

CHAPTER – 5

AMRITA PRITAM'S PINJAR AND ITS FILM VERSION

A story of love and hate, a tale of complexities of human mind and the rehabilitation of abducted women with Partition as the backdrop builds the plot of Punjabi, Hindi and later translated into English novel *Pinjar* alias *The Skeleton and other Writings*. The novel *Pinjar* is written by Bhartiya Gyanpith Award recipient Amrita Pritam. It has been later translated into English titled *The Skeleton* by equally eminent writer Khushwant Singh. The novel came out in 1950, soon after Partition. This same novel was brought on screen by *Chankya* fame director Chandraprakash Dwivedi in 2003, almost after fifty years.

5.1 Amrita Pritam

Amrita Kaur was born to Kartar Singh and Rajbibi of Gujranwala, Punjab (at present in Pakistan) of undivided India in 1919. She was married to Pritam Singh Kwatra in 1936, but the two got separated in 1960. As a consequence of her marriage to Pritam Singh she had two children and her identity as Amrita Pritam. In 1947, amidst communal violence that followed the Partition of the subcontinent, Amrita left Lahore and migrated to Delhi, India. In India, she worked with All India Radio for a long time.

She was emotionally attached to the renowned lyricist Sahir Ludhyanvi as mentioned in her autobiography *Revenue Stamp*. Thereafter, she spent last few decades of her life in the companionship of Imroz, the known painter, till she took her last breath. She passed away at the age of 87 in October, 2004.

Amrita Pritam's pen started to follow her thoughts at a very young age of twelve or thirteen. Since then, she has to her credit 27 novels and novelettes, 8 collections of poems and 38 other prose works which includes short stories, travelogues and also her auto-biography. Her novels include *Pinjar*, *Doctor Dev*, *Naagmani*, *Yatri*, *Aaj Ke Patte*, *Koi Nahi Janta*, *Yah Sach Hai*, *Terhavaa Sooraj*, *Unyas Din*, *Jalaa Vatan*, *Jebkatren*, *Kacdhi Sadak*, *Ek thi Anita*, *Dilli Ki Galiyan*, *Kore Kagaj*, *Ghonsla*, *Unke Hastakshar*, *Saagar Aur Spiyan*, *Bandol Darvaja*, *Aag ki Lakeer*, *Naa Raadha Naa Rukmani*, *Ek Sawal*, *Ariel*, *Bulaawaal*, *Ek thi Sarla*, *Eksimo Smile* and *Pighalti Chattaan*.

Pinjar, her debut novel is a saga of pain and pangs experienced by women during pre-partition and Partition period. It tells of women's abduction, dislocation and loss of identity.

Doctor Dev focuses on true love which is far more important than the physical intimacy. It sees 'love' and 'marriage' with a 'not traditional' angle and is mildly appreciated. *Unke Hastakshar* reflects the writers own thoughts regarding woman, her problems and the awakening with a variety of symbols. The novel passes a message that a woman should have strength enough to let her grow even on the rocks. *Rang ka Patta* is again a novel proclaiming the victory of love with the backdrop of Partition. The writer here shows the results of social taboos like dowry system, marriages of young girls to aged men and exploitation of women and her fight against it. *Dilli ki Galiyan*'s protagonist reflects the life of the writer to a great extent. It is a satire on contemporary political and social happenings and corruption prevailing in educational institutes.

Ek thi Anita is one more novel directly related to Amrita Pritam's personal life, her marriage, her feelings for Sahir, her relations with Imroz and the breakups. In this novel the writer boldly rejects marriage as a social bondage but tries to establish it as a mature adorable value. *Unki Kahani* is a story related to the violence and terrorism spread by dacoits in the Madhya Pradesh region. It narrates the pain experienced by women in the worst conditions in the areas of dacoity. In *Sagar aur Sipiyan* and *Naagmani* Amrita Pritam mirrors shocking truths of women of Indian society. It tells of how duty and love in this age become each other's substitute. Both the novels explain love, physical intimacy without any sign of lust or dirt.

Amrita Pritam's other novels in one or the other way reflect Indian woman's plight in the past and the present age. All her female protagonists come out as brave individuals directly or indirectly and challenge the rigid traditions social taboos and all those who hurdle her life and her emotions.

Apart from her large corpus of novels, Amrita Pritam's treasure overflows with 8 collections of poems, namely, *Thandiya Kiranaa*, *Mai Jamma Tu*, *Jameen-Aasmaan*, *Sunehudey*, *Kasturi*, *Lok-Peer*, *Sardhevelaa* and *Kagaj aur Canvas*. Her 38 other prose works include 12 collections of short stories, 3 travelogues, one character sketch and two autobiographies of which *Rashidi Ticker* or *Revenue Stamp* won her fame and reputation of a life sketch writer.

With her prolific creations, Amrita Pritam could win over not just the hearts of her readers, but also number of awards and honours. Her writing has brought her much name and fame. She received Sahitya Academy Award in 1956 for *Sunehudey* (collection of poems) and Padma Shri in 1969. She was honoured with Bharatiya Gyanpith Award, the highest honour for Indian literature in 1982. In 2004, Indian

Government honoured her with Padma Vibhushan. Apart to many other awards from different states of India, Social and Literature groups, Amrita Pritam has been honoured with D.Lit. Degree from the universities of Delhi, Jabalpur and Punjab.

