



## Partition Trauma: Comparative Study of the Ministry of Utmost Happiness

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### Abstract

This research paper deals with partition the trauma of India and Pakistan. One of the most important and painful moments in South Asian history was the 1947 Partition of India. On August 15, 1947, it resulted in the independence of India and Pakistan. Massive communal bloodshed, large-scale migration, and profound political and social upheaval all followed the divide. Authors of Indian descent witnessed the suffering of people during the division of India and Pakistan and were forced to make a decision. Their writings recall the trauma of the downtrodden during a period of helplessness and are replete with conservative winds that resist. The Ministry of utmost happiness is the second novel of Arundhati Roy which published in 2017 after God of Small things. She has explored darkest and violent side in the Ministry of utmost Happiness novel.

**Keywords:** Partition, painful, migration, downtrodden.

### Introduction

When British India was divided into the Union of India and the Dominion of Pakistan in 1947, it became known as the partition of India. Today, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the People's Republic of Bangladesh, and the Republic of India and the Dominion of Pakistan comprise the Union of India. Bengal and Punjab were split into two provinces according to district-by-district Hindu or Muslim majorities as part of the partition. In addition, the Indian Civil Service, the British Indian Army, the Royal Indian Navy, the railways, and the national treasury were split between the two new dominions. In addition, the Indian Civil Service, the British Indian Army, the Royal Indian Navy, the railways, and the national treasury were split between the two new dominions. The British Raj, or Crown control in India, was abolished as a result of the partition, which was outlined in the Indian Independence Act 1947. At midnight on August 14–15, 1947, India and Pakistan, two sovereign nations, formally became one nation. Over 14 million people were displaced by the India-Pakistan partition, which resulted in a chaotic flow of people moving from one area of the continent to another. For example, a stream of people moved from the newly established Pakistan to India and vice versa, and from the east of Bengal to the opposite side. Suicides, riots, and a massive refugee crisis permanently damaged both countries' societal cohesion. These authors of Indian descent witnessed the suffering of people during the division of India and Pakistan and were forced to make a decision. Their writings recall the trauma of the downtrodden during a period of helplessness

and are replete with conservative winds that resist. (Wikipedia).

The Partition of India (1947) has been a profound theme in literature, cinema, and art, explored by numerous authors and filmmakers. Each of the writers and directors you mentioned has depicted the horrors, trauma, and human stories of Partition in their unique ways.

The 20<sup>th</sup> century saw a number of wars, conflicts, revolutions, partitions, confusion, and competitiveness, which led to the emergence of trauma theory.

This century has seen a startlingly high number of terrible events.

Since literature is thought to reflect life, nearly all of the horrific events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century are represented in the artistic creations of that era. Cathy Caruth's book *Unclaimed Experiences: Trauma Narrative & History* is where the term "trauma" initially surfaced. We can say that this theory has some psychological implications as well because traumatic situations always have an impact on the mind.

### Notable Works on Partition by These Creators

- i). **Amrita Pritam:** *Pinjar* (novel about the struggles of women during Partition)
- ii). **Khushwant Singh:** *Train to Pakistan* (one of the most famous novels on Partition)
- iii). **Bhisham Sahni:** *Tamas* (a stark portrayal of communal violence and displacement)
- iv). **Bapsi Sidhwa:** *Ice-Candy Man* (also known as *Cracking India*, a child's perspective on Partition)

- v). **Chaman Nahal:** *Azadi* (a deeply personal take on the Partition experience).
- vi). **Attia Hosain:** *Sunlight on a Broken Column* (exploring the loss of aristocratic Muslim culture).
- vii). **Saadat Hasan Manto:** Short stories like *Toba Tek Singh*, *Thanda Gosht*, and *Khol Do*, capturing the brutality and absurdity of Partition.
- viii). **Salman Rushdie:** *Midnight's Children* (Partition as a backdrop to India's post-colonial journey).
- ix). **Manohar Malgonkar:** *A Bend in the Ganges* (Partition and its aftermath).
- x). **Deepa Mehta:** *Earth* (1998) (film based on *Cracking India* by Bapsi Sidhwa).
- xi). **Govind Nihalani:** *Tamas* (1987) (TV film adaptation of Bhisham Sahni's novel, showing Partition violence).

Each of these works provides a different perspective some personal, some historical, and some fictionalized to convey the impact of Partition on individuals and societies.

