REVISITING INDIA'S PARTITION

New Essays on Memory, Culture, and Politics

Edited by AMRITJIT SINGH, NALINI IYER, AND RAHUL K. GAIROLA

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For our parents,
who are not responsible for any shortcomings in this volume

Kesar Singh Uberoi (1911–1994) and Balbir Kaur (1913–1985)
J. N. Iyer (1931–2009) and Seetha Narayanan
C. Krishna Gairola (1926–2003) and Indira Bhojwani Gairola

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Preface

In Boston, a city of confluences, on the margins of the South Asian Literary Association (SALA) annual conference in January 2013, the three editors got into an engaging conversation over dinner about the negative impact the 1947 Partition continue to have on South Asian populations at home and abroad. We also noted with a certain sadness and irony how most literary scholarship on the subject had rarely gone beyond a few well-known novels, short stories, poems, or films. One of us suggested the idea of organizing a one-day pre-conference in October 2013 at the Annual South Asia Conference in Madison, Wisconsin. We were encouraged by the generous support we received for our plan from both Ohio University and Seattle University. The response to our Call for Papers was even more heartening—seasoned and younger scholars, graduate students, and even a couple of undergraduates sent us proposals for papers they wanted to present at the pre-conference. Still others wrote to us that while they were unable to participate in our daylong conference, they would consider submitting their work for possible inclusion in an edited book or be willing to support us in other ways.

The pre-conference brought together a dozen scholars as presenters and many more as audience participants. We had excellent Q & A sessions and many more informal exchanges over lunch and dinner. By the end of the day, we were persuaded, as were most participants, that while Partition studies had virtually been an industry for half a century or more, many aspects of the exhilarating and tragic events from the 1940s surrounding India's independence and its Partition remained unexplored. For example, at least two of our presenters in Madison bemoaned the relatively little attention Bengal and the Northeast had received in scholarship and fiction, compared with literally hundreds of texts in multiple genres that explored the many facets of the horrible violence that had afflicted towns and villages throughout Punjab in 1947. Another presenter shared her ongoing work on the oral narratives she was collecting from her Sindhi relatives in Mumbai and in North America. More than ever before, we were persuaded by our Madison exchanges to recognize the relevance of the "Long Partition" paradigm developed by Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali Zamindar, who had, as it were, given a fuller voice to what we were attempting to articulate in Boston nine months earlier. Several of the participants from the Madison pre-conference are represented in this volume. However, all three of us already knew that

the move from a set of conference papers to a substantive edited collection of interdisciplinary essays would be a long journey. And yes, it has been an exciting and sometimes exhausting journey—nearly three years of seeking Partition scholars across the globe, revisiting the structural design of our table of contents every six months, vetting each essay and persuading our contributors to revise (sometimes more than once), nonstop editing, and eventually finding a wonderfully empathetic editor in Lindsey Porambo at Lexington Books.

Such a transnational, multiyear project cannot be completed without the assistance and participation of others. The three editors would like collectively to thank the following for collegial support of one kind or another in our work on the volume over three years: Meena Alexander, Ashna Ali, Ranjit Arab, Tapan and Rekha Basu, Alok Bhalla, Amy Bhatt, Ellen Bigler, Jaysinh Birjepatil (1933–2015), Devika Chawla, Pradyumna and Vijay Chauhan, Rey Chow, C. Lok Chua, Girish Dahiya, Rakesh Desai, Howard Dewald, Abigail Doyle, Marsha Dutton, Robin Field, Christopher Ian Foster, Robert Franceschini, Radhika Gajjala, Amrita Ghosh, Alex Gil, Barbara Grueser, Sham Lal and Usha Gupta, Gabriella Gutierrez y Muhs, John C. Hawley, Anika Holland, Manju Jaidka, Jasbir Jain, Sonora Jha, Prafulla Kar, Suvir Kaul, Saad Khan, Rita Kothari, Malashri Lal, David Lelyveld, Auritro Majumdar, Kasia Marciniak, Catherine Matto, Daphne Metts, Chandra Mohan, Gail Minault, Samina Najmi, Ashok Puri, Yogesh and Greta Puri, Anisur Rahman, Masood Raja, David and Judy Ray, Roopika Risam, Roshni Rustomji-Kerns, Sumanyu Satpathy, Kshama Sawant, Tasneem Shahnaaz, Albeena Shakil, S. Shankar, Carol Shelton, Chetan Singh, Prem, Reshma and Samir Singh, Pavitra Soram, Yashoda Nandan Singh, Rajini Srikanth, K. L. Tuteja, Kamal Dev Verma, K. G. Verma, Rajiva and Meera Verma, Richard Rahul Verma, Bonnie Zare, and Linda Zionkowski. We want to thank Luke Kubacki and Dylan Rickelman for their splendid assistance with the index.

