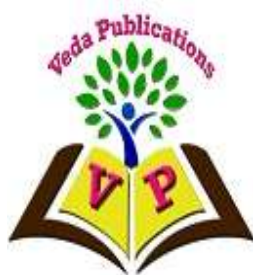


**PHALLIC POLITICS OF FREEDOM IN CHAMAN NAHAL'S AZADI**Ms. Rupanshi Jain<sup>1</sup>, Dr Shuchi Agrawal<sup>2</sup><sup>1</sup>(M.A.English, Amity University, NOIDA.)<sup>2</sup>(Associate Professor, Amity University, NOIDA.)**ABSTRACT**

Sexual Politics is a biased representation of sexuality and the pride potent masculine authors have successfully been able to suppress the voice of their female characters. As we find the authors like Chaman Nahal, Khushwant Singh have been biased in their representation of aggressive picture of partition by giving due importance to male characters subduing the voice of their female characters. As a result, our freedom which was equally attained by the hard work and sacrifices given by many females but they ended up being with unsung heroes of battle whereas every credit went to their male counterparts. History is biased to depict the contribution of females in freedom fight. The women have always been represented as tools and weapons in the hands of powerful males who used to manipulate and fabricate with their actual 'self'. This phallic politics can easily be observed in the novel *Azadi* written by Chaman Nahal.

**Keywords:** *Partition, Communalism, Fundamentalism, Sexual Politics, Imagined community.*

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Chaman Nahal's *Azadi* is a novel of partition that leads to bloodshed, violence, brutality, abduction and alienation. It always scrutinizes the morality and humanity of individuals. Partition novels portrays the havoc of violence which occurred because of religion. It is an irony that every religion teaches an idea of peace but peace is always ruined because of religion. Post structuralism argues that *binary opposition* is a pair of related terms that are opposite in meaning. *Azadi*, which means freedom has the same literal meaning but in this paper it is presented as *binaries*. Freedom always gives us the glimpse in our mind of happiness, love and peace. But on the contrary in the novel *Azadi*, freedom brought partition, alienation, sexual violence, brutality specially on women, bloodshed and communalism.

*Azadi* presents the violence of Muslim fundamentalists on Hindu minorities in Sailkot after the partition of India and Pakistan. After the declaration of partition the West Punjab came under Pakistan and East Punjab came under India. The brutality of Muslim fundamentalists reached to its pinnacle when in the district of Narowal the Muslim fundamentalists arranged a naked parade for the Hindu women. Thus, humanity and morality were totally ashamed and hence shattered. In that parade there were women from the age of sixteen to sixty. Their pubic region and heads were shaven. Muslim men gazed at their pubic region. This satisfied their ego and superiority over the other Hindu community. Bruises on the bodies of Hindu women shows that they had been beaten badly and their condition shattered the values of humanity. Benedict Anderson in his nonfiction text *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of Nationalism* has theorized the concept of "the nation" as a social construct in which people find commonality with others, even when they do not know each other, for Nahal this statement exemplifies the unconscious mind of the Muslim men who somewhere associated themselves with the pain that partition had brought through these communities.

Kate Millet has elaborated in her book titled as *Sexual Politics* about the biased representation of sexuality. Chaman Nahal's *Azadi* has been biased in presenting the aggressive picture of partition. It was women who were most brutalized and they were the ones who were most exploited during the time of partition. The women were taken just an object of sexual pleasure. The plight of women is presented in the novel but readers may not find their voice or their individuality. Male novelists because of their sexist approach represent sexual oppressions in the world of their narration. The whole story is framed through the mind of the male writer and even the protagonist of the novel is male i.e. Lala Kanshi Ram and Arun, hence the women characters are mutilated in their own space of Indian democracy. Why is the female's perspective disregarded? If we read the novels of Bapsi Sidhwa and Taslima Nasreen we find that women writers have not ignored the male viewpoint in their novels. They have not overlooked the depiction of males and their desires and passions in their works. They have always given an equal importance to male as well as female characters. Bapsi Sidhwa in her novel *Ice-Candy-Man* has incorporated the ideology of equality amongst her characters. In her novel she has presented ice candy man as well as Shanta, the ayah with equal importance. Both the characters have their own individuality. Even the characters of Satpal or Sardar ji or Pa-ji is sketched with utmost concern that all the character weather male or female may get equal opportunities to display their fragmented partitioned life. The pride potent masculine writers have successfully been able to skim through the lives of their oppositional feminine fraction. the novel *Train to Pakistan* by *Khushwant Singh*, the female characters of Nooran and Haseena are presented as suppressed and they are considered merely as an objects of sexual satisfaction for males.

*Azadi* has introspected the phallocentrism of the society that Nahal propagated within the unit of his own understanding of Indian society. Phallus is the symbol of masculinity and patriarchy which is strongly prevalent in the



