an apocalyptic vision of Partition. The cohesiveness of community and territory is expressed through arboreal imagery – the anchoring of roots in the soil expresses the connected nature of the community and the territory it inhabits. The long nineties replaced these essentialist narratives by an examination of migration/ethnic cleansing in the national or postnational order of things. The post-globalization narratives of Partition deconstruct the power/knowledge strategies of a colonial narrative of modernity, which not only roots natives to their soil but also imprisons. This chapter intends to explore how the shift in community-thinking lead to alternative conceptualizations of migration through a privileging of the new categories of hybridity and transnationality.

Apocalypse: The Early Representation of Community and Location

For the common people, Partition came with the bewilderment that whole villages and towns had to be evacuated overnight, after the creation of two new independent states. “*Raje, Maharaje badalte rehete hain, par praja kab badli hain?*”: “Rulers change, but when has the populace changed?” (Butalia 2000: 71) was the popular response. Novelists until the seventies are positioned within a conceptual universe framed by the *gemeinschaft*’s claim to community territory, and the post-

imperial ideology of nationalism, which made its claim on a national territory demarcated by a *hard-defined* border. They approach the crisis of forced migration by responding to the imperial and nationalist conceptualizations of space that were available to them, mostly privileging the ethical position of sedentary organic communities supposedly *rooted* to the soil.

By the mid-nineteenth century, the category of empire came to attain finality by resting on the liberal-universal ideals. As Uday Singh Mehta (1999) shows, liberal and progressive thinkers and reformers such as Jeremy Bentham, James Mill, John Stuart Mill, Lord Macaulay and Adam Smith endorse the empire as a legitimate form of political and commercial governance. The empire's civilizing mission was based on the liberal ideals of order, justice, peace and progress. As the Sun never set on the empire, it chose to rule people of different colours, creeds and locations in a similar fashion. Location was never a serious consideration for the colonial power, which sought to picture itself as a benevolent guardian of a large number of cultures. The economic ethos of empire rests on a denial of territoriality summed up by the following excerpt from Locke's *Two Treatises of Government*:

He that in obedience to this command of God, subdued, tilled and sowed any part of the Earth thereby annexed to him something that was his property, which another has no title to, nor could without injury take from him ... God gives the world to men in common....

He gave it to the use of industrious and rational (and labour was his

title to it) not to the fancy and covetousness of the quarrelsome and contentious. (21-22)

The absence of territoriality means no one is a foreigner. This narrative facilitates the exercise of imperial guardianship. Mill's *Considerations on Representative Government* declares that the "true principle of government" can albeit operate in colonies separated by a distance and inhabited by different races:

... in the case of India, a politically active people like the English, amidst habitual acquiescence, are every now and then interfering, and almost always in the wrong place. The real causes, which determine the prosperity or wretchedness, the improvement or deterioration, of the Hindoos are too far off to be within their ken. They have not the knowledge necessary for suspecting the existence of those causes, much less for judging of their operation. The most essential interests of the country may be well administered without obtaining any of their approbation, or mismanaged to almost any excess without attracting their notice. (402)

Edmund Burke, a leading modern conservative, was a lone speaker against empire – in India, Ireland or elsewhere. In a famous passage in his "Fox's India Bill Speech" of 1783, he compares the empire in India as flying birds of prey sweeping down on the rice bowl of the Bengal peasant. The Arabs, the Tartars and the Persians differ from

the English conquerors in that Asiatic intruders made India their home, and the Europeans did not:

England has built no bridges, made no high-roads, cut no navigations, dug out no reservoirs. Every other conqueror of every other description has left some monument, either of state or beneficence, behind him. Were we to be driven out of India this day, nothing would remain to tell her that it had been possessed, during the inglorious period of our dominion, by anything better than the orang-outang [sic] or the tiger. (453)

Despite a rather predictable conformity to the narrative of the white man's burden, Burke's position is very close to nationalism – the dialectical opposite of imperialism. Against the non-locational self-conception of imperialism, nationalism has always been keen to yoke space with culture, demarcate and guard its *legitimate* territory, keeping out the foreigner. Further, it depends on the citizen's emotional attachment to the territory. Nehru's definition of India in his *Discovery of India*, for example, relies on great natural geographic boundaries such as the Himalayas in the north and the Indus valley in the west. Importantly, he remembers, "My reaction to India thus was often an emotional one, conditioned and limited in many ways. It took the form of nationalism" (52). He added that nationalism in India was a healthy and natural growth, because it was a country with an acute sense of individuality and heritage, staggering under colonial control.

