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India (1988) on the other, look at the partition from the viewpoint of India and Pakistan, respectively. These three novels look at partition not just as a cataclysmic event that needed to be recorded but more as a phenomenon to be explored as something that informed and defined the social, political, cultural and religious realities on the Indian Subcontinent. The next two novels, namely *Lajja* (1993) and *Fugitive Histories* (2009), talk about the ethnic conflicts between Hindus and Muslims in Bangladesh in 1992 and in India in 2002, respectively. While the last novel, *Island of a Thousand Mirrors* (2012), focuses on Sinhala and Tamil civil war that engulfed Sri Lanka for almost three decades.

The present research paper aims at bringing out how certain people manage to rise above fundamentalism and practice much needed humanism and humanitarianism during ethnic conflicts. The paper highlights the universality of humanism with the help of the selected novels and reveals that humanism is not a monopoly of any single religion and is found in every religion. The role of individuals in bringing back normalcy is neglected in historical narratives but the selected literary works show that the basic nature of human beings is good and it is only during the time of religious frenzy that certain people are not able to rise above fundamentalism. The presence of inter-ethnic romance in these novels proves that religious differences and intolerance cannot stop people loving each other across the religion. It is the treatment of humanism and inter-ethnic romance that sets apart these literary works from history books.

The novels under consideration beautifully depict the theme of inter-ethnic romance. In *Train to Pakistan*, *A Bend in Ganges*, *Cracking India*, *Lajja* and *Fugitive Histories* we have romance between Hindu and Muslim while *Island of a Thousand Mirrors* beautifully deals with romance between Sinhala and Tamil.

Train to Pakistan: Nooran and Jugga's love story is probably the most famous love story in Partition Literature. The novel at the very beginning makes it clear that, in spite of their religious difference, Jugga and Nooran love one another passionately. During troubled time when all Muslims are leaving for Pakistan, Nooran tries her level best to stay back though it means risk to her life. When Muslims are asked to evacuate Mano Majra, Jugga is in jail. She goes to meet Jugga's mother and let her know that she is carrying Jugga's child. But Jugga's mother remains unmoved. At last, she carries in her womb two months old child of Jugga. On the other hand, when Jugaa comes to what is going to happen to Nooran, he displays great courage and sacrifices his life for Nooran. The tragic love story of Jugga and Nooran seeks to bridge the wide gulf of communal hatred. Jugga's love for her carries with it a commitment unto death. Jugga's act of saving Nooran and ultimately the lives of Muslims on the train to Pakistan demonstrate the power and the need of love in trouble time.

A Bend in the Ganges: Like Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*, Malgonkar's *A Bend in the Ganges* also affirms the value of love as transcending all hurdles against the background of communal riots. Gian's pure and unselfish love for Sundari transforms him completely and he becomes a moral person. He is no longer the earlier Gian who built his life on falsehood, but is a morally regenerated person through the experience of love. Debi in order to avenge Shafi buys his mistress, Mumtaz. Shafi throws acid bulb at the face of Mumtaz but Debi saves her but in this attempt he gets hurt and his hand is burnt. Actually Debi has no special interest in Mumtaz but Mumtaz with her dogged devotion wins his love and affection. He opts to marry her, and discloses it to her sister Sundari who easily accepts her. Great humanizing force in the innocent love of Mumtaz transforms him and he finds fulfillment in the overpowering nature of love. Both Gian and Debi Dayal seek their redemption in love. Gian grows to be a mature person and finds fulfilment in love for Sundari; Debi Dayal gradually withdraws from the political life into the life of domestic happiness and realises that the peace lies in the love for Mumtaz.

Cracking India: Though *Cracking India* is steeped in ethnic conflict and gender-based violence, we have passionate romance between Ayah and Masseur. Ice-candy-man, too, is in love with Ayah and rivals with Masseur for Ayah's attention. Ayah's two Muslim lovers are presented with opposite manners. Ice-candy-man is sinister, violent and hyper-sexual while Masseur is good, docile and self effacing. Ayah is terrorized by Hindu-Muslim trouble and tells Masseur that she want to go away from Lahore. But Masseur assures her saying, "(y)ou don't need to go anywhere . . . Why do you worry? I'm here. No one will touch a hair on your head. I don't know

why you don't marry me!" (CI, 158). Masseur feels it his obligation to save Ayah from any trouble and therefore asks her to marry him. In order to get married to Ayah, he is even ready to become Hindu. Amidst the inhumane and disgusting violence, Masseur's love for Ayah stands in complete contrast to religious hatred. Like Nooran and Jugga in *Train to Pakistan*, this is a very unique example of love between two persons from different religious affiliation.

