



## LITERARY REPRESENTATIONS OF WOMEN DURING AND AFTER THE PARTITION OF INDIA (1947) IN THE WORKS OF SAADAT HASAN MANTO, KHUSHWANT SINGH AND BAPSI SIDHWA\*

Ana V. Gatica  
Department of Social Sciences  
Universidad del Salvador, Argentina

### Abstract

Literature, as opposed to politics, is the field where past grievances can be negotiated, understanding can be reached or at least accepted as a fictional reality, and psychological explorations can be made, thus opening space for healing strategies to overcome social suffering through engagement with historical facts and critical analysis of present day developments. This paper examines the ways in which Saadat Hasan Manto, Khushwant Singh and Bapsi Sidhwa represent female characters, their roles and statuses in the new states of India and Pakistan during and after the violent Partition. Literature is the medium through which memory takes shape and materialises, thus contributing to the historical data provided by official sources. The importance of memory resides in the fact that it provides us with countless individual narrations of a particular event, thus revealing facts that, at times, tend to be ignored or sidelined by official narratives, as is the case of gendered violence during Partition. Gendering the historical study of Partition raises unanswerable questions but, at the same time, introduces a critical discourse that questions the role of the state(s), political parties and personalities and

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