Much of the literature on nations and nationalism (Gellner 1983, Giddens 1987, Hobsbawm 1990) shares an implicit assumption that the world is composed of sovereign, spatially partitioned units. Ernst Gellner conceptualizes nations as distinct ethnological blocks clearly separated on the map. The nationalist cartography is distinct from a pre-national order of things, he reminds us:

Consider the history of the national principle; or consider two ethnographic maps, one drawn up before the age of nationalism, and the other after the principle of nationalism has done much of its work. The first map resembles a painting by Kokoschka. The riot of diverse points of colour is such that no clear pattern can be discerned in any detail. . . . Look now instead at the ethnographic and political map of an area of the modern world. It resembles not Kokoschka, but, say, Modigliani. There is very little shading; neat flat surfaces are clearly separated from each other, it is generally plain where one begins and another ends, and there is little if any ambiguity or overlap. (139-140)

Gellner uses a powerful simile to drive home the austere cartography of a national order of things, which allows no in-between or "fuzzy spaces" (Tambiah 1985). Borders are black lines starkly differentiating essentially different nations represented by different colours on the map. In the third chapter (titled "The Quest") of *The Discovery of India*, Nehru remembers how he assisted the common

peasant in his audience, with “his limited outlook” (1989: 59) to grasp the territoriality of the nation: they had an idea of it from their exposure to ancient epics and legends; and the pilgrimages they made to other parts of the country. In the section titled “Bharat Mata”, Nehru constructs the nation as an idea transcending the organic community:

Sometimes as I reached a gathering [of peasants], a great roar of welcome would greet me: *Bharat Mata Ki Jai*—Victory to Mother India! I would ask them unexpectedly what they meant by that cry, who was this Bharat Mata, Mother India, whose victory they wanted? ... At last, a vigorous Jat, wedded to the soil from immemorial generations, would say that it was the *dharti*, the good earth of India that they meant. What earth? This particular village patch, or all the patches in the district or province, or the whole of India? ... I would endeavour to...explain that India was all this that they had thought, but it was much more. The mountains and the rivers of India, and the forests and the broad fields, which gave us food, were all dear to us, but what counted ultimately were the people of India, people like them and me, who were spread out all over this vast land. *Bharat Mata*, Mother India was essentially these millions of people and victory to her meant victory to these people. You are parts of this *Bharat Mata*, I told them, you are in a manner yourselves, *Bharat*

Mata, and as this idea slowly soaked into their brains, their eyes would light up as if they had made a great discovery. (60, italics original)

It was not the *gemeinschaft* of the humble peasant, rooted in his *dharti* and the close community of neighbours, the peasant had to *discover* the larger, imagined community of the unified nation – not only territorially but also ideologically – which becomes clear in the next section titled “The Variety and Unity of India”.

Here, Nehru takes pains to find the spiritual oneness that unites Indians of all colours and creeds in one nation. Difference of religion could not change their “mental backgrounds” and in spite of linguistic difference they share “the same national heritage and the same set of moral and mental qualities” (61) which expressed themselves in “a philosophical attitude to life and its problems” (62). This Orientalist approach highlights the mythical and philosophical nature of the vast and historical Indian civilization to achieve a transcendental unity, bypassing, and almost refusing to acknowledge, cultural differences. The children, thus unified, would become even more culturally indistinguishable through the levelling influence of global capital (Nehru 2004: 487); and proceed on the path of industrial progress and bourgeois selfhood. The sooner this happened, Nehru opined, was the better. Nehru’s discourse is not much different from that of colonial narratives which asserted that the only social formations Indians were capable of possessing were organic communities, and not an ‘advanced’ one such as nations, which only the

West was capable of achieving. Therefore, India has to tread the paths of reason and science to reach proper nationhood:

... we have too much of the past about us and have ignored the present. We have to get rid of that narrowing religious outlook, that obsession with the supernatural and metaphysical speculations, that *loosening of the mind's discipline* [italics mine] in religious, ceremonial, and mystical emotionalism.... We have to come to grips with the present, this life, this world, this nature which surrounds us in its infinite variety. Some Hindus talk about going back to the Vedas; some Moslems dream of an Islamic theocracy. Idle fancies, for there is no going back to the past ... There is only one-way Traffic in time.

India must therefore lessen her religiosity and turn to science. (519-520)

Thus, *Mother India* was Nehru's symbol of a nation capable of transcending ethnic difference and narrow territorial attachment to the village soil, proudly joining other nations on the common path of progress. The exercise of reason and science can prevent the *loosening of the mind's discipline* and relapsing to "supernatural and metaphysical speculations": Nehru clearly is against religiosity in its everyday embodiment, which creates walls of established custom between neighbours.

Khushwant Singh and Chaman Nahal write within the discursive formation discussed above. This has two interesting consequences. Firstly, their depictions of migration expose the betrayal on the part of the imperial power – which rested on its assumed role of supra-local guardianship and neutrality. Secondly, they treat the nationalist emotional claim to the sacred territory of the nation with irony and bitterness. Actually, most of the early fictional representation of territoriality and migration leans towards the colonialist-developmentalism position rather than the nationalist one.

In Manohar Malgonkar's *A Bend in the Ganges*, Gyan Talwar is shocked when Patrick Mulligan, the superintendent of the Cellular Jail in the Andamans informs him of the English plan to withdraw from the island. He cannot accept the fact that Mulligan, who ruled like a king at the jail, could just *escape* from it like a common fugitive, without offering any resistance to the Japanese invasion. Reaching Rangoon, Gyan witnesses the devastation done to the infrastructure by the English themselves before they depart: he is overcome by an acute sense of betrayal by the colonial power. The following passage is strongly reminiscent of Burke's criticism of the much-vaunted guardianship and territorial neutrality of the empire:

But the British themselves had left, almost casually, like tenants vacating a house. They had never had any stake in the house itself. On the other hand, even in their hurry, they had actually made efforts to destroy whatever they had laboured to build – all vaunted gifts of

their occupation – not caring how the people of the land itself would live after they had gone. (*BG* 219)

In Chaman Nahal's *Azadi*, not only characters like the obsequious middle aged grain merchant Lala Kanshi Ram but also the narrative voice mourns the withdrawal of the imperial power from India. The English administrators in the town, who stand for duty, order, and impartiality, depart for their "home", leaving India in the hands of partisan Indian administrators who fail to stop "communal" violence.

Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* ends with two beloved women – Nooran and Chandni leaving for Pakistan with Muslim refugees on a train that is about to be ambushed near the bridge on the Ravi. As the threat of refugees coming from Pakistan looms large, the village meets in the Sikh temple to discuss the fate of their Muslim tenants. Sikhs advise Imam Baksh, the old Muslim headman to seek shelter in the refugee camp for some days until the trouble blows over. However, everyone knows deep down that in all possibility Muslims will have to leave for good. Imam Baksh accepts their lot in a resigned way:

'All Right,' he said solemnly, 'if we have to go, we better pack up our bedding and belongings. It will take more than one night to clear out of homes it has taken our fathers and grandfathers hundreds of years to make.' (*TP* 112)

The first generation novels foreground the trauma of migration through arboreal metaphors of community: organic communities *rooted* to the soil of *watan* or *desh*, which gave them sustenance for generations. Partition is apocalyptic in that it uprooted communities from their beloved surroundings, separated from the familiar colours, sounds and smell that made them feel at home. The trauma of migration is a major aspect of the first wave novels, and in its expression, they approach the sophisticated wistfulness of Urdu poetry. Imam Baksh in *Train to Pakistan* recites a verse that expresses the community's trauma through images of universal loss:

Not forever does the Bulbul sing

In balmy shades of bowers,

Not forever lasts the spring

Not ever blossom flowers.

Not forever reigneth joy,

Sets the sun on days of bliss,

Friendships not forever last,

They know not life, who know not this. (TP 112)

The moment of departure is evocatively pictured, with bewildered villagers running helter-skelter, visiting neighbours before they leave. In the monotonous downpour of the morning, military trucks grumbling ominously in lower gears “plough in” through the mud and slush to evacuate the Muslims. As the officers begin to

announce through a loudspeaker, the villagers are greatly surprised: instead of a temporary stay in the Chundunnugger refugee camp, Muslims are supposed to proceed to Pakistan by train. After the initial confusion, they are whisked off within five minutes. The authorities appoint Malli and his gang of miscreants as the “custodians” of Muslim property. In the rain, confusion and military haste, the villagers can hardly see each other for the last time. A moment of apocalypse arrives as Malli and his gang busy themselves looting the Muslim homes:

A shepherd boy, who had been out gathering mushrooms, came back with the news that the river had risen. No one took any notice of him. They only wished that it would rise more and drown the whole of Mano Majra along with them, their women, children, and cattle – provided it also drowned Malli, his gang, the refugees, and the soldiers. (TP 121)

Juggat Singh, deciding to sacrifice his life to save the train to Pakistan, comes to the gurdwara and requests the granthi to read something from the Granth Sahib. Meet Singh’s choice of the passage is significant here for its poignant assertion of the rootedness of the Mano Majrans to its soil:

Air, water, and earth,
Of these are we made,
Air like the Guru’s word gives the breath of life

To the babe born of the great mother Earth

Sired by the waters. (TP 151)

The verse firmly places Jugga inside his territory of his organic community. The sacred value of a community's territory is reaffirmed through the action of Jugga, a son of the holy soil watered by the five rivers and shaped by the Sikh religion and culture. He is a martyr like the venerated Gurus in his religion: like them, he is rooted in his location, and can lay down his life for the community's sake. Partition is a hideous aberration which has to pass, like the train to Pakistan, over his dead body as the *communal* madness is robbed of its prey.