Collaborative work can be most fulfilling when the team of co-workers can stay focused on shared project goals. The three of us are fortunate to have enjoyed a working relationship of mutual respect wherein we have complemented one another's strengths. Rahul and Amritjit would like to salute Nalini—the pivot for the project—for her hard work and organization, as well as for her gentle and persistent directive skills. Nalini and Rahul thank Amritjit for his energy, passion, and vision that have shaped this project from inception to completion. It is only because of the countless hours Amritjit spent on soliciting and mentoring several essays into final shape that our volume has a global scope. Nalini and Amritjit valued Rahul's careful analytical response to each essay and his sharp knowledge of critical theory.

Amritjit Singh would like to thank his parents, Professor Kesar Singh Uberoi and Mrs. Balbir Kaur for giving him and his five siblings a loving home and high ideals of education and service before, during, and after

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Introduction

The Long Partition and Beyond

Amritjit Singh, Nalini Iyer, and Rahul K. Gairola

In Amitav Ghosh's novel *The Shadow Lines* (1988), the narrator's grandmother is pondering her upcoming trip to Dhaka in January 1964. Dhaka was then in East Pakistan, and the grandmother now living in Calcutta was born in Dhaka when it was part of an undivided Bengal. Her grandson imagines that her concerns involve traveling on an airplane, but his grandmother is in fact wondering what it would be like to cross the border. She asks her son, the narrator's father, if there are trenches or lines that sharply demarcate India from East Pakistan. When she learns that there are no physical markers that are visible from the sky, she wonders, "What was it all for then—Partition and all the killing and everything—if there isn't something in between?"[1] When her son, a seasoned traveler, explains that borders are really experienced within airports and that she would have to fill out forms, the narrator realizes that his grandmother "at that moment had not been able to quite understand how her place of birth had come to be so messily at odds with her nationality."[2] The grandmother's bewilderment in Ghosh's novel resonates with the emotions that many South Asians continue to face about their "messy" identities in real life at home and in the diaspora.

Just before the British left India in 1947, they divided the subcontinent into two nations, India and Pakistan, allegedly in response to the irreconcilable differences between the two major religious communities. The narrative of such differences between Hindus and Muslims was bolstered by sweeping assumptions that almost all Muslims supported Mohammad Ali Jinnah's demand for a discrete Muslim homeland based on the "two-nation theory" whose rationale had been laid out in the 1930s by figures such as Chaudhry Rahmet Ali and poet Sir Muhammad Iqbal.[3] In Ghosh's novel, years after the grandmother's death, the young protagonist revisits her notion of lines, maps, and borders:

> I was struck with wonder that there had really been a time, . . . when people . . . had thought that all maps were the same, that there was a special enchantment in lines. . . . What had they felt, I wondered, when they discovered that they had created not a separation, but a yet-undis-

> covered irony . . . a moment when each city was the inverted image of the other, locked into an irreversible symmetry by the line that was to set us free—our looking-glass border.[4]

Thus he recognizes that you cannot create two nations by simply drawing a line on a map.

In producing the "looking-glass" borders that involved India and Pakistan in 1947 (and India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh since 1971) whose collective population today is well over 1.5 billion, the departing colonizers did not care about the impact of such borders on the daily lives of people within national boundaries—especially the place of religious minorities. Muslims, who formed the overwhelming majority in Pakistan in 1947, became a much smaller minority in independent India than before and also became the chief targets of anger and suspicion over the Partition. On the other hand, Hindus, Christians, and/or Sikhs in Pakistan and Bangladesh have faced even tougher challenges than Muslims in postcolonial India that have included coerced conversions, ethnic cleansing, and forced migrations. In 1947, the departing British ignored the serious issues of communication and functioning that the West and East wings of Pakistan would face, separated as they were by a thousand miles of independent India. The borders were porous and ambiguous, and to this day many border disputes remain.[5] In any case, the formation of two new nations did not resolve questions of citizenship, identity, language, culture, and belonging for diverse groups.

Thus the Partition of British India was an arbitrary political solution to what were seen or constructed in the postwar 1940s as irreconcilable differences between the political factions vying for influence while fighting for the shared goal of independence. As Christopher Hitchens has pointed out, the departing British colonizers left behind dozens of accomplished or simmering partitions in their former colonies across the globe, sometimes for neocolonial economic advantage, or simply to add shine to their self-image of evenhandedness—Cyprus; Palestine and Israel; Iraq and Kuwait; Northern Ireland; Somalia, Eritrea, and Ethiopia; etc. Hitchens frames his commentary on these partitions powerfully by using excerpts from W. H. Auden's infrequently cited poem, "Partition," which evokes Sir Cyril Radcliffe's hasty partitioning of British India into India and Pakistan as both clueless and irresponsible. Unnamed in the poem, Radcliffe gets down to work, "to the task of settling the fate of millions," using out of date maps: "And the Census Returns almost certainly incorrect/ But there was no time to check them, no time to inspect."[6] As Hitchens put it,

> The true term for this is "betrayal," as Auden so strongly suggests, because the only thinkable justification for the occupation of someone else's territory and the displacement of someone else's culture is the testable, honorable intention of applying an impartial justice, a dis-

> interested administration, and an even hand as regards bandits and sectarians. In the absence of such ambitions, or the resolve to complete them, the British would have done better to stay on their fog-girt island and not make such high-toned claims for themselves. The peoples of India would have found their own way, without tutelage and on a different timetable.[7]

But they were not given a chance. As Saros Cowasjee notes with irony in his introduction to the anthology *Orphans of the Storm: Short Stories on the Partition of India* (1995):

> Nehru made his tryst with destiny and became India's first Prime Minister. But what of the "others"?—the tryst of the common people caught between the greed of politicians for power and the unseemly haste with which the Labour Government in Britain decided to transfer power. It is on record that Lord Louis Mountbatten, then Viceroy and Governor General of India, got his Reforms Commissioner, Mr. V. P. Menon, to draw up the plan for the division of India in just four hours. With this plan he himself flew to London and got Mr. Attlee and his Cabinet to accept it in exactly five minutes. "It is all very well," says the historian Leonard Mosley, "to draw up a plan to divide India in four hours and accept it in five minutes. How, in a land consisting of 250,000,000 Hindus, 90,000,000 Muslims, 10,000,000 Christians and—particularly—5,000,000 Sikhs, do you implement it?" . . . The implementation of the plan with neither foresight nor preparedness led to a holocaust. . . . Foot convoys, some of them 800,000 strong and seventy miles long, moved between the two dominions. Thousands were slaughtered on the way; an equal number fell victim to cholera and other diseases.[8]