Many of her works are translated in English, and several Indian and foreign languages. Three of her novels are filmed by known film makers. They are *Sagar aur Sippiyan* as *Kadambari*, *Unki Kahani* as *Daku* and *Pinjar* as *Pinjar.....beyond boundaries*.

The novel *Pinjar* has been translated into several Indian and Foreign languages. Translated into French by Dennis Metrineje, the novel received the prestigious award for literature in France in 2005.

5.2 The novel

In the words of D. R. More, *Pinjar* is remarkable for it's:

“...poetic presentment of the theme of the exploitation of the weaker sex on the background of the partition tragedy”

(2004: 235)

Amrita had not just heard of Partition, but had also witnessed it. She was aware of the torture and inhuman insults women had suffered before, during and immediately after Partition. The agony first appeared on paper as her legendary blood-boiling poem *Aj aakhaan Warris Shah nu...* The poem is an Ode to Warris Shah, the Sufi poet and creator of the romantic tragedy *Heer-Ranjha*. This was followed by her equally noteworthy novel *Pinjar*. It first came out in Punjabi and Hindi in 1948 and later was translated into English as *The Skeleton* by the dynamic old man Khushwant Singh.

Pinjar is a huge outcry hidden behind the silent sobs of thousands of females like Pooro, a victim of religious and communal conflicts during the Partition of the Indian subcontinent. Having caught the disturbance of Partition with great immediacy and tragic power, this novel becomes an intimate leap into events that tear apart the world of females like Pooro.

At the outset of the novel, Pooro the leading character, while shelling peas, is recollecting her past. She is in a nostalgic mood. She feels her body polluted as if she is nurturing a worm in her womb. As she shells the peas her thoughts shell her past. She travels a few years back to her parents place at Chhattovani village down the memory lane. The thoughts revealed that Pooro, a young beautiful fourteen year old girl is the eldest daughter of a Hindu 'Sahukar' moneylender's family. They belong to Chhatovani village in Punjab of undivided India. Pooro has three sisters and one brother. Her mother is expecting one more child. She gathers other woman folk of the village to perform a ritual so that she is blessed a son by the goddess 'Viddhimata'.

The subcontinent then was already in the clutches of the horror of Hindu – Muslim – Sikh hostility. The novelist has pointed to the danger from the Muslim in the beginning of the novel. "...Hindu girls never dared to venture out except in the broad daylight of the afternoon" (2003:03)

Thus from the very beginning the writer has made her readers aware of the attitude of the two major communal groups, Hindus and Muslims, towards each other during pre-partition and partition period.

As the novel advances, Pooro's marriage is being discussed. The family settles their choice on young Ramchand, son of a well-to-do family from a nearby village

Rattoval in Punjab of undivided India. Along with this, the marriage of Pooro's younger brother is fixed with Ramchand's sister Laajo.

Both the families start preparing for the two marriages. But destiny's plans were extremely different. One day a Muslim Youth Rashid abducts Pooro in the bright daylight in front of her younger sister. He locks her up in his house on the farms outside the village.

A family feud is linked with this abduction. Rashid discloses it to Pooro. The Sheikhs (Rashid's family) and Sahukar's (Pooro's family) are not on good terms. Before years Sahukars had abducted Rashid's aunt for the debt of a very small amount of money. They had kept her with them for three nights. This and Pooro's family's arrival at Chhatovani made Sheikhs provoke Rashid to abduct Pooro and revenge the Sahukars. But along with this he reveals one more secret. He truly loved Pooro. He said:

“It was my love and the prodding of the Sheikhs which made me do this. But I cannot bear to see you so sad.” (20)

Pooro is surprised to see Rashid, her abductor being gentle and caring towards her. He even proposes to marry her.

The mournful process of abduction is aggravated by the rejection from her parents when Pooro succeeds in escaping from the clutches of Rashid. Her parents do not let her in. Instead they say:

“You have lost your faith and birthright. If we dare to help you, we will be cut down and finished without a trace of blood left behind to tell our faith”. (23)

Shocked Pooro returns to Rashid. She marries him and moves to a nearby village. In the due course she is pregnant. She is renamed as 'Hamida' and her new name, as if to establish her new identity, is tattooed on her hand. Priyadarshini Das Gupta says about Pooro:

“Now she is Pooro only in her dreams and in her reminiscences of her parents' home. This duality she cannot take affably to and is soon reduced to mere skin and bones.” (2013:05)

Though Rashid did not call her Hamida, Amrita writes:

“In her dreams, when she met her old friends and played in her parents' home, everyone still called her Pooro” (25)

And again,

“It was a double life. Pooro became Hamida by day and turned back Pooro by night. In reality she was neither Hamida nor Pooro; she was just a skeleton, without a shape or a name.”(25)

Pooro cannot even accept her own child. For her it is Rashid's torture. She is bewildered with the thought that she is carrying a portion of a person who has spoiled her life:

“He had been planted inside her by force.... against her will.” (33)

She thinks, “Only if she could take the worm out of her womb and fling it away.” (01)

And she feels, "...as if the boy was drawing the milk from her veins and was sucking it out with force..." (33)

During this turmoil, Poro alias Hamida comes in contact with three females living a wretched life. Kammo is a motherless young girl who is ill treated by her aunt. She sees her mother in Hamida, but her aunt bans their meeting. Tara is suffering with some unknown disease and is fed up of her own life. Her husband has brought another woman to live with and forces Tara to become a prostitute. Both are in their full senses but pass through the torture silently so as to get three basic needs of life: food cloth and shelter. They suffer but they continue to live.