Manohar Malgonkar's *A Bend in the Ganges* has a similar apocalyptic ending where Shafi Usman and his armed colleagues attack Sundari and her parents. Tekchand, the father of Sundari and Debi-dayal, was a collector of ancient figurines. Reluctant to leave and expecting a return of peace, he defers their departure until it is too late and all his servants have escaped:

The only thing he could think of was the futility of resistance. He toyed with the idea of letting his wife and daughter go with the convoy. He would stay behind, with his men and women and half-beasts and half-gods of metal. He would like that, somehow he would be able to manage. *It was his land, his town; its people were his people.* *They would come to their senses,* as soon as this wave of hatred had

passed; they would realize he was one of themselves [sic] and not to be spurned. (BG 288, emphasis added)

Tekchand's assertion of territoriality "his land, his town" is followed by a desperate claim of kinship with its people, which would surely prevail once again as the communal madness had its fill of violence. They would "come to their senses" and welcome him once again. However, his hopes are thwarted as Shafi and his cronies attack his house. In the scuffle that follows, Sundari's mother is killed but with the help of Gyan Talwar they manage to kill Shafi and other intruders. They escape in Shafi's car to join the kafila of fleeing Hindus. Near the border, Tekchand goes mad with grief and wishes to return to his home where his wife is still lying dead. Unable to bear the burden of his guilt, he vanishes from the kafila. Gyan and Sundari wait for some time, unable to decide what to do. After an hour, the cars start moving and they are ordered to move. After a second's hesitation, without looking at Sundari, Gyan releases the clutch and the car leaps forward. In an apocalyptic moment such as this, one has to look aside when a near and dear one lies murdered and run for self-preservation, *uproot oneself*, and "move on".

The first generation writing on Partition obviously foregrounds the mighty remorse, trauma and madness resulting from this mutilation of roots. A classic example is Sadaat Hasan Manto's Urdu short story "Toba Tek Singh". Toba Tek Singh, a Sikh farmer who went mad with grief and refused to have anything to do with partition – is possibly the most powerful image of the traumatised refugee in

Partition literature. His gibberish “*Up the gur gur the annexe the bay dhyana the mung the dal of the Pakistan and Hindustan dur fittay moun*” (6) is an ironic take on the Nehruvian nationalist logic of territoriality, and so is his symbolic death on the no-man’s land:

There, behind barbed wire, on one side, lay India and behind more barbed wire, on the other side, lay Pakistan. In between, on a bit of earth, which had no name, lay Toba Tek Singh. (7)

A similar scene unfolds in Chaman Nahal’s *Azadi*. While crossing the bridge on the river Ravi, Arun realizes that he is leaving the land of five rivers behind. “These were the rivers which in a way flowed in his veins too; his blood owed as much to them as to the earth under his feet” (285) he feels while crossing the Ravi. This poignant grief at the brutal tearing of roots is the hallmark of the early fictional response to Partition. Arun’s parents, crossing the border, utter “Vande Mataram” in a nationalist gesture, and touch and bow to the demarcation line that is to define their (future) motherland. Arun perceives this to be a great violence to the natural territorial claim of a timeless organic community: a display of emotional ties to a handful of soil and ritualistic bathing in the Ravi confirm the refugee’s allegiance to the nation. Losing his mind, he runs to the bridge that marks the boundary, and picking up a stick, he waves it like a baton, directing refugees into India:

‘Come on, hurry up,’ he shouted at the refugees. ‘Get a move on – quick,’ he shouted, trying to rip apart the air with his stick. ‘Hurry,

hurry,’ he shouted at young children, who ran away from him in fear.

‘Get to your mother India – quick!’ he waved the stick over them like a whip. ‘Hurry up! Be quick!’

‘The boy’s lost his mind,’ said one elderly refugee to another, while they ducked their heads as Arun kept lashing with his stick. (A 286)

Nahal’s subversive attack on the “mother India” myth undercuts the nationalist erasure of cultural difference and territory creation. The nationalist narrative sought to omit and overlook the differences that existed all the time, and could not think of accommodating them in any way. As Tagore (1917) would say,

Even from childhood I had been taught that the idolatry of the Nation is almost better than reverence for God and humanity. I believe I have outgrown that teaching, and it is my conviction that my countrymen will truly gain their India by fighting against the education which teaches them that a country is greater than the ideals of humanity.

(83)

Nationalism assigns the affective to the unwitting peasant with “his limited outlook” and ignores the organic community of peasants who are “wedded to the soil from immemorial generations” (Nehru 1989: 60).

The Heart Divided by Mumtaz Shah Nawaz anticipates an apocalypse, a terrible flood of tears, which will drown the ethics of an organic community. “Look,

it comes ... the separation and the shadow ...*the darkest hour* ... and the rift between us becomes a chasm...and the chasm a sea...a sea of blood and tears...of tears and blood," Habib's Hindu friend Vijay forecasts a violent Partition (*THD* 450, emphasis added). However, the flood of refugees across the border will leave a fertile ground for the Islamic state of Pakistan. Cleansed of the Other, Pakistan will be a New England for the liberated, activist Muslim women like Sughra, who would work for the betterment of their community. Habib and Zohra avert their eyes from the impending bloodbath that is to accompany the birth of Pakistan. Sughra goes out to meet her husband to work for the Islamic utopia. Territorial loss is not represented as hopelessness for the future of the humanity, but the dawn of a new era of hopefulness for Muslims, the rebirth of Islamic culture in an exclusive territory unhindered by the hegemonic claims of the Other:

Then she looked up at him with radiant eyes, and she said:

‘Henceforth we shall go forward together hand in hand, towards our goal.’

‘Towards Pakistan!’ he said triumphantly. (*THD* 451)

Shah Nawaz's novel is unique in our corpus as it depicts the deviant response of a large section of the Muslims to the metaphysics of the organic community. At the crucial juncture of South Asian history, they clearly stood up for the territorial

exclusivity of a nation, in the hope of achieving cultural ends without the need for a dialogue with the Other.

Relocation and Transnationalism in the Second Wave Novels

Arborescent metaphors of roots and trees, used to express the deep, metaphysical connection between community and territory have informed both colonialist-developmental and nationalist narratives. On the other hand, metaphors such as Mother India create an imagined community of her children who reside in a strictly defined national territory. At the turn of the millennium, we still live in a world understood by the national order of things, where identities are understood as rooted within the national borders. As Deleuze would have it,

It is odd how the tree has dominated Western reality and all of Western thought, from botany to biology and anatomy, but also gnosiology, theology, ontology, all of philosophy . . . the root-foundation, *Grund, racine, fondement*. The West has a special relation to the forest, and deforestation. . . . (1987: 18)

The concept of space in this order of things rests not on fluidity but clear breaks symbolized by sharp black borderlines on the map. This part of the chapter explores how the long nineties brought about a change in the assumed connection between community and location, and how this is expressed in the interpretation of nation, identity, and migration. The earlier conceptualizations of organic community yoked

together culture and territory, criticizing the essentialist “sedentarian metaphysics” (Malkki 1992) of nation as a chimera (except Shah Nawaz). The post-globalization “hybridity” and transnationalism unsettles such demands of the nation by an interrogation of the power/knowledge strategies that “strategically reverse the process of domination through denial of ‘pure’ or originary identities which are formed through the repetition of discriminatory identity effects” (Bhabha 1994:1-27). As Avtar Brah states,

Globalising tendencies set in motion centuries ago acquire new meanings in a world characterised by the increasing dominance of multinational capital; the flexible specialisation of labour and products; and the revolutionising impact of new technologies in production, distribution, and communication. (178)

Partha Chatterjee (1998) commenting on Arjun Appadurai’s work clearly indicates a paradigm shift in transnational tendencies after the coming of electronic mediation and mass migration: “The developments on this score in the last three decades or so cannot be regarded as merely quantitative enlargements of phenomena that existed in the pre-electronic age” (58). The socio-economic and cultural changes brought about by globalization challenged the power/knowledge configuration of the national order of things. As Arjun Appadurai pointed out, “[f]or those of us who grew up male in the elite sectors of the postcolonial world, nationalism was our common sense and the principal justification for our ambitions, our strategies, and

our sense of moral well-being" (158). The second-generation novels of Bapsi Sidhwā, Amitav Ghosh, and Meira Chand interrogate such constructions of national identities as they describe a series of migrations that began with Partition.

Bapsi Sidhwā spearheaded the new wave of writing from the Indian subcontinent that came with the phenomenal success of Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*. Her ironic representation of the Parsee community in *The Crow Eaters* (1978) facilitated Rushdie's expression. Sidhwā's true success came in 1991, when she published *Ice-Candy-Man* (*Cracking India* in America). She will be remembered for her intimate and humane presentation of the Parsee diaspora settled in India, Pakistan, and the West. Apart from *Ice-Candy-Man*, Sidhwā has portrayed the small, prosperous and closed Parsee community in *The Crow Eaters* and *An American Brat*. She frequently points at their anxiety of preserving the image of a politically neutral model minority group. Though *The Crow Eaters* had attracted controversy at the time of publication, it gives a sympathetic representation to the raucous, funny, and clannish Parsees. The novel is a hilarious saga of Fareedoon Junglewala alias Freddy, who at the turn of the century migrates from a village in central India to Lahore, travelling across the land of five rivers on a bullock cart. His adventure and prosperity is iconic of the perpetual migrant status of the Parsees, Zoroastrian refugees from Persia who sought shelter in the western coasts of India in the eighth century. In the colonial times, they flocked to Bombay and other thriving business centres such as Lahore, and became successful traders and shipbuilders.

In *Ice-Candy-Man*, Sidhwa offers a funny account of the Parsee community meeting to decide which way to migrate in case of a Partition, and the possible birth of two or three new nations. Hindus will make off with their businesses if they come to power, they think, and Muslims will convert them by sword, one forecasts, and Sikhs will prove to be too crazy for them, “God help us if we are stuck with the Sikhs!” a member remarks (*ICM* 37). Colonel Bharucha calms them by recounting the story of their earlier migration to India thirteen hundred years ago. When the Muslims drove them out of Persia, they journeyed to the port of Bombay and sought permission of the king to settle. The king sent his envoy with a glass full of milk. The Parsis saw it as a polite message that this prosperous and homogeneously populated land did not wish to have outsiders. The *wajir* of the Parsis took a teaspoonful of sugar and carefully mixed it with the milk before returning it to the envoy. The Indian king was impressed to find an intelligent people who wished to be assimilated in the populace, unobtrusively, and sweeten the existing civilisation with their culture and industry. The king now gave them permission to land and settle, with a prohibition on conversion of Indians to their religion. Col. Bharucha and Mr. Bankwalla reveal the secrets of living in any culture as a model minority:

‘As long as we do not interfere we have nothing to fear! As long as we respect the custom of our rulers – as we always have – we’ll be all right ... as long as we conduct our lives quietly, as long as we present

no threat to anybody, we will prosper right here,' roars the colonel over the mike.

'Yes,' says the banker. 'But don't try to prosper immoderately. And, remember: don't ever try to exercise real power.' (ICM 39-40)

A diaspora community cannot make legitimate claims to a patch of land or political power in the national order of things. Some members in the audience hint that they will consider migrating to Bombay, and even to the West in case they found the post-Partition emergent nations hostile towards them.

Shauna Singh Baldwin's *What the Body Remembers* subtly depicts the struggle of a whole generation of Sikhs to relocate to India and rebuild their fortunes. Roop encounters a little Sikh orphan selling newspapers at Delhi rail station. A refugee like Roop, Zorawar tries to sell her a copy of *The Statesman*, and an umbrella. Roop is weary of the paper's narrative: "she knows what they will say – that they are doomed, that no Europeans would have behaved as they have in the past few months, that the years of British rule and British authority kept the lid on the inborn savagery of Indians. That India will never last" (499). Zorawar is from Rawalpindi, and lost his family. As he tries to sell her a newspaper with a bright smile, Roop realises that undermining the apocalyptic vision contained in the papers he is selling, the boy's smile and resilience will overcome the crisis:

My people, Punjabi Sikhs, will survive; this Zorawar's spirit is in them.

They will not beg, they will not die, they will work and build their lives again.

I will survive, even if Sardarji is gone – I made two sons. (WBR 500,
emphasis original)

Sardarji arrives in Delhi as a devastated man, but with Roop's help, he gets back his self-confidence. After mourning for some days, he braces himself and goes out to help his community in the reconstruction of their fortunes. This new phase in Sardarji's life is symbolised by the new, Delhi style of tying the turban that he adopts – smaller, and tied without a flourishing *safa* or trail. His community now has half of Punjab and the rest of North India to settle in, and the need of the hour was massive reconstruction work and not mourning.

The Sindhis are a people rather under-represented in Partition literature: the only full-length works on them are by a historian (Markovits 2000) and an anthropologist (Falzon 2004). Unlike the Punjabi and Bengali refugees, the Hindu Sindhis cannot legitimately claim any territory as their own in the linguistically divided India as Sind, a province mentioned in India's national anthem, ironically falls in Pakistan. A complex narrative of nation, diaspora, and identity evolves in Meira Chand's *House of the Sun*, as the Sindhi families migrate to India after Partition, and relocate to the West and other countries through a series of migrations. Through the portrayal of two generations of expatriate Sindhis, Meira

Chand interrogates the power/knowledge structures of Sindhi nationalism and attempts a post-globalisation deconstruction of the national order of things. The pre-Partition Sindhi “Trope of the Tribe” (Appadurai 159) is surpassed by the transnational imaginary *Sindhayat*, which questions the nationalist pathologisation of migration and depicts the creation of an ethnic identity, which is transnational and a political solidarity that is non-national (Chatterjee 1998:58).