Inter-religious romance is recurrent theme in Partition Literature. But in *Cracking India*, Sidhwa gives a twist to the theme of inter-religious romance. As Paul Brians has pointed out: "Whereas in *Train to Pakistan* interfaith romance was a redemptive force in the face of violence, here it is an integral part of the violence" (Brians, 106). The difference between Juggat Singh and Ice-candy-man's love is that the former's love is requited while the latter's love is unrequited. Ice-candy-man's obsessive love finds an excuse in ethnic conflict to possess his lady. His (carnal) love for Ayah and religion are combined together and he hatches a plan to abduct Ayah. Like Juggat Singh, Masseur's love is returned and so he assures Ayah of her safety by saying that nothing harm can happen to her till he is alive.

Ice-candy-man breaks his left hand in his fight with the Sikh guard and still he patrols Warries Road to win Ayah back. He is so madly in love with Ayah that he does not care the Sikh guard's life threatening advances. He has become harmless and does not mind the Sikh guard's beating. His love for Ayah turns Ice-candy-man into a fakir who has renounced the world for his beloved. When the Sikh guard escorts Ayah to Mr. Phailbus for homeopathic treatment, Ice-candy-man waits patiently for Ayah but does not stare at her out of shame. He truly becomes a harmless fellow and even the Sikh guard feels his passionate love towards Ayah and consoles Ice-candy-man by referring to the wayward ways of men, women and god. Each morning Ice-candy-man covers the courtyard of the Recovered Women's Camp with petals. At last, Ayah goes to her family in Amritsar and Ice-candy-man, too, risks his life and disappears across Wagah border into India.

Lajja: Through her characters, Nasrin proves that religious enmity cannot stop people loving each other across their religion. Maya was in love with a Muslim called Jahangir. Every time there was trouble Jahangir would almost certainly check to see if Maya was alright. Mala and Jahangir were in love for four years and Maya was a living prize for Jahangir. They met at restaurants and discussed their marriage on the bank of the Crescent Lake. Suranjan was also in love with a Muslim girl called Parveen. Parveen was Haider's sister and Haider knew Parveen's love affair with Suranjan but he didn't spoil their relationship. Parveen would kiss Suranjan when they were together and Suranjan would hold her tight and would call her little sparrow. But Parveen's parents wanted Suranjan to convert to Islam and Suranjan was of the view that it was not necessary for either of them to convert in order to get married.

Fugitive Histories: *Fugitive Histories* present true multicultural fibre of Indian society by showing inter-religious romance. Asad Zaidi and Mala Vaidyanathan fall in love and have a love marriage. Mala and Asad meet for the first time at Nasreen's house. Nasreen is Asad's sister and Mala's friend. It is on 8th March, on International Women's Day, that Asad and Mala physically come together as a sign to defy the families and the rest of the world. Sara Zaidi is in love with Rajat Shaw and will be glad to drop the Zaidi for the Shaw. Like Sara's parents, Rajat's parents' is also an inter-religious marriage. His father is a Christian and mother is a Hindu. Since Sara and Rajat's parents are secular and liberal-minded, they do not object their children's freedom regarding their personal life.

Island of a Thousand Mirrors: In *Island of a Thousand Mirrors*, we have Sri Lankan version of inter-ethnic romance. While returning from school, Visaka is followed by many school boys, but she is attracted towards the youngest Shivalingam boy, Ravan. Despite many cultural differences he feels intimate in a way that shocks her. Visaka and Ravan find themselves passionately in love with one another and share the dream of becoming doctor. They often meet at a place which is for workers to rest. In spite of ethnic differences, Visaka is proud of her Tamil lover. Subsequently, Ravan starts insisting Visaka for getting married. He refers to his aunt who married a Sinhalese. He is of the opinion that there shall be uproar for some time and ultimately it would be forgotten.

Munaweera has very successfully rendered the romance between Ravan and Visaka which could not lead to their marriage due to their religious differences. The third generation girl, Yasodhara is also madly in love with Shiva. When the Shivalingams leaves the place fearing an attack from the Sinhala, Yasodhara cannot bear the loss of Shiva and spill hot, angry and secret tears. Ananda, Yasodhara's maternal uncle, chooses Ophelia, a Burgher, his wife without caring his mother's wrath. Ophelia is a kind, generous and has certain tenderness which makes it clear why Ananda chose this woman over all others. After Lanka's death, Yasodhara and Shiva find solace in each other. They have six years old daughter, named for the ocean she has never seen, Samudhra.

CONCLUSION

The present research paper points out that though the selected novels deal with the negation of human values in the wake of ethnic conflict, they are not completely devoid of the vision of humanism. These writers wish to build a world which is free of dominance and hierarchy, a world that rests on the principles of justice and equality and is truly humane. These novels celebrate universal love by showing how humanistic attitude gives a sense of fulfillment and peace of mind while hatred breeds hatred leading to mindless violence and its retaliation which ultimately destroys fibre of the society. The novels show the futility of the enmity between communities and bring out the importance of religious tolerance and humanity. The characters that rise above rigidity of fundamentalism and practice humanism in trying situation are from all the major religions of South Asia. Through these novels it becomes clear that inter-ethnic romance cuts across national, political, geographical and cultural borders and is found in all societies.

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