**Arundhati Roy:** Arundhati Roy was born in Shillong, Meghalaya, on November 24, 1961. Her most well-known works include the 1997 book *The God in Small Things*, which won the Booker Prize, and her support of human rights and environmental causes. The novel, a semi-autobiographical work, explores themes of caste, forbidden love, and political unrest in Kerala, India. Beyond fiction, Roy is also a well-known activist and essayist. She has been vocal about human rights, environmental issues, and political matters in India and globally. Among other things, she criticizes globalization, social injustice, and fascism in her political writings. Her grassroots participation in demonstrations against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) of 2019 and the Narmada River dam project informs them. Her notable non-fiction works include *The Algebra of Infinite Justice*, *Capitalism: A Ghost Story*, and *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (her second novel, published in 2017). Indian author and political activist the majority of Roy's latter writing is politically charged nonfiction, with a strong emphasis on tackling the issues her own country faces in the era of global capitalism. *The Algebra of Infinite Justice* (2002), *War Talk* (2003), *Public Power in the Age of Empire* (2004), *Field Notes on Democracy: Listening to Grasshoppers* (2009), *Broken Republic: Three Essays* (2011), *Capitalism: A Ghost Story* (2014), and *Power Politics* (2001) are some of her works. Her 20 years of nonfiction are collected in *My Seditious Heart* (2019).

The narrative centres on the lives of transgender person Anjum, formerly known as Aftab. Anjum was born into a middle-class, conservative Muslim family. As a child, her father never accepted her. Jahara Begum, her mother, was frightened of her own child. Her initial reaction was to feel her bones turn to ash and her heart tighten. She believed that every word in Urdu had a gender, either feminine or masculine. She was aware that nothing in this world is in between, yet her child is caught in the between. She was worried about her future and if she would be abandoned or have recognition, prestige, and responsibility in society. (Roy 8).

Roy has misled the multicultural nation's darker side. People from various races, castes, religions, and faiths reside in India. Various religions occasionally lose their equilibrium and always end up using violence. The most frequent conflict occurred between Muslims and Hindus. Roy discussed the plight of the Kashmir Pandits following the slaughter of

hundreds of Hindus. They abandoned the valley and began living in the plains after the government failed to protect them. Any one of them lost everything and experienced fewer problems. Additionally, Muslim boys are detained on suspicion of carrying out a terrorist act.

The Partition of India in 1947, one of the most traumatic events in South Asian history. The phrase "God's carotid exploded" is a powerful metaphor for the violence and bloodshed that erupted as British India was divided into India and Pakistan. During this time, deep-seated tensions fuelled by colonial policies, political ambitions, and religious divides erupted into mass killings, rapes, and forced migrations. Families who had lived together for centuries turned against each other. Homes changed hands overnight. Cities like Lahore, Amritsar, and Delhi saw an exchange of populations, often accompanied by brutal violence.

The sense of betrayal you describe where neighbours, once part of each other's lives, suddenly became enemies was one of the most tragic aspects of the Partition. Music, culture, and shared histories were shattered by arbitrary lines drawn on a map.

On the new border between India and Pakistan, God's carotid exploded, killing a million people out of hatred. The neighbours betrayed one another as if they had never met, attended one another's weddings, or performed music together. Old Muslim family ran away. There were new Hindu ones. (Roy 13).

The exodus of Kashmiri Hindus in the late 1980s and early 1990s was a tragic event in Indian history. As militancy rose in Kashmir, particularly after 1989, Islamist militant groups targeted the minority Hindu population, leading to widespread fear and displacement. Many Kashmiri Pandits were killed in brutal attacks, and others were forced to flee their ancestral homeland after receiving threats through newspaper ads, posters, and public announcements. The government at the time struggled to control the situation, and as violence escalated, the Kashmiri Pandit community numbering around 200,000 migrated en masse, seeking refuge in Jammu and other parts of India. Many families ended up living in makeshift camps with poor living conditions, and even decades later, many remain unable to return due to political and security concerns. This remains a deeply sensitive and politically charged issue, with ongoing debates about justice, rehabilitation, and the broader implications of the conflict in Kashmir.

When the government declared that it could not guarantee their safety, nearly two hundred thousand Kashmiri Hindus fled the valley and took refuge in camps on the plains of Jammu after some Muslim militants turned against the small Hindu population, slaughtering hundreds of them in gruesome ways. (Roy 116).

2002 Godhra train burning incident in India, in which a railway coach carrying Hindu pilgrims was set on fire, leading to the deaths of 59 people. The pilgrims were returning from Ayodhya, where they had participated in religious activities related to the construction of a Ram temple at the disputed site of the Babri Masjid, which had been demolished in 1992 by Hindu activists. The train burning sparked widespread communal riots in Gujarat, resulting in significant violence and loss of life. (Roy 44).

## Conclusion

While *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* does not directly narrate the 1947 Partition, it vividly portrays its aftermath how Partition's communal wounds continue to manifest in

modern India through violence, displacement, and identity struggles. The novel suggests that the trauma of Partition is not a closed chapter but an ongoing reality, shaping lives across generations.

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