The Sindhis in *House of the Sun*, led by an elderly businessman Dada Lokumal, construct an apartment house in Bombay and name it *Sadhbela* after an island on the Indus. Hindu Sindhis migrated not in ill-fated *kafilas* or on ambushed trains but through the port of Karachi or the Rajasthan border. Mr. Hathiramani is an ex-journalist who stands out among his businesslike brethren as a classic example of Anderson’s bourgeois nationalist who can mobilize large reading publics in imagined communities, “exploiting cheap popular editions” (40). Mr. Hathiramani, an untrained cultural historian, is concerned about the cultural oblivion of the second generation of Sindhi refugees:

The Indus river still flowed through Sind, and the great ruins of Mohenjo Daro still stood as proud proof of ancestry, but to Lokumal and the other inhabitants of Sadhbela, the land had now faded to the substance of dreams. Those like Lokumal who remembered, spoke of it to their children in a biblical way, as a land of milk and honey, lost and gone forever. Their faces grew sad when they spoke of Sind, but

their children shrugged and laughed. They knew nothing but
Bombay, sinful, lusty and full of excitements desired by the young.
They yawned in the face of Sind. (HS 37)

While not denying the trauma of Partition, the author subverts the pathologisation of migration and draws attention to the analytical consequences of such deeply territorializing notions of identity, which classifies people as “uprooted”. The nationalist historian would stick to his assumption that the Sindhi identity was still rooted to the soil of Sind, even after migration, and would take pains to keep that identity intact by teaching the next generation about the cultural heritage and the lost days of glory. Ironically, he ends up creating for the posterity a cultural museum; putting on display ossified cultural products from another time and location as symbols and icons to be worshipped. He refuses to acknowledge that Identity is not monolithic and timeless but is fluid and unsettled. As a result, the next generation responds with laughter and a shrug. Mr. Hathiramani used to run his own literary publication in Sind but “after Partition, in Bombay, his opinions seemed unwanted and a frost settled upon his life” (HS 22). Here he has two vocations: running an electrical shop and writing. In his diary, under the heading *Miscellaneous Past*, “he compiled from mildewing books of Sindhi script his own English translations of the history and culture of his homeland, which has flowered in the Indus valley two thousand years before the Aryans invaded India with their primitive ways” (23). Here he would write about the Indus civilization and the city of Mohenjo Daro

which are but vaguely associated with the Sindhis, their participation in Greek and Persian armies as well as the resistance they put up against Alexander the Great, and then come to the obvious conclusion that

Pride in heritage was lacking in Sadhbela, *resettlement had eroded identity*. There were young people now who knew nothing of Sind, and who found their only heritage in a language spoken but never written, a few regional foods, and their distinctive names. (HS 23, emphasis added)

Hathiramani perceives the Sindhi identity, earlier nourished by the soil of Sind and the waters of the sacred rivers, *eroding* after migration. He is compelled to address the second generation of expatriate Sindhis in English as they have lost their mother tongue and script. He undertakes the daunting task of translating in English the work of Shah Abdul Latif, the great medieval Sufi poet of Sind. This knowledge of heritage, inflaming the heart of each Sindhi would lead to “an expatriate Sindhi renaissance” (HS 24), he believes.

Before Partition, the Sindhi identity was constructed according to very narrow territorial parameters such as the difference and hometowns. In *House of the Sun*, refugees from Rohri and Sukkur, towns on opposite banks of the Indus come to live huddled in the same apartment house. They sadly realize that Partition has drastically changed those standards:

In Sind, Mrs. Hathiramani had not known Mrs. Bhagwandas, who came from Sukkur, a short distance from her own home in Rohri. ...

In those far-off days before they all became refugees, fleeing from a Muslim Sind, each town disdained the other. History, chaos, poverty and death soon changed such parochial ways. (HS 16)