A mad woman arrives to village outskirts where villagers serve her food. She goes around half clad and half fed. But the villagers are shocked to know one day that she was pregnant. She is found dead with the birth of a baby boy. Hamida and Rashid bring the mad woman's child home and take care of the infant. She even breastfeeds the child. All the three female characters are treated merely as a body, not as humans. Poro calls them all a 'cage', a skeleton compelled to suffer as if they had no heart, no soul, and no feelings.

Owing to Rashid's co-operation and caring nature, the three miserable lives around her compel Poro alias Hamida to rethink about Rashid.

"He had not left her, not thrown her out. She was safely settled in his house. He was a kind husband". (48)

She wants to forget her past and live a peaceful life with Rashid as Hamida. But again her memories are ignited when she is to accompany an old woman for cure of her weak eyesight to Rattoval, Ramchand's village. The two come across each

other, they recognize each other, but none of the two utter a word. She returns to her family, once again disturbed.

One day Rashid comes to her with a bad news. Pooro's brother had set fire to their crops at Chhattovani village. This seemed to be an act of revenge. The year was 1947. As an irony to this act of setting crops on fire, communal discord erupts and rises to an unbelievable height. The canvas of Partition is smeared with horrible colours of murders, abductions, rapes and destructions. Not so surprisingly, none of the creative writers selected for this study hesitates portraying the horror attached to the event of Partition. The difference lies in the time and tenor, depending on their subsequent individual sensibility and point of view. Amrita is very precise with her pen:

“The streets ran with blood and were said to be muddled
with human corpses with no one to bury or cremate them”

(81)

During these days, a Hindu refugee group takes a night halt outside their village. Ramchand and his family were among them too. Hamida goes to meet him. Ramchand tells her that his sister Laajo, who was now also her brother's wife, had been abducted by Muslims. He requests Pooro to save his sister, Laajo. Back home, Pooro pleads to Rashid to help her locate and save the girl. Together they are able to locate her. She was confined in her father's house by a Muslim of Rattoval. They help her escape. She is brought to their house. One day Rashid informs the two females about the Government proclamation. The people were requested to hand over all abducted Indians so as to bring back their counterparts from India. Parents had been

requested and pleaded to accept their abducted daughters back. The religion had started to become accommodating and flex the rigid clutches of orthodoxy.

Pooro with Rashid hands over Laajo to Ramchand and Pooro's brother. Her brother urges Pooro to return to India. Pooro too was aware that this was her only chance. But she challenges the obsession with borders and boundaries. She reaches the climax of acceptance and challenge. She declares her choice "My home is now Pakistan" (84). She comes back to her family-Rashid and her son Javed.

As quoted by Kalpana Raithatha, Lakshmidhara Jain, the Director of Bhartiya Gyanpith comments about Amrita's writing:

"The one who has the knowledge and experience of the female's physical, mental and emotional structure, the one who has heated herself to gold ornament in the force/excitement of tension, conflict and pure love even in the difficult situations, such a Amrita's creation can be appreciated only with the warmth of the blood flowing in the veins and the throbs of the beating heart (translated from Hindi). (2008: 63)

Amrita Pritam has used two types of narrative techniques in *Pinjar* -Stream of consciousness and third person narration. The reader comes to know about Pooro's past, her grievances and anguish for Rashid and their son through the stream of thoughts running in Hamida's mind, the rechristenised Pooro. The same is with Tara. She is one of the three females Pooro meets at Sakkar. Her illness and her husband's attitude towards her are unbearable. She wants death to free her from the cage of life. Leaving these two characters, Amrita has used third person narration to introduce

other characters. The readers gradually come to know of other characters through the external narrator. Readers are not given an excess to their psyche. However, the horror of partition is well expressed largely through the characters of Pooro, Rashid, Ramchand and Laajo.

Pooro, the leading character of Amrita Pritam's *Pinjar* has been nourished as a paradigm of power hidden in a woman and its significance and manifestation. Her mood has constant shifts. This makes her character realistic. From the very beginning to the end, with each event she becomes one more woman on the pages of *Pinjar*. Pooro's nausea for the child in her womb, anguish for Rashid's mean act of her abduction, awaiting the moment of her marriage to Ramchand, rechristenised to 'Hamida', her acquaintance to Kammo, Tara and the mad woman, helping Laajo, the gradual positive change in her attitude for Rashid, and finally her decision of considering Pakistan her home forever altogether makes her character round. Long back her return was rejected by her parents and she had to go back to Rashid:

“When she had come this way earlier, she believed she was returning to life..., she had come full of hope. Now she had no hope, or any fear too.” (23)