novel. My question through this research paper is Why can't a man without any prejudice present the pain and suffering of female characters by giving those characters equal significance and importance as per their male counterparts? On being attracted towards the physical beauty of Susanda Bala, Captain Rahmat Ullah Khan tried to rape her. He tried to put Arun in his confidence by lucrative offers so that he could bring Sunanda Bala as a prey. Being a faithful widow, a splintered soul, she followed all the rituals after the demise of her husband though she was not feeling an innate connection with him when he was alive. In another case, Isher Kaur was in her fourth month of pregnancy and the death of her husband Niranjana Singh brought alienation and devastation in her life. She was all alone in her pregnancy in the violent atmosphere of partition. Although she was in the company of Lala Kanshi Ram and his family but she was lonely because her husband was not with her in the most crucial time of her life. Chandni's physical appearance fascinated Arun who got emotionally and sexually attracted towards her. If we see carefully, we observe that being a woman is meant to be beautiful in Narowal society. Whether it is Sunanda Bala or Chandni, they both are described through the beauty of their physical appearance. According to Narowal society women are meant to be beautiful, mild and weak. In the novel not even a single woman has her voice or individuality. They are being abducted, raped or exiled from their own country. They have always been marginalized in their own society. Even after their abduction and rape, the members of their own family did not accept them. They were thrown out of their houses. And the pregnant women either had to leave their child to the orphanage or to the person who had fathered the child. Women depicted in the novel have always been placed in difficult situations. They can call nothing as their own not even their family. They face desertion by their own clan and community. Their family did not accept them because according to them they have lost their so called purity and this led to the depression and psychological tensions in their mind.

*Azadi* is a novel of fractured freedom, freedom came but with the catastrophic effects of partition. The novel is divided into three partitions of narration i.e. *lull*, *storm* and *aftermath*. It represents the calm atmosphere before the partition then the chain of brutal incidents during the partition and then the pitiable conditions after the partition. The idea of love was also shattered because due to partition not only humanity and moral values fail but also the pure love between two individuals. The love between Arun and Nurul – Nisar was dead because Arun was a Hindu and Nurul-Nisar was a Muslim. The politics based on religion butchered the pure love between Arun and Nurul-Nisar. The love between Arun and Chandni shattered because of Muslim fundamentalists. Muslim fundamentalists abducted her and the sister of Arun was also killed because of the brutal fight between two communities. Sunanda Bala lost her husband Suraj Prakash in an attack. Sunanda Bala became the victim of sexual gratification for Captain Rahamat Ullah Khan but he failed in his evil deeds. Arun saved Sunanda Bala from becoming the victim of sexual assassination and this broke the relationship between Arun and Captain Rahamat Ullah Khan. Chaudhary Barkat Ali was also separated by his friend Lala Kanshi Ram. Bibi Amar Vati was crushed when her husband decided to become Muslim to inhabit in Pakistan. Prabha Rani was torn aside from inside after hearing the news of the death of her daughter and son-in-law. The tragedy that imbibed the air of partitioned society, separation devastated every Hindu from inside. They became alienated from inside and were filled with void. The storm of partition destroyed every happiness and love and relationships from their life. Even after coming to India they didn't lead a respectful life. They were humiliated at every moment. Prestige and honour was totally vanished from their life even after coming to India. Turban represents self-respect. Lala Kanshi Ram stopped wearing turban after coming to India because he lost all his self-respect as he used to enjoy in Sialkot. After coming to India, he was begging for an accommodation of a single room from a



young Rehabilitation officer. At this moment he realized that all his prestige, honor and self-respect evaded which he used to enjoy in his place, Saikot though initially in the novel, he took pride in the manners and lifestyle of the 'west'. In the core of his mind he has created a slave mentality for the Britishers. They were taking pride to be a part of the so called civilized western culture. It was considered a pride if an Indian is talking to a British person. It is considered to be a superior having relations with a western culture because it is accepted by the people that the western culture is more civilized. These people have become orientals by accepting the culture and manners of the British people. But *colonialism* has always brought corruption and violence. He earlier admired British Raj for they brought safety to Saikot but he also criticizes them for the partition of the undivided India. The west i.e. Britishers considered India as weak and uncivilized and according to them they need a rescue through the civilized manners and refinement of the Britishers. But they applied their scissors on the map of India and divided the nation into two which brought violence, bloodshed, abduction, rapes, communalism and alienation to the people. Colonization has always brought destruction and devastation to the people.

In the similar narrations such as that of Nahal's *Azadi*, *Tamas*, *Train to Pakistan* or *A Bend In The Ganges*, the portrayal of the abduction of the self 'I' in the chaotic world of partition, has been presented with the sequence of tragic episodes. And all the chaos takes place because of religion and it aggravates communalism. Even in *Lajja* by Taslima Nasrin, the havoc is created by Muslim fundamentalists on minority Hindu community in Bangladesh. The Hindu minority of Bangladesh was suffering without any fault of their own. Hindu women were abducted and raped. Hindu minority were forced to leave Bangladesh and migrate to some other country. The homelessness from their land made the people alienated from inside and also alienated them from their relatives. Mostly male writers of Diaspora literature have presented the characters

of women as suppressed individuals. Women have suffered much more than a man. She became the victim of torture because of dual reasons. The first and foremost reason of their suffering is their sex. Because, they are women so they are meant to be physically weak and they are conditioned by phallogocentric society to be weak, feeble, unvoiced and suppressed. And second, it is their religion which puts them down...if they belong to a minority community, they will become the victim of torment and anguish. The minority women were raped, abducted and also been killed. But, still the male writers like Chaman Nahal and Khushwant Singh have always been biased in representing the female characters. They never represent the story through a female point of view. The female is never their protagonist. The females have suffered much more than men in the partition novels. Their breasts were amputated. Their womb were cut by knives so that the seed which will take the community forward can be killed. After such a long and inciting epidemic of torture and sufferings, women still have no resistance to the masculine energy, due to which they have forgotten their long lost voice in the sphere of their own muteness. This is the irony of being trapped in a female body that they become the mute watchers and spectators of what was all malign happening to their race.

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