Mr. Hathiramani's nationalist longing aims at restoring a lost Sindhi identity which rested on the core assumption of territoriality which points at a long tradition of nationalism in Sind from the Arya Samaj Movement days. However, the nineteenth-century construction of the Sindhi nation is markedly different from the present diasporic imaginary '*Sindhayat*' emphasizing the unity of Sindhi Hindus scattered worldwide. More than one commentator has pointed out that it is a post-Partition phenomenon: "It is important to point out that *this cohesive tendency has a history*; until Partition, what really mattered were not so much the abstract and generic designation of 'Sindhi' as the heavily connotated details and particularities of caste and regional origin" (Falzon 30, emphasis added). As Saturn moves out of the house of the Sun, the Sindhi families of Sadhbela witness a dowry killing, a crisis that brings them closer. Mr. Hathiramani has a cerebral attack while translating Shah Abdul Latif's *Song of the Necklace*. During his stay in a nursing home, his wife burns his library and his diary. Like Quixote, he is abruptly made to leave his grandiose and absurd project. Standing in the empty room, he tries to make sense of this violence,

and in a flash of sudden realization, he sees the absurdity of his nationalist scheme of asserting an essential Sindhi identity by excavating instances of past glory:

Latif had not been what was needed.... the world called instead, he saw suddenly, for *The Hathiramani Newsletter*. Spread about the world were community after community of expatriate Sindhis, who knew little of their culture. It was his duty to speak to them. His heart beat violently. The purpose of the fire was clear to him now....the newsletter would go to communities in Hong Kong, London, New York, Madrid, Lagos ... destinations flew through his mind. In these places were settled Sindhis for whom his newsletter would reinstate identity. (HS 310)

From the Sindworkies to the post-Partition Sindhi refugees in India and the diaspora in the West a complex ‘diaspora space’ (Brah 178) evolves. The messianic longing of the first generation Sindhi to ‘return,’ to the lost territory is replaced by a post-globalisation diasporic imaginary in which the Sindhi identity seamlessly merges with the host cultures in a way which deconstructs the insider/outsider and native/immigrant binaries. These assertions of new forms of mobility and rootedness in multiple places result in the construction of new subjectivities, and a modification of the classical concept of territoriality. As Robin Cohen suggests,

I propose we adopt the expression ‘deterritorialized diaspora’ to encompass the lineaments of a number of unusual diasporic

experiences. In these instances ethnic groups can be thought of as having lost their conventional territorial reference points, to have become in effect mobile and multi-located cultures. ... [Sindhis and Parsis] perfectly demonstrate the argument that new centres of economic, cultural, social and religious identification can develop as the links to a homeland become more and more tenuous. (124)

Defining diaspora by a nostalgic association with the mythical “homeland” overlooks the economic and culturally productive nature of their identity. The question of subjectivity is directly linked with power: the diasporic subjectivity in different countries has been determined largely by the local regulatory power and normative discourses. As Judith Butler has pointed out, all identities operate through exclusion and a complex discursive negotiation with an outside (132-151). Diasporic identity inside India and elsewhere has lived a porous life, as Stuart Hall would say “with and through, not despite, difference; by hybridity” (235).

The Hindu Bengali family in Amitav Ghosh’s *Shadow Lines* had migrated to Calcutta (now Kolkata) long before Partition. However, they have relatives in Dhaka and face a curious situation when the narrator’s grandmother, Thamma, has a chance to fly to her ancestral house in Dhaka (in East Pakistan). Though she was born and brought up in Dhaka, and spoke its dialect, she became a foreigner after Partition. She uses the Bengali verb *coming* instead of *going* to Dhaka, and this confusion, which becomes a pet family joke, shows that homecoming for Thamma

means leaving the nation. Ghosh offers a powerful criticism of the nationalist cartography as she naively asks if the border can be seen from the aeroplane:

... she wanted to know whether she would be able to see the border between India and East Pakistan from the plane. When my father laughed and said, why, did she really think the border was a long black line with green on one side and scarlet on the other, like it was in school atlas, she was not so much offended as puzzled. ... she said, But if there aren't any trenches or anything, how are people to know? ... What was it all for then — partition and all the killing and everything — if there isn't something in between? (SL 151)

Her son answers that in a modern world the border is inside the airport: travellers perform the border-crossing rituals when they fill up various forms. In the recent past, however, the Indo-Bangladesh and the Indo-Pakistan borders have been massively fortified: Thamma would have been reassured to see the physical confirmation of the ideological shadow lines that separated two nations. Overnight train journeys from Calcutta to Dhaka, which she mentions, also remained stalled for many decades in an atmosphere of mutual distrust. The mutilated railway network confirmed the green-scarlet division. It is only very recently that a direct bi-weekly train has begun its journey. Ghosh's writing of an alternative family history in *Shadow Lines* is important because it reclaims the maps mutilated by the nationalist imaginary. As Sangeeta Ray observes,

The larger question left for us the reader to answer is whether or not this looking-glass border is an image that could apply to similar cities positioned on either side of arbitrarily designated borders and whether in such recognition one may truly begin to understand a new cosmopolitics, one based not against the nation or the state but with and within cities inhabited not just by citizens but simply by people.

(185)