But when she declares Pakistan as her home, according to Priyadarshini Dasgupta:

“Pooro, thus, makes the non-normative choice to refuse the offer of inclusion and interpolation into family, community, nation that was once denied to her. In doing so she recreates her own identity, 'Hamida' which had been once thrust upon her.”(2013: 5)

Initially, Rashid's character seems to be a negative, villainous one. But the writer gradually brings out the virtues hidden behind the first and only one mean act of his – abducting the girl he likes in the rage and provocation of age old revenge. He is actually kind and considerate by nature. He continuously contemplates his mean act. This adds to the increasing strength of his character. His character grows with the story. He supports Pooro in bringing up the mad woman's child, in helping an abducted Hindu girl hide in their house, in letting Laajo escape from the clutches of her abductors and reach home safely. Every time he helps Pooro, he feels a little relieved from the burden of his mean act, of abducting her.

The writer has made Rashid the medium and the first victim of communal malice ruling over the subcontinent. During the partition each and every community prepared for the self defense and harassed and attacked the other community. To kill was the way to save one's own self. At such a time of crisis, Rashid saves Hindu girls, the other community than his, of which one is sister to Ramchand, Pooro's earlier fiancé and wife of Pooro's brother who had destroyed Rashid's ready crop. He proves to be growing. He does not remain flat but develops slowly and gradually. He outshines a real man.

There are many other minor female characters who not only help to advance the story but also leave long lasting impression on the readers. Pooro's mother wants one more son, a brother for her daughters but rejects abducted Pooro; Tara is disgusted with life and wants to die as her own husband sells her to other men; the mad woman, half-clad becomes a victim to some lustful men and gets pregnant; Kammo, the little girl lives with her aunt in a very wretched way and tries to seek her mother in Pooro; the Hindu girl from the refugee camp whom Pooro hands over to Ramchand to take care of and Laajo, Ramchand's sister, is abducted during the

migration between the two parts of the cracked sub continent. She is put in a situation similar to that of Pooro. Under Pooro's shelter she fears returning to the family that had once rejected abducted Pooro's comeback. She says,

“So far our families have been mourning loss of one, now they can grieve the death of two. Pooro, I have nowhere to go. What face will I show to anyone?”(79)

With these female figures, the writer has tried to show the patriarchal society asking for the '*agnipariksha*', ordeal by fire of the second sex during the partition, pre-partition period and also to-day.

Ramchand, Pooro's father and Pooro's brother become the symbols of helplessness in front of the orthodox conventional thinking, religious fury and migration of bewildered multitude and confused magnitude. Leaving Rashid, no male character reaches the height of Pooro.

Amrita Pritam has passed through Partition and her experiences find first hand expression in *Pinjar*. Besides this, *Unke Hastakshar* and *Dr. Dev* also voice her trauma. She once said about Partition:

“I have written a lot on communal quarrels, and now I am tired of it.....Man has still not understood Mohmmad, Nanak or Krishna. He is still entangled in meager things and is there only where he previously was. How would he understand that love and lord are one only” (translated)
(2001: 20)

Pinjar can be considered document of this terror, especially woman as its major victim. The novel, off course, starts with the communal hatred of pre-partition period, but it takes a turn at the midway. At the middle of the novel Amrita shows the disturbance of the partition. It results in not just killing one or two persons but butchering men, women and children beyond imagination.

“Hamida, with her own eyes, saw men collecting steel weapons and having their edges sharpened...everyone was saying, we will not let a drop of Hindu blood remain in our country”. (80)

The writer shifts the novel to a violent complex chapter in Pooro’s life, making the shades of the horror of Partition riots severe and turmoil.

“...the streets ran with blood and were said to be cluttered with human corpses, with no one to bury or cremate them; the stink from putrefying flesh hung in the air spreading pestilence”(81)

Readers witness partition to a great extent through bewildered Pooro’s eyes. She sees a young band of goondaz dancing about a naked girl. She also hears that girls were stolen from the refugee camps in the night and returned in the morning. A girl was taken away like this for nine continuous nights before Pooro helps her out. Many girls were abducted and forced into marriage.

The writer tries not to be bias. She narrates the happenings on the other side of the border too.

“News come of worn out conveyors of Muslims coming across the frontier. Many had died in India; many had fallen by the wayside and many others had given in to their wounds after their journey was over”. (83)

Amrita’s story of Partition, its horror and tragedy has man as the tormentor and woman as the sufferer. The novel settles to a great extent with plight of women in that crisis. It focuses more on the trauma of women abducted, raped, murdered, stripped, paraded naked in the streets, forcefully married or made slaves by the opponent community.

Unlike other Partition novels, *Pinjar* ends with recognition, recovery and rehabilitation of the abducted women. As Bharti Ray quotes, Nehru too had made a strong public appeal:

“I am told that there is unwillingness on the part of the relatives to accept those girls and women... This is most objectionable and wrong attitude to take and any social custom that supports this attitude must be condemned. These girls and women require our tender and loving care”.
(1999: 10)

Pooro compares the two times: when she was abducted and her return was rejected by her parents and 1948, when families and community came searching for their females. She was pure and was yet considered unclean at that time.

“When it happened to her, religion had become an insurmountable obstacle; neither her parents nor her in-

laws to be, had been willing to accept her. And now the same religion had become so accommodating?" (112)

Thus Amrita Pritam's *Pinjar*, translated into English by Khushwant Singh titled 'The Skeleton' is the tale of a young girl who becomes a victim of cross-religious abduction but defies the patriarchal and territorial boundaries effectively using her power and significance to assess critically the bitter reality of Partition by choosing to stay on the other side of the border. Not that she hates her people, her community, her India. But she accepts her bitter truth:

"Any girl whether Hindu or Muslim is welcomed back in her home, take it that Pooro's soul too has reached back to its home." (118)

As Raghu Ram Bandi puts it:

"The cinema's business is not the photographing of theatrical décor, a pre-stylized reality, but the photographing of actual physical reality so that it has style." (2009: 9-10)

Amrita Pritam's *Pinjar* too got a different style by *Chankya* (tele series) fame writer, actor, director Dr. Chandraprakash Dwivedi. It fully satisfies the argument put forward by Joy Gould Boyum:

"In assessing an adaptation, we are never really comparing book with film, but an interpretation with an interpretation the novel that we ourselves have recreated in our imaginations, out of which we have constructed our own

individualized ‘movie’, and the novel on which the filmmaker has worked a parallel transformation. For just as we are readers, so implicitly is the film maker, offering us, through his work, his perceptions, his visions his particular insight into his source. An adaptation is always, whatever else it may be, an interpretation” (1989: 61-62)

5.3 Chandraprakash Dwivedi

A qualified medical professional, Chandraprakash Dwivedi has proved his talent as a film director, script writer and actor. He had cultivated deep interest in Indian Literature and Indian theatre. Born in 1959 at Lakhmipur Kheri District of Uttar Pradesh, Dwivedi, entered the medium of entertainment and theatre as an actor-director in 1991 with his television epic *Chanakya*. The debut creation opened the doors of television and cinema for him with a bang. This was followed by one more television series *Mrityunjay* based on the same titled Marathi novel by Shivaji Samant. It is on the life and relations of Karna, a major character of Mahabharat. This snatched him the screen Videocon Best Director award of the year. Next was *Pinjar* in 2003. This was his debut large screen film. It brought to the unit Film-Fare Best Art Direction Award to Manish Sappal and National Award for Best Actor to Manoj Bajpai. In 2012 one more Tele Series *Upanishad Ganga* came on the small screen. Dwivedi has at present two projects on floor – *The Legend of Kunal* (a film based on Emperor Ashoka’s son Kunal) and *Mohalla Assi* set around Assi Ghat, Varanasi.

Dwivedi’s commitment to exploring India’s cultural and historical heritage and bringing it to the mass through the medium of films has been duly recognized and

honoured with 'Cultural Catalyst Award' by South Asian Cinema Foundation in 2009.(Wikipedia)

According to Somdatta Mandal there could be several reasons why a film maker adopts a story from the print medium into film. She opines that a director or film producer would do so when "...he wishes to present his personal interpretation of the original story through his own language of film" or when "...he wishes to take up the challenge of recreating a period in history and the original literary source has been picked up mainly for the period element."(2005: 49-50)

Both these reasons can be attached to the pair of creator and creation, namely, Chandraprakash Dwivedi and *Pinjar...beyond boundaries*. In his interview to Sukanya Verma, a day before the release of his film, he says:

"I wanted to make serious cinema. Serious literature fascinates me... I read *Pinjar*. I was sure I would be able to make it into a meaningful film. What I found special about the novel was its depiction of the crumbling structure of society, people's beliefs, faith, values of life and principles.
(2003: n.pag)

And he adds,

"Re-creation has become a habit with me". (2003: n.pag)

5.4 Film *Pinjar... beyond boundaries*

Pinjar... beyond boundaries a full length commercial film, released in October 2003, tells the tale of religious slits between Hindus and Muslims. This religious slit was present before Partition but had reached a monstrous height at the

end of the colonial rule. It brought human morals to a piteous depth in 1947, during the time of Partition. The film reflects the dogmatic beliefs, rigid customs and traditions attached to religious boundaries and its worst effect on the second sex.

Following is the crew of the film....

Film: *Pinjar...beyond boundaries* (2003)

Director: Dr. Chandraprakash Dwivedi

Producer: Lucky Star Produciton

Screenplay: Dr. Chandraprakash Dwivedi

Based on: Amrita Pritam's *Pinjar*

Lyrics: Amrita Pritam, Gulzar

Music: Uttam Singh

Cinematography: Santosh Thundiyill

Editor: Ballu Saluja

Art: Muneesh Sappel

Cast: Urmilla Matondkar, Manoj Bajpai, Sanjay Suri, Sandali Sinha, Priyanshu Chatterjee, Isha Koopikar, Lilette Dubey, Kulbhushan Kharbanda, Farida Jalal, Alok Nath, Sima Biswas, Dina Pathak....

Without fearing any controversy, Dwivedi has boldly handled the sensitive issue of Partition. The film starts with Poro (Urmilla Matondkar) and her family at Amritsar. Poro's family includes her father (Kulbhushan Kharbanda), her pregnant

mother (Lilette Dubey), her elder brother Trilok (Priyanshu Chatterjee), her younger sister Rajjo (Isha Koppikar) and a kid sister.

They are shifting to Chhatowani, their village on Indo-Pak border in Punjab. Her marriage is fixed to young cultured educated man Ramchand (Sanjay Suri) of Rattoval in Punjab of undivided India. The time period is 1946. Pooro's brother is a freedom fighter. Pooro and her family's joy get shattered when Rashid (Manoj Bajpai) a Muslim of the same village kidnaps her. There had been an ancestral dispute between their families. Abduction of Pooro was to settle the past scores.

When Pooro escapes from Rashid's prison and goes to her parents, they do not accept her. Left with no other option, Pooro marries Rashid. Her dislocation gives her a new name, 'Hamida'. On the other end, Trilok is married to Ramchand's sister Laajo (Sandali Sinha) and Rajjo is married to Ramchand's cousin brother. Rashid leaves the village with Hamida and the two settle in the nearby village Sakkar. Pooro, greatly depressed by all the happenings conceives but mis-carries the child.

She thereafter starts bringing up the child of a mad woman who had died during the delivery of the child. But very soon, the child is taken away by the Hindus of their village.

In 1947, the British leave India splitting the country into two. The effects of Partition were equal to people on the either sides. Rattoval and Sakkar become part of Pakistan. Rajjo has gone to Amritsar with her brother. But Laajo, Ramchand and their parents are caught in clutches of riots. Laajo is abducted by some Muslims. Pooro meets Ramchand who pleads to save his sister. Pooro, with Rashid's help, successfully helps Laajo to escape from her abductor. They hand over Laajo to Trilok and Ramchand at the border.

Trilok and Pooro's meeting is full of tears. Trilok asks Pooro to return and marry Ramchand. But Pooro surprises them by saying that she now belongs to Pakistan. Rashid has already left the place. Pooro runs around searching for him. She finds him and says the he was her truth. They bid farewell to Laajo, Ramchand and Trilok.

In the able hands of Dwivedi *Pinjar*, the novel is transformed into a sensitive screenplay with a different sensitive approach.

Unlike the novel *Pinjar*, the film *Pinjar* moves ahead with linear time. The novel begins with present time, shifts to flashback, comes back to present again. It starts with pregnant Pooro at Sakkar recollecting her happy past and lamenting her present. The film *Pinjar* starts with the 'past' of the novel as its present. Pooro is seen enjoying her youth at Amritsar with her family at the out-set of the film. She is not a fourteen years old child. Neither is her brother a child too. Both are matured enough to understand and enjoy their lives. Pooro's brother appears as Trilok (Priyanshu Chatterjee) in Dwivedi's film. He has an identity outside his home. He is a Congress activist.

Dwivedi has filled the first forty five minutes of the film with bright colours and bright light. The songs and settings of huge Punjabi houses reflect the joviality of Pre-Partition Punjabi families. People are shown living and working together. It shows undivided subcontinent. He has used space to show time. George Bluestone has given the difference between time and space used by films and fiction.

“...The novel renders the illusion of space by going from point to point in time; the film renders time by going from point to point in space.”(1957: 61)

This part of the film is full of light, bright colours, farms under the bright open sky, music, dances; laughter's and smiles depicting joy and happiness.

In the film *Pinjar* there is no underage marriage. The characters are mature. In the second 45 minutes of the film unlike Ramchand of the novel, Ramchand (Sanjay Suri) of the silver screen denies the proposal of marrying Rajjo (Isha Kopikaar), Pooro's younger sister. He believes that it will spoil Rajjo's life. She will not be able to see a husband in him, but would be reminded of the tragedy every time she sees him. He suggests to get his young cousin marry Rajjo instead and save the family prestige. Even Trilok (Priyanshu Chatterjee) who loves his sister Pooro a lot and shares a great attachment with her, files a complaint of Pooro's abduction. The novel's little boy is not that grown up to take any bold decision. Whereas, in the film, Ramchand, Trilok and Laajo are brought to the 21st Century audience in a convincing manner. They are young and mature. They argue, give opinions and try to convince their elders. They are capable of taking decisions.

The second forty five minutes has a mixed atmosphere. It is bright and joyous on one hand and dull and grave on the other. At Amristsar and Rattoval the two families are shown living a joyful life, enjoying the fair of 'Baisakhi'. At Sakkar, Hamida alias Pooro passed through the pain of miscarriage. Both Laajo and Pooro alias Hamida's names are tattooed on their hands. Laajo's pain has joy hidden and Pooro's pain has the sorrow of the loss of identify. This time frame suggests that time never waits or laments anyone's absence. One has to continue to breathe irrespective of absence or loss of one's kith and kin too. And parallel to this, it also tells of how one has to pass through the problems, the trauma, away from the dreamt life, and still remain alive.

The last forty five minutes of the film is full of grave colours. The use of red colour, as an exception symbolizes bloodshed. Through these forty five minutes, the director portrays the year of 1947 more as the year of partition than the joy of freedom. This part of the film, mostly follows the text faithfully. Pooro alias Hamida with Rashid helps Laajo return to her folk. Pooro accept Rashid's companionship. The fidelity visible in the first two forty five minutes of the film slowly decreases in the third part.