Cowasjee and others have invoked eyewitness accounts of the hideous levels of violence that took place during population transfers across the borders for which the departing colonial government had failed to make adequate and secure arrangement, presumably because they had not anticipated the huge size of these migrations. Trains packed with murdered refugees arrived at various stations on both sides of the border, with messages scribbled on the sides of the carriages reading "A Gift from Pakistan" or "A Gift from India." Cowasjee cites one Captain Atkins of the British army who recalls a road where a convoy had passed: "Every yard of the way there was a body, some butchered, some dead of cholera. The vultures had become so bloated by their feasts they could fly no longer, and the wild dogs so demanding in their taste they ate only the livers of the corpses littering the road."[9] In commenting on the horrific communal violence a year earlier in Calcutta, William Dalrymple cites Margaret Bourke-White. The American photojournalist, who had witnessed the opening of the gates of a Nazi concentration camp a year earlier, wrote that Calcutta's streets "looked like Buchenwald" in August 1946. Sadly, this violence had been instigated by the ruthless Bengal

Chief Minister, H. S. Suhrawardy, a Muslim League leader, who justified his role by writing in a newspaper that "bloodshed and disorder are not necessarily evil in themselves, if resorted to for a noble cause."[10]

As part of the longstanding "divide and rule" colonial strategy, the British had manipulated and exacerbated ethnic, religious, and tribal differences in most of their colonies to ensure their own survival in the face of resistance from emerging freedom movements. In India, the Partition and the rush to get it done are often attributed to the power struggle between Nehru, independent India's first Prime Minister, and Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah, Pakistan's first Governor General and its founding father, and their inability to set aside personal visions of nationality in the interest of compromise. In this version of history, as put forth by Nisid Hajari in *Midnight's Furies* (2015),[11] the British were beneficent, befuddled onlookers who attempted yet failed at peacemaking as communal bloodshed across all borderlines began to spread. Yet such a narrative of Partition does not quite explain what catalyzed people to perpetrate horrible communal violence, representing the Indian masses as mere pawns of an all-powerful departing colonizer. There were greater complexities to this tragedy, and the factors that influenced the Partition of Punjab along the border of West Pakistan were vastly different from those that mattered in Bengal, on the border of India and East Pakistan. Thus, the Partition is a tragedy of multiple narratives, and any single historical account might cover just one geographical facet, or the perspective or bias of one particular region or community.

The Partition resulted in a bloody division of land as well as the rupturing of shared histories, cultures, and memories between Muslims, on the one hand, and Hindus and Sikhs, on the other. The summer of 1947 witnessed the migration of some fourteen million people and the deaths of at least one million. The nationalist historical accounts—signaled most famously by Nehru's "tryst with destiny" speech to India's Constituent Assembly on the late evening of January 14, 1947—often present the view that independence was achieved triumphantly for India and Pakistan predominantly by Gandhi's campaign of non-violence, a perspective that was evoked powerfully by Richard Attenborough in his film *Gandhi* (1982).[12] At the same time, this long cherished freedom brought with it staggering numbers of the dead, mutilated, raped, or forcibly converted. For years afterwards, the two nations also had to cope with the catastrophic consequences of forced migrations as well as other rehabilitation challenges. These tragic realities on both sides of the borders have left a lasting mark and wounded memories for millions throughout South Asia and in South Asian diaspora. Although many historiographical accounts of Partition focus on the causes of this event and consequently track the "high politics" of major players such as the Indian National Congress, the Muslim League, Gandhi, Nehru, Jinnah, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Master Tara Singh, and others, much else is pushed aside, silenced, and left

unexamined. The 1947 Partition and its horrible violence continue to speak to us through the many historical traces that still haunt South Asian cultures and lives on a daily basis.

