

# THE PARTITION OF INDIA

## BEYOND IMPROBABLE LINES



Edited by  
Daniela Rogobete  
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This volume offers a collection of essays focused upon the representation of one of the most traumatic events in the history of India – the 1947 Partition – in literature and cinematographic adaptations. The focus here is placed on various strategies of representation and different types of memory at work in the process of remembering/re-membering Partition. All these avoid the traditional Hindu vs. Muslim perspective, and analyse other sides of the same story, seen from the perspective of marginal people belonging to other religious minorities, whose stories have generally been ignored and silenced by the official historical discourse. The book also demonstrates that the multiple “truths” engendered by this crucial event in India’s history lie along “improbable lines” randomly generated between history, amnesia and memory, between personal drama and collective trauma, loss and rupture, religion and nationalism, and longing and belonging.

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## CHAPTER TEN

# LOVE IN TRAUMATIC TIMES: *GADAR* AND *QISSA* OF THE INDIAN PARTITION OF 1947

RITIKA SINGH

Waris Shah! To you I say:  
add another page to your epic of love  
today. (Amrita Pritam, *I Say unto Waris  
Shah*)

In 1947 the Indian subcontinent was divided into two parts – Hindu-majority India and Muslim-majority Pakistan. A million people died, thousands of women were raped and abducted, breasts were chopped off and sent back as tokens of revenge, trains returned with dead bodies, uncountable families were destroyed and millions of people were left uprooted. Expansive sociological, political and historical studies have explored this past. In *Borders & Boundaries* (1998), Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin uncover the experiences of women; *The Other Side of Silence* (2000) by Urvashi Butalia records their witness accounts. In *Midnight's Furies: The Deadly Legacy of India's Partition* (2015), Nisid Hajari looks at its haunting legacy for a nation. These are just a few of the numerous studies done on the event and its continuing impact.

Artistic representations of trauma of the Indian Partition range from short stories to cinema productions—each proving how we “are implicated in each other’s trauma” (Caruth 1996: 24). Cinema and Bollywood have offered spaces for its memorialisation. The impact of the Partition has been projected onto the big screen in new and interesting ways. Often, stories by prominent writers like Khushwant Singh’s *Train to Pakistan*, Amrita Pritam’s *Pinjar* and Bapsi Sidhwa’s *Ice-candy-man* have been adapted into films. Cinematic representations of the event tackled the issue to add their voice to the remembering of the past. The key theme that this paper would explore is the treatment of love in two such movies—*Gadar*: