

was driven to the conclusion that for the horrors of 1947–48 not to repeat themselves, reformation had to occur not merely in the behaviour and attitudes but in terms of a far-reaching transformation wrought from an engagement with contradictions in the self.¹⁸⁹ Rather, the novel replicates the state of wounded selfhood and despair of refugees, falling back on conventional images of alienation and angst. Deeper contradictions in the constitution of masculine identity in Punjab are not engaged with, however. There is little formal experimentation either; the narrative follows a pattern of linear, realist narration. The lapses of insight and empathy weaken the rendering of traumatic historical events that may have been personally witnessed as a child.

Civilisational Memory in the Wake of Migration

I conclude this chapter with a discussion of *Basti* (1979 trans. 1999), a novel by Pakistani writer Intizar Husain.¹⁹⁰ In an interview with Alok Bhalla, while reflecting on the partition, Husain admits his bewilderment and inability to explain the extent and magnitude

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 105.

¹⁹⁰ Intizar Husain was born into an orthodox Shi'ite family, given that his father and uncle were recent converts to Shi'ism, while the rest of the family remained Sunni Muslims. Husain's father was somewhat of a Maulvi and a proselytiser. He wished his son to be educated in the traditional way, and hence Husain received his early education at home in his native Dibai, a town in the district Bulandshahr in India, under his father. This included a study of Arabic and mainly religious texts, though amongst the Urdu books he read was the *Arabian Nights*, a book that later had a great influence on his fiction. The family moved to the larger town of Hapur. Husain went to school there and eventually went to Meerut for his college education. His college career was brought to an end by the partition in 1947, when he was deeply disturbed by the levels of violence around him. He migrated to Lahore, where his family later joined him. He began a long and illustrious literary career with the story *Qayyuma ki Dukan* (*Qayyuma's Shop*). The discussion that follows is indebted to Memon's Introduction in Husain, *Basti*, pp. vii–xx.

of the violence that occurred.¹⁹¹ Even so, through his narratives Husain has made a lifelong attempt to make the experience of migration meaningful, often figuring this quest in terms of retrieval of memory. He began writing short stories after migrating to Pakistan, though not in the mode advocated by the Progressive writers.¹⁹² Rather, he probed deeper into the past and ancient traditions and legends; initially the history of the Muslim migration, the *hegira* or *hijrat* and later the *Mahabharata* and other subcontinental narratives about devastation and exile.¹⁹³ Husain began to examine the Indian Muslim culture that he felt he was a product of and that had shaped the history of which he was a part. In his view, an ongoing cultural process had developed a cultural and creative amalgam, as a result of an attempt to understand the Islamic revelation in terms of this land and to merge the revelation with the soil. But this amalgamation had been threatened by the puritan frame of mind amongst both Hindus and Muslims.¹⁹⁴

Along with his friend the poet Nasir Kazmi, Husain attempted to initiate a literary movement that would usher in a new consciousness.¹⁹⁵ At first he hoped that the experience of emigration would be a source of creativity and growth in the life of the new nation. He sought to turn the temporal event of the Prophet Muhammad's hijrat from Mecca to Medina in 622 C. E. into an archetypal event of

¹⁹¹ See Husain, 'Partition, Exile and Memories of a Lost Home: An Interview with Intizar Husain by Alok Bhalla' in *A Chronicle of the Peacocks*, trans. Alok Bhalla and Vishwamitter Adil, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002, especially pp. 229–33. This exchange has also appeared in Bhalla, *Partition Dialogues*, pp. 75–108.

¹⁹² Memon argues that Husain was influenced by the Progressives during the first phase of his career as a writer, but fell out with them because of their failure to acknowledge the reality of Pakistan. Some Progressive critics dubbed his work reactionary on account of the nostalgia for the past they discerned in it. See Memon, 'Partition Literature: A Study of Intizar Husain', *Modern Asian Studies* 14 (1980): pp. 397–401.

¹⁹³ The following paragraphs draws on Memon's account. See Memon, Introduction *Basti*, pp. xvii–xix.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. xviii.

¹⁹⁵ Kazmi was born in Ambala in undivided India, and migrated to Lahore. For details about Kazmi's literary career, see the biographical note in Farooqi, ed. *Oxford India Anthology of Modern Urdu Literature: Poetry and Prose Miscellany*, pp. 50–51.

renewal, an epiphany that could enact itself again and again across time and history. However, Husain came to fear the collective loss of memory, since he felt that at times great experiences come to be lost to a nation and that nations come to forget their history. In his opinion, the experience of emigration was thus lost to the *mohajir* community. Husain's disillusionment was confirmed by failures of the Pakistani state, with suppression of democracy, removal of civilian government and the taking over of power by military dictators such as Field Marshal Ayub Khan in 1958. Later events such as the defeat during the 1965 war with India and the 1971 civil war that led to the division of Pakistan confirmed this sense of failed potential. Given that religion had failed to be the bond that could keep people united and that society had not been regenerated, there was a pronounced sense of loss of memory and collective identity.¹⁹⁶ For Husain the implications of this partitioning of consciousness could prove to be disastrous.

Husain adopts a complex literary strategy in *Basti*, combining retrospective narration with a storyline set in a later phase of history. The protagonist Zakir is a historian who looks back to the events of his early childhood in India and the partition from the vantage point of the experience of 1971 in Pakistan as a dual witness to momentous events, past and present.¹⁹⁷ His memories of childhood in village India are not merely nostalgic in the representation of commonality of experience between the communities and the tales and stories that formed the bedrock of a shared culture. For there is an early reference to Cain's murder of Abel; this episode becomes a key to understanding the potential for discord within

¹⁹⁶ Memon, Introduction to *Basti*, pp. xviii–xix.

¹⁹⁷ Both Prakash argues that the novel can be divided into two parts. The first part portrays Zakir's memories of childhood in Rupnagar, while the second reflects on the community's past, going back to prehistory and mythic times. Images from nature, seasonal rhythms and images of innocence and continuity characterise the first part, while images of loss, desolation, waste and meaninglessness predominate in the second. The second part follows a stream-of-consciousness structure, in which events are recorded through the principle of association rather than chronology as the narrator moves between ages. The two parts are united by the image of the *basti*, the small town or neighbourhood, with different connotations including that of Pakistan, a *basti* as failed utopia. See Prakash, 'Nation and Identity', p. 86.

the family, or within such modes of intercommunity coexistence in 'bastis' or neighbourhoods.¹⁹⁸ As in *Twilight in Delhi*, a plague afflicts Hindus and Muslims alike in the village Rupnagar in undivided India. The young Zakir observes that Hindus are dying in larger numbers. He is told that when the plague comes, Hindus die, while when cholera comes, Muslims die. But the disease soon ceases to discriminate and even the doctor's wife is taken by the plague.¹⁹⁹ Such memories of the spread of contagion, which take on a metaphoric quality, are interspersed with an awareness of demonstrations taking place with the advent of the movement for freedom of the eastern part of Pakistan, which would later become Bangladesh. His father Abba Jan compares demonstrations against this movement unfavourably with those that took place at the time of the Khilafat movement.²⁰⁰ The poignancy of departing from the land of one's childhood memories is powerfully evoked. It was as if, as Zakir puts it, a whole mythic era had stayed behind with Rupnagar.²⁰¹ Husain dramatises the psychological costs of loss of one's homeland and the resultant sense of alienation with sensitivity, also giving us a sense of psychic numbing that followed physical dislocation.²⁰²

The novel also captures the impact of the historical trauma of 1947 at the level of perception of time. In *Basti* time is not always presented as a linear succession of past, present and future, given that the black hole of 1947 led to a disturbance of temporality and the sense of continuity. There is rather a sense of blocked or frozen time here, as well as an attempt to reach back into sacred/durational time to initiate the possibility of recuperation. Marianne Hirsch's notion of post-memory, a form of memory transmitted by survivors of traumatic events to their children, is pertinent with respect to the novel. Hirsch writes of holes in the memory of survivors of the Holocaust and their children and the ways in which trauma

¹⁹⁸ Husain, *Basti*, pp. 6–7.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 12–13.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 22–23.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

²⁰² As Lifton points out, psychic numbing may result in immobilisation in extreme cases as there is an inward struggle to absorb and confront what has happened. See Caruth, 'An Interview with Robert Jay Lifton', pp. 136–37.

may be passed on through either discussion of horrific events, or even refraining from, overt reference. For her, later stories may be evacuated by such narratives of a previous generation that circulate belatedly and are shaped by traumatic events that can neither be recreated nor understood.²⁰³ Husain is able to grasp the belated effects of historical trauma on later generations in Pakistan, especially in terms of such holes in memory. He makes a conscious effort to restore a sense of the Indo-Islamic cultural amalgam, as well as other strands in the civilisation of the subcontinent that had been deemed ‘other’ by official nationalist ideologies in Pakistan.²⁰⁴ Indeed, the possibility of coming to terms with such gaps in the collective memory was further complicated due to the historical circumstances of the 1960s leading to the break-up of Pakistan. This narrative generates different modes of representation of discontinuity, shifting between the late 1960s/early 1970s during Ayub Khan’s rule, 1947, the 1857 revolt and the events during the hijrat. Husain traverses the fractured landscape of exile and post-memory through recourse to symbolism and myth, as well as sustained reflection on lost modes of civilisational being and exchange in *bastis* or neighbourhoods.

There is a retrospective description of how as a student Zakir observed demonstrations during the Quit India movement along with his Hindu friend Surendar, and how he began to come to terms with his sexuality with his attraction for his childhood sweetheart Sabirah (whose name means patience).²⁰⁵ Later, at a time when teaching is disrupted at the college in Pakistan where he lectures, a letter from Surendar in India brings news about Sabirah, who had stayed behind in India.²⁰⁶ The theme of unrequited love and the longing to be reunited with the love of his youth recurs through the narrative. Zakir misses the neem trees that do not flourish

²⁰³ See Hirsch, *Family Frames*, pp. 22–23. Narratives by children/grandchildren of partition refugees/survivors, however, begin to appear later in the 1980s and 90s. Also see P. Kumar’s critical evocation of Hirsch’s ideas in her discussion of second generational acts of memory in *Limiting Secularism*, pp. 97–98.

²⁰⁴ Contravening the ‘Pakistan ideology’ could even lead to a jail sentence, though this law was not often implemented. Personal communication, Mubarak Ali.

²⁰⁵ Husain, *Basti*, pp. 41–42 and 47.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

in the harsher climate in the northwest; these become a symbol of lost time.²⁰⁷ Zakir's friends meet at the restaurant at the hotel Shiraz, where a young radical spouting Marxist rhetoric denounces imperialism and welcomes the possibility of smashing of the system, which the war symbolised for him.²⁰⁸ Here we find a satirical representation of over-the-top revolutionary posturing. There is even a question as regards whether the creation of Pakistan itself was a good thing or not; finally the reply is that doubt must be suspended at some point.²⁰⁹ As Memon argues, Husain eventually accepted the partition as a historical necessity, while recognising its tragic outcome.²¹⁰

Surendar describes to him in his letter Sabirah's fate as a silent, melancholy girl staying on alone in India. She had decided to stay, Zakir learns, after having been offered a position at All India Radio, even as her mother and sister set off for Dhaka. When asked by Surendar what might have happened if she had set off for Pakistan as well, she refuses to speculate on paths not taken. Zakir begins to feel that his position is similar to Sabirah's.²¹¹ Indeed, her situation begins to preoccupy him more than the fate of independent Pakistan and the possibility of another partition of his country. He is unable to reply to his friend's letter or make any decision about Sabirah after the announcement of war breaking out.²¹² The failure to act on this desire acquires a symbolic significance, indicating the long-reaching effects of paralysis of will in both the personal and geopolitical realms.

Section seven is constructed in the form of a diary narrativising some of the important dates during the civil war. In a nightmarish vision, Zakir takes on the identity of Abul Hasan of *The Thousand and One Nights* and wanders through a city of men without heads, which terrifies him.²¹³ The diary entry for December 16 (also the day the Indian army entered Dhaka, assuring the birth of Bangladesh) is interwoven with references to the 1857 revolt and the looting

²⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 96.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 124.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 130.

²¹⁰ Memon, 'Partition Literature', p. 410.

²¹¹ Husain, *Basti*, pp. 137–44.

²¹² Ibid., p. 151.

²¹³ Ibid., p. 176–77.

of the city of Delhi after the revolt.²¹⁴ The telescoping of different moments of devastation and collective despair does allow to an extent for a resonance with earlier historical trauma to evolve. However, there may also be a tendency here to collapse discrete historical moments into a universalised account of suffering to achieve a sense of meaning through destined suffering for the community.²¹⁵

The narrative takes a critical look at the usage of the rhetoric of religiosity in war mobilisation in section eight as Zakir observes a poster depicting a man on horseback with the sword in his hand and a bloodthirsty face with the slogan ‘these fighters for the faith, these your mysterious servants’.²¹⁶ The picture provokes no response: it was dead for him, as were the words. A little further he sees a car passing with a sticker that says, ‘Crush India’. This banal slogan too has no meaning for him, even as he is overpowered by numbness.²¹⁷ The vacuity of such invocations of identity based on mythic conceptions of the heroic past, or premised on demonising the common enemy, becomes self-evident. Indeed, the foundational myth of Pakistan, as Talbot puts it, in the official reading still maintains that the Muslims of the subcontinent were a separate nation from their Hindu neighbours.²¹⁸ The Pakistan demand and the logic for the partition were based on this two-nation theory. As Talbot shows, during the celebrations of Jinnah’s 85th birth anniversary in December 1961 a *Majlis-i-Istiqal-i-Pakistan* (Committee for Independence of Pakistan) meeting in Lahore

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 187–88.

²¹⁵ This tendency becomes pronounced in Husain’s later comments on his attempt to make the experience of migration meaningful for Pakistani mohajirs. Husain suggests that the experience of the partition, of exile and migration is not unique, but is rather part of the civilisational memory of the subcontinent, in terms of what people have experienced since the days of the *Ramayana* or the *Mahabharata* (see Husain, ‘Partition, Exile’, pp. 248–50). In this remark in an interview, the need to recast the meaning of the partition in terms of the language of the epic, or religious precedents such as the hijrat, seems to lead a loss of historical specificity with respect to 1947 and the new forms of near-genocidal violence witnessed then.

²¹⁶ Husain, *Basti*, p. 194.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 194.

²¹⁸ Talbot, *Pakistan*, pp. 4–5.

unanimously resolved that the committee should list those who had opposed Jinnah and the Pakistan movement during the period 1940–46, and that anti-Pakistan elements should be deprived of the rights of political expression, that they should be debarred from seeking election to any future Parliament of government and that a ceiling should be imposed on their property.²¹⁹ This sowed the seeds for a political culture of intolerance, which became the hallmark of successive elected as well as non-elected regimes. In its wake, curbing civil liberties and selective political accountability, as well as violence in the absence of a consensual and accommodationist political culture came to be considered acceptable. This encouraged military intervention under the pretext of restoring law and order.²²⁰ Ethnic stereotyping and the politics of language manifested in the imposition of Urdu as the official language on Bengali-speakers led to the eventual breakaway of Bangladesh from Pakistan. This was also a response to the hegemonic position of the Punjabi dominated state and military under Yahya Khan that culminated in genocide in the East (resisted by the Mukti Bahini) after the refusal to accept the results of the 1971 elections.²²¹ Husain's narrative seeks to restore compassion and kindness that had been lost at this time when few in the west were even aware of the atrocities committed in the east by the Pakistan army. Indeed, such erasure of collective memory could be traced back to an earlier period when the massacres during the partition became a taboo subject.

Furthermore, the difficulty of dealing with defeat and disillusionment with nationalist ideals comes to the fore in Zakir's conversations with his friend Afzal, a character perhaps modelled on the real-life figure of Nasir Kazmi. Afzal makes a show of mock-bravado in declaring that he could make Pakistan beautiful again, given that the ugly ones have spoiled the face of Pakistan. Even the flowers have been growing fewer; due to this people have been growing ugly and hatred has spread. He states his desire to plant roses and

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 5–13.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

²²¹ For a lucid and detailed account of the events leading up to the civil war and the declaration of Bangladesh's independence with India's assistance, *ibid.*, pp. 185–213.

mangoes to counteract the ugliness around.²²² There is a gentle irony in the portrayal of such poetic invocations of transcendental possibilities and utopian projections of desire in a time of strife and conflict.

Zakir hears about people who have fled Pakistan to rejoin their family in India.²²³ For the country that had once been hostile to them was now matched in hostility by the country which they found themselves in.²²⁴ Just before his father dies, he hands Zakir the keys of their ancestral home back in India. However, with Abba Jan's passing away, ties with the ancestral land seem to disintegrate as well.²²⁵ Zakir gets a reply from Surendar after the war. He charges Zakir with becoming cruel after going to Pakistan, since he had made no effort to contact Sabirah, who had burst into tears after hearing about his letters to Surendar.²²⁶ The novel ends with the friends reassembling at the Shiraz, where they observe the ruins of the formerly splendid hotel damaged during the rioting. Zakir again expresses his desire to write a letter to Sabirah before it is too late but remains in a state of existential immobility, even as Afzal asks them to wait for a sign, a sign that must come during such a moment of crisis.²²⁷ Once again the theme of a culture in internal decay facing the consequences of displacement at a time of political crisis comes to the fore. As a historian, Zakir becomes witness to the ambivalent effects of the partition's afterlife in Pakistan. This is figured in terms of its impact on the realisation of long-cherished aspirations; whether in terms of creative relationships, or productive engagement with the legacy of the Indo-Islamic cultural amalgam that might lead to an activation of will at the individual and collective levels.

²²² Husain, *Basti*, pp. 204–5.

²²³ In this context also see Priya Kumar's discussion of Shyam Benegal's film *Mammo*, about a woman from Pakistan who seeks to migrate back to India to rejoin her family. See P. Kumar, 'Testimonies of Loss', especially pp. 212–14. The novel, unlike the film, does not address the complex legal issues that arose for such reverse migrants.

²²⁴ Husain, *Basti*, p. 216.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 231–32.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 235.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 261–63.

There are some explicit references in *Basti* to the difficulties faced by mohajirs or refugees on their way across the border in 1947, whether towards West or East Pakistan.²²⁸ Ironically, the anguish of displacement and dislocation, the violence and fear that accompanied 1947 are replayed in the context of the division of hearts in Pakistan in 1971. The narrative makes reference to political events then transpiring through oblique allusions. Husain looks at the consequences of political gamesmanship and communal/ethnic/sectarian polarisation at the individual level and through his characters, shows the capacity for civilisational memory to play a role amidst the ruins of the self. A network of allusions to Islamic, Hindu and Buddhist myth and history provides an allegorical structure through which the experience of disillusionment is mediated.²²⁹ Furthermore, the poeticisation of exile and loss allows even those who may not share the Shia sensibility to identify with the situation of those surrounded by events that seem to defy comprehension. In *Basti*, the sense of loss is diffused into the symbolic domain. The motif of separation from the beloved, though a commonplace in poetry, is actualised and given contemporary resonance through the movement between the memory of childhood/adolescent experiences in pre-partition India and the moment of 1971. Sabirah represents for Zakir the wellspring of possibilities he is now cut off from; he is left with a sense of an unrealised epiphany that might have awaited him and, by extension, the community. The friends may look out for the sign which may provide the direction, a beacon which might help them find a way, but in the present there is the grim reality of repetition of the wrenching of self and community from the place of anchorage. Indeed, prolonged separation may be a mode of being that the self might have to come to terms with, whether in concrete terms at the individual level, as in the relationship with Sabirah, or in terms of exile for the community, especially given the anxiety as regards the possibility of infinite repetition of the partition.²³⁰

²²⁸ Sixty per cent of the 464,000 mohajirs from Uttar Pradesh resettled in Sindh, in cities like Karachi. The attachment for a lost Uttar Pradesh world remained with many of the community, as Husain's stories show, with an emphasis on protection of Urdu. See Talbot, *Pakistan*, p. 109.

²²⁹ See Bodh Prakash, 'Nation and Identity', p. 88.

²³⁰ I am indebted for this idea to Aamir Mufti.

Husain delves into the realm of memory to retrieve the ground for such expressions of beauty and goodness, not merely as a romantic gesture or sentimental move. Rather, it is the belated recognition of the desolation that faces the self and the community that impels the protagonist–historian’s quest in the realm of individual and collective memory. The further impasses such a quest might run into are further elucidated in a later discussion of Husain’s short stories, in which the near-impossibility of recovery of memory and the near-extinction of the creative self are thematised.²³¹ In stories such as ‘The Stairway’ (discussed in Chapter Five), retrieval of memory of the homeland and the rituals practised during Moharram are figured as an existential necessity for sleep-deprived *mohajirs*.²³² In *Basti*, however, memory becomes a route into an investigation of alternative perceptions and civilisational sites where counter-memories such as Afzal’s rose gardens and mango orchards may still be reconstructed. Zakir (his name means ‘one who remembers’) is both witness and a witness of witnesses; through such reflexivity a form of poetic narrativisation becomes possible for the survivor–exile, even though some aspects of collective trauma may remain undecipherable.

In conclusion, given the shock and horror of cataclysmic violence and uprooting, a large-scale inability to work through the traumatic memory of the partition may be noted in the generation that experienced the partition of the subcontinent.²³³ There was insufficient societal as well as artistic engagement with the aftermath of collective violence of 1947 in both countries due to the predominant mood of celebration of independence and the pressures of nationalist ‘emotionalism’. The effects of historical trauma were nevertheless manifested directly in terms of embodied forms of witnessing marked by silence, as in the case of the abducted women. It was as if collective trauma was displaced into phantasmal and

²³¹ See Memon, ‘Partition Literature’, pp. 406–9.

²³² Also see Memon’s discussion of this story, in *ibid.*, pp. 406–7.

²³³ Many writers of the first generation continued to write about the partition in subsequent decades; the distinction made here between first and second generations is not a sharp one, given that many novels of the 1960s and 70s were written by those who were young children or young adults at the time of the partition, rather than by children of survivors. The consciousness of a generation having passed does underpin later writing, nevertheless.

disembodied forms that remained in circulation in the body politic.²³⁴ These spectral configurations of the nation and the 'other', often taking the form of hate-speech or underground pamphlets, drew upon memories of previous conflicts to legitimate communal or sectarian attacks in the present. Thus literary witnessing became a more complex problem. Indeed, we may note the phenomenon of secondary trauma, of witnessing the trauma of witnesses, as exemplified by the writings of many in the second generation of writers. We may also be reminded here of Radstone's invocation of Freud's notion of 'afterwardsness', whereby memory may be revised by the pressures of the present, complicating issues of temporality.²³⁵ Radstone argues that the affect and activities associated with afterwardsness include fantasies of omnipotence and powerlessness.²³⁶ Later reconstructions are thus always mediated representations.

The major partition narratives of the 1960s and 70s often sought to fill in perceived holes in collective memory through the creation of narratives with a greater degree of self-reflexivity. The important novelists seek to retrieve the memory of social interaction between communities, as well as a critical awareness of gaps and structural inequities. A double vision, as Alok Bhalla argues, leads such writers down the tightrope above the memory of horror and allows for the possibility of taking responsibility and transmuting pain and guilt that, as Lifton suggests, are by-products of the fact of having survived the experience.²³⁷ These writers also negotiate the perverseness of false witness, often itself a result of the excessive emotionalism accompanying nationalist self-assertion.²³⁸

²³⁴ A discussion with Deepak Mehta helped clarify ideas presented here.

²³⁵ See Radstone, Introduction to *Memory and Methodology*, pp. 85–89.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

²³⁷ See Caruth, 'An Interview with Robert Jay Lifton', p. 138. Also see Bhalla, 'Memory, history', p. 3120.

²³⁸ According to Lifton, atrocity is a perverse quest for meaning, the end result of a spurious sense of mission, the product of false witness. *Ibid.*, p. 138. The compensatory process in false witness, the need to bear witness and take on the survivor mission leads one to block out elements of the death encounter, leading to a numbing toward death, and the possibility of exploitation of victims. Lifton argues that what is perverse is that one must impose death on others in order to reassert one's own life as an individual and a group. *Ibid.*, pp. 138–41.

It is perhaps fitting that a chapter that began with a reflection on the afterlife of 1947 concludes with a discussion of a narrative depicting the next major geographical/political division during the partition of Pakistan in 1971, for this second partition re-enacted many of the traumatic experiences of the partition. Some novels written in this period do confirm extant prejudices and act out the pathological residue of violence, bitterness and hatred, as well as sadism and anomie. However, the engagement with historical/civilisational memory in the major novels discussed in detail raises the crucial question of remembrance to a different level. Ideas about the loss of vitality in society stemming from disengagement with the realm of the popular by the elite, as well as the dangers of erasure of memory of the cultural amalgam characteristic of civilization in South Asia, led to the positing of the need for recovery of civilisational memory based on dialogic exchange. Though even these counter-narratives are flawed instances of surrogate testimony in many respects, the experience of suffering and exile does become resonant for another generation, often through the use of metaphor. While tragic irony is the chosen vehicle of expression of disillusionment experienced by these writers, it is the reflexive take on memory that allows for a new language of description to emerge in the testimonial narratives of Attia Hosain, Abdullah Hussein, Bhasham Sahni, Rahi Masoom Raza and Intizar Husain.