Partition remains a strong presence in all kinds of events and decisions in unexpected ways—for example, in a 2015 art exhibit titled *After Midnight: Indian Modernism to Contemporary India, 1947–1997*, as well as the aforementioned 2015 border agreement between India and Bangladesh. This art exhibit at Queens Museum in New York City juxtaposed Indian art from the 1940s through the 1970s with the globalization of contemporary Indian art after 1997 (the golden anniversary year of India's independence) to understand art and nation-building during two critical periods of paradigm shift in Indian culture and self-definition.[13] In August 2015, India and Bangladesh signed a long-delayed agreement that would, as the Government of India Ministry of External Affairs declared, reduce border friction and also fulfill "a major humanitarian need to mitigate the hardships that the residents of the enclaves have had to endure for over six decades on account of the lack of basic amenities and facilities that would normally be expected from citizenship of a State."[14] One would think that the need to mitigate such hardships would have been quite evident in, say, 1948 or 1972, and yet it took until 2015 for the two governments finally to ratify the agreement. From our opening example referencing Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines* to contemporary art to the normalization of borders left unsettled for decades, it is clear that South Asians continue to confront in both art and life the unresolved and tragic consequences of the hastily executed partition of the subcontinent. Simply put, the Partition is not a bygone occurrence of 1947, but rather an ongoing event whose historical traces cast a long shadow in the region and across the globe today. As William Faulkner would say in relation to the dark legacy of the American South, "The past is never dead. It's not even past."[15]

THE LONG PARTITION: A WIDER FOCUS

We recognize that Partition marks "a defining moment that is neither beginning nor end," as deftly formulated by Ayesha Jalal.[16] Our volume, *Revisiting India's Partition*, adapts and extends the term "the Long Partition" as developed by Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali Zamindar in her aforementioned book, to underscore the ongoing impact of the 1947 Partition in a variety of domains. Zamindar asks us to consider the Long Partition beyond the events of 1947 and to "stretch our understanding of 'Partition violence' to include the bureaucratic violence of drawing political boundaries and nationalizing identities that became, in some lives, interminable."[17] In her essay "From Conclusions to Beginnings: My Journey with 'Partition,'" Rita Kothari concurs with Zamindar and also notes that Par-

tition studies need to move beyond the events of 1947; she proposes that scholars study partition as "an organizing principle for nations and communities."[18] Some seventy years after the Partition, our contributors help us to expand Zamindar's notion of the Long Partition to examine the continuing cultural, political, economic, and psychological effects of 1947. In inviting and selecting essays for this volume, we were alert to the need to acknowledge that the Partition has made a serious impact on many regions beyond the typically studied Punjab and Bengal. With this volume, we join a growing number of Partition scholars who have begun to explore these other regions and communities affected by Partition. For example, Siddiq Wahid has recently noted how Ladakh has experienced multiple partitions that fragmented its Buddhist and Tibetan cultural links and destabilized its links to Central Asian cultures.[19] Again, it is necessary to examine and contextualize many events that preceded 1947, such as the 1905 failed Partition of Bengal, or, as Amit Rahul Baishya observes in his contribution to this volume, how events like the Forgotten Long March of 1942 had already exposed the multiple geopolitical fault lines in the Northeast region of the British Raj.[20] In addition, very sadly, frequent episodes of sectarian violence all over South Asia continue to trigger and reinforce the horrible memories of the Partition, both lived and received, for ordinary citizens, scholars, and artists in both productive and destructive ways.

On the one hand, such violence continues to feed suspicion and mistrust around millions of Muslim citizens in contemporary India who had not supported the demand for a separate Pakistan and/or did not choose to move there. The narrative of Muslims as outsiders seems never to end and many obscurantist, right-wing Hindu organizations are doing all they can to support and expand that narrative in every possible way. On the other hand, such violence has inspired and cemented the determination of activists, scholars, writers, and filmmakers to put up resistance to the forces of communal hate and to strengthen the workings of the nation's democratic institutions and processes. This is how Urvashi Butalia explains the sources of her activist scholarship on the oral narratives of the Partition in her influential work *The Other Side of Silence* (2000): "It took the events of 1984 to make me understand how ever-present Partition was in our lives, too, to recognize that it could not so easily be put away inside the covers of history books. I could no longer pretend that this was a history that belonged to another time, to someone else."[21]

Butalia was a witness to the October–November 1984 violence against Sikhs in Delhi and elsewhere that was largely orchestrated by the Congress Party in response to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's assassination by her own Sikh bodyguards. These security guards were enraged by her military-style assault in June 1984 on the Darbar Sahib, the Golden Temple, in Amritsar, the holiest religious site for Sikhs, to flush out armed militants.[22] Similarly, the nonagenarian Pakistani writer Intizar Husain,

the focus of a jointly authored essay by Tasneem Shahnaaz and Amritjit Singh in our volume, acknowledged how the brutal and repressive measures taken by West Pakistani political and military leaders against East Pakistan in responding to the 1970 democratic election results that eventually led to the creation of Bangladesh compelled him to confront the unresolved violence of the 1947 Partition in his novel *Basti* (1979; English translation, 1995). In 2014, in looking back at the 1971 situation in East Pakistan, Husain told Tehmina Qureshi, "It was as if 1947 revisited us three decades later."[23] As someone who has spent a lifetime attempting to make sense of the Partition, Husain told interlocutor Alok Bhalla in 1997 that he finds "what happened in 1947 was so complex, so devastating, that I have yet to understand it fully."[24] In the same interview with Husain, Bhalla challenges all South Asians to get past the never-ending blame game over the Partition:

> As post-colonialists we blame the British, as Pakistanis we blame the Indians, as Hindus we assert that it is the Muslims who started it all, etc. But we never look at ourselves and say that we—each of us—contributed to the nightmare that our lives have become since 1947. Till we can do that, we shall never be able to bury the dead—or find ways of living within a peaceful civilization.[25]

To this day, most communities in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh have failed to meet this challenge of overcoming the angers and resentments of the past. On the contrary, in each country there are forces in place that seem determined to instigate much more menacing tribalization of the population based on caste, class, and religious identity. Very little effort is being made in the contemporary context to distinguish the large Muslim population in India (the second largest in the world within the boundaries of any one nation) from Muslims, say, in some parts of the Middle East. As M. J. Akbar would remind journalist Thomas L. Friedman, Muslims in India are the only large Muslim community in the world that have—despite their continuing social and economic challenges—enjoyed a sustained democracy for over six decades and have become part of a significant middle class because of India's secular constitution. And even though Muslims in India do not display the frustrations that Muslims living in authoritarian societies manifest and have no interest at all in radical groups such as al-Qaida, most non-Muslims in India appear to still treat their Muslim compatriots with suspicion and mistrust.[26]

The hermeneutic lens of the Long Partition constructs a conflicted nationhood in the subcontinent, which continues to affect the people of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh every day. The diasporas created by Partition are unique—overnight, neighbors found themselves belonging to two different nations and one's brother became his other. Like the grandmother in Ghosh's novel, many became reluctant diasporic subjects; others were forcefully evicted and never quite settled in a new

home. Their sense of homelessness spurred further dislocations and migrations and radically shaped the social fabric of community politics in the UK, US, and Canada. As novels like Anita Rau Badami's *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?*[27] and oral histories gathered by the 1947 Partition archives (www.1947partitionarchive.org) in Berkeley, California, testify, Partition lives on in the memories of children and grandchildren of those who were uprooted. As Ananya Jahanara Kabir's work[28] recognizes, the dialectic of memory and forgetting shapes narratives of Partition not as a closure or healing of trauma, but rather as a uniquely South Asian way of narrating Partition. How diasporic Indians confront the shock of recognition about the high incidence of communal violence in contemporary India is best illustrated by novelist M. G. Vassanji's bewildered response to his ancestral homeland Gujarat, a region that was not directly implicated in the horrors of the 1947 Partition. Born in Tanzania and a longtime resident of Canada, Vassanji visited India for the first time in 1993, when Bombay was coping with the communal violence that followed the 1992 demolition of the Babri Mosque by a Hindu mob spearheaded by BJP leader L. K. Advani. In his travelogue, *A Place Within: Rediscovering India* (2008), which is based on multiple India visits, Vassanji narrates the challenge he faced in coming to terms with the 2002 violence in Gujarat, Gandhi's birthplace:

> At yet, in recent times, the bloodiest communal violence, with the most hideous attacks on the human person, especially on women and children, has taken place with some regularity in this ancestral homeland, among these people I thought I knew, whom I have called—culturally, ancestrally—my people. