

ABSTRACT

This thesis places Elizabeth DeLoughrey's idea of "Heavy Waters" in the context of the Subcontinent's Partition of 1947. It argues that from both a historical and an environmental approach, the waters of the Subcontinent hold as much importance as the waters of the Atlantic ocean, for they too, amidst Partition riots, came to carry a burden that was two-fold; of human bodies which were thrown into wells and rivers after being killed, and of a painful memory of a cataclysmic historical event. The thesis brings together five different Partition narratives from different regions of the Subcontinent and studies how the various water-bodies of all these localities have stories to tell regarding the atrocities of the Partition. The primary texts chosen in this regard include the novels, *Ice-Candy Man* by Bapsi Sidhwa, *Train to Pakistan* by Khushwant Singh, *The River Churning* by Jyotirmoyee Devi, *A River with Three Banks* by Shiv K. Kumar and three short stories hailing from the province of Sindh, "Muhammad, the Coach-driver" by Ram Panjwani, "The Uprooted" by Vishnu Bhatia and "A Tale of 1947" by Saadat Hasan Manto. It uses the theory of Hydro-criticism to analyse the representation of water-related atrocities in these works written on the division of the Subcontinent into Pakistan and India. The purpose of carrying out this research is to bring to the forefront, the important role played by waters of the Subcontinent. The forced migration of Partition victims, who suffered more or less the same tortures of being uprooted from their homes and thrust into boats and ships to cross the borders of a fluvial region as in the Middle Passage, remains overshadowed by Partition Literature dealing with land related migration and Hydro-criticism dealing with Euro-centric and American narratives. The questions which this research strives to answer are: What was the nature of the events which resulted in the heaviness of the Subcontinent's waters? Which rivers originally present in the region find their way into literary texts on the Partition? How the water-bodies of the Subcontinent, including ponds, wells, rivers and seas are involved in creating rich water-related narratives revolving around 1947? What kind of lessons does the consignment of human bodies to water yield for the future?