Joy Gould Boyum has discussed the word 'fidelity' saying:

“...a film might be considered faithful to its source, to the extent that is implicit reading remained within the confines of that work's interpretative possibilities, to the extent that it neither violated nor diminished them”. (1989: 77)

Dwivedi goes one step ahead of this. He borrows an original literary source related to a period in history and tries to recreate it without losing the original story.

The novel *Pinjar* is a sad tale of sufferings of Pooro and other females starting from pre-partition period in 1936 followed by abductions of females during Partition of the sub-continent. The film *Pinjar* is about the same sufferings and exploitations of Pooro and other females but at the eve of Partition. Pooro's suffering on the screen start in 1946 and extends upto 1947 where the film ends. Dwivedi does not lengthen Pooro's suffering for eleven long years. He also decreases the number of sufferers as compared to the novel *Pinjar*. There is no reference to Kammo or Tara's characters or their sufferings. The mad woman played by Seema Biswas, the Hindu female refugee whom Pooro helps to reach the Hindu camp and Laajo are the only sufferers shown on the screen. One of the reasons could be that he wishes to focus more on the core

events and centralize the major characters, and through access to their psyche, wants his viewers to re-experience the event of partition and the novel too. Thus the victims are depicted more as sufferers of communalism during the Partition period. There is a shift in the time period and degree of sorrow and also in the number of the sufferers. This reduction in tragedy helps to balance the audience's capacity of enduring it. Tragedy on the screen does fulfill the function of Catharsis. But too much of tragedy, especially on the screen may dilute the effect and prove melodramatic. The reducing of the time period turns the story purely a Partition film.

Chandraprakash Dwivedi was born three years after Partition at a place which was not much affected by the trauma. So in his words, no one in his family had a tale to tell him about Partition and he knew nothing about its pain and tribulations. For him the exposure to the trauma of Partition was confined to history, literature, documentaries, films etc. He spoke to Sukanya Verma on the day before the release of the film: how he came to know of the minute details about partition, the trauma that he had never experienced:

“...When I read about it, I realized what a tragedy humanity has gone through... To obtain the knowledge of the society of that time, stories written in that period are of great help. I read a lot of literature from that era as well as post-partition stories that carry the images and pictures of that particular time”. (2003: n.pag)

Owing to his lack of personal experience of Partition, Dwivedi's scenes of Partition do not appear grave with grey, black and blue shades. In the film one sees open swords, stabbings, killings, blood gushing out, kids butchered, buses set on fire,

blood flowing in the gutters with water, girls kidnapped from the groups of refugees migrating to the other side of the border, house locked from outside and set on fire with people screaming, shouting being burnt alive and much more. The film shows everything in its naked form. No masking is used as far as killings, destructions and abductions are concerned. The last forty five minutes of the film depicts the reality of days of the Partition in its true colours, actions and reactions.

At Rattowal, Muslims set fire to all the houses belonging to the Hindus. A mob runs behind Ramchand with open swords. Ramchand manages to escape from their hands and reaches his house. He leaves the house with his mother and sister Laajo. There is no news of his father. During migration to India, Laajo is abducted by a Muslim. Ramchand and his mother are left lamenting the loss of first Ramchand's father and then Laajo.

Dwivedi, like Amrita Pritam has tried to remain unbiased with deviation at two instances. Pooro's brother Trilok is a Congress activist who follows Gandhi's idea. In a Public meet related to communal riots at Amritsar during partition, Trilok is seen distributing leaflets. The speaker in this public meet tells people that, "only a few Muslim leaders want Partition". This can be considered a hint to leaders like Jinnah and Liyakat Ali and others. The film shows most of the atrocities from the side of the Muslims. Even the harm done by Hindus is shown as a result of the problem ignited by Muslims. The director thus slips out of the area of remaining unbiased at few moments in short shots.

When a film-maker makes a 'period film', he has to be very careful about everything related to that specific period. He needs to be faithful to the time, structure, architecture, language, costumes, traditions and thinking pattern of the

society of that specific period. This film shows communalism at the outset itself. The viewer can immediately make out the period the film has used as the backdrop. The typical Punjabi accent added to the Hindi used by the characters signifies the place being discussed. Most of the Partition films are the part of genre of historical films. It becomes mandatory to remain authentic at least through period settings, costumes, traditions and dialects. One more significant feature of this film is its pace. It advances evenly, without wasting unnecessary time on any single event or any unwanted casting.

Apart to the language and dialect, the unit of the film *Pinjar* has used villages of Rajasthan and sets of Amritsar and Lahore at Film City, Mumbai to create the period of 1940s, pre-partition and Partition years. At Punjab, villages were already crowned with antennas and water tanks. The settings brought Film-Fare best Art Director's award to Muneesh Sapal, the Art Director of the film.

Costumes are used as symbols too. The first quarter of the film is full of bright and shining colours. Even the costumes are of floral and natural colours. It suggests joy, happiness and easy life. It also hints to hopes for a bright future. The last quarter has more of dull, dusty earth coloured costumes. It suggests the storm, the holocaust, the trauma of Partition shattering once colourful Punjab. In Punjab, both Hindus and Muslims wear similar attires. The difference mostly lies in the colour of 'dupattas' among females and 'turbans' of males. In *Pinjar* the costume designer has not ignored this difference. 'Pooro' is seen with red, pink and orange dupatta on floral colour dresses, while 'Hamida has white, black or brown dupatta' on white, black or earth colour dresses. While moving from Chhatovani to Sakkar after marriage with Rashid, Pooro sits in the bus wearing a 'burkha'. The 'burkha' becomes a metaphor of Hamida concealing Poor's identity then onwards. Young educated males like

Trilok and Ramchand are not given any turban or dressing of any specific religion. This suggests secularism entering the young generation through education.

From Raj Kapoor's dream sequences to Salman Rushdie's magic realism, dream has been a conveniently effective tool to articulate reality in a convincing way. Dwivedi is not an exception. He has employed the technique of dream to bring his Pooro very near to the writer's Pooro. In the novel, at Sakkar, Pooro after her marriage was 'Hamida by day, Pooro by night.' She dreamt of her parents, family, friends and also Ramchand. She cannot forget Ramchand. In the film Pooro sees Ramchand in Rashid at the time of *Nikah* and she says 'yes'. She daydreams herself as a bride in palquin led by Ramchand. The dreams of Ramchand can be summed up to the conclusion that she still loved him.

The music in any film, especially the way it relates to the film is very significant. *Pinjar* is not simply a film of pangs felt by women in the Partition period; it aims to mark its presence as a commercial film too. Hence it contains many songs. The songs help to build the mood or add to the importance of the characters. The song *Mar udaani...mat mar udaani....* become the words for Pooro and her family living happily at Amritsar expecting and accepting her marriage very soon. Similarly, *Shabani Shabba...* explains the festival of Baisakhi celebrated at Punjab. *Sitako dekhe sara gaon...* is sung by Ramchand and his sister Laajo on screen. This song tells much about Ramchand, Laajo and their family. It suggests that Ramchand's family was rich, educated and cultured. This song builds a positive image of Ramchand revealing his peace loving and god fearing nature; his love for music and his faith in religion. The song is about Lord Ram and his wife Sita's parting and her 'agnipariksha'. It turns a hint to the next event. Of all the songs, Chandraprakash Dwivedi has taken two from Amrita Pritam's collection, namely, "*waris shahnu...*"

and “*charkha chalati maa...dhaga banati maa...*” Both these songs sing of the bitter truth of the society: ignorance suppression and injustice towards women making her existence merely a ‘skeleton’. “*waris shah nu...*” is a poem written by Amrita Pritam invoking ‘*Waris Shah*’, the one who created the famous romantic story of Heer Ranjha. The writer invokes him to shed the tears of blood for the daughters of India and Pakistan.

In any film, actors play their roles respecting the script writer’s words. Manoj Bajpai playing Rashid in *Pinjar* says, it was his dream role since the college times. Urmilla Matondkar calls ‘Pooro’ and ‘Hamida’, a challenge to the actress in her. Dwivedi’s casting and his faith in his artists has extended him exactly what he desired.

According to Bhavna Somaiya as quoted by Gita Vishwanath and Salma Malik,

“The advantage of using literature on celluloid was that the film-maker had a readymade a ready-made screenplay supported by well sketched wholesome characters. The disadvantage was that it raised the expectations of the audience.”(2009:68)

Amrita Pritam’s debut novel *Pinjar*, later translated as *The skeleton* by Khushwant Singh, came as a saga of pain and problems experienced by females before and during Partition. The novel has two parallel ends. Laajo returns to her family and Pooro accepts her family. Along with accepting Rashid’s love for her she was blinded by the mother-hood for her son Javed and the adopted child whom she loves equally. Even Ramchand, her fiancé is married to her own younger sister. All

these together play an important role in her decision declaring Rashid and Pakistan her home.

Pinjar, the film too has the parallel ends as like the novel *Pinjar*. But in the film, the director makes this decision comparatively difficult for Pooro. Unlike the source text Hamida has lost her child as she miscarries it; the Hindus of her village have taken away her adopted child calling him the son of a Hindu mother; Ramchand is still a bachelor as he had rejected the suggestion of his marriage to Pooro's sister. The only attachment is her developing affection, understanding and forgiving Rashid. She declares Rashid as her truth and Pakistan as her home.

When any filmmaker goes for the filmisation of a literary piece of work, the utmost priority goes to the principal objective behind it and the group of viewers. The shifts that are seen in the film *Pinjar* can be explained as the film maker's consideration of the demands of the audience. Catering the demands of the generation and inflexibility of time, changes get necessitated. Even after bringing the necessary changes in the film *Pinjar*, the director has tried to maintain the theme of its source text without giving any complex narration.

Amrita Pritam's *Pinjar* tells the story of love and hate. It also tells of the feelings, reconciliation, recovery and reaccepting of women abducted in different circumstances during Pre-partition and Partition periods. With visible shifts, Chandraprakash Dwivedi, the director of the film *Pinjar* has maintained the story of love and hate where love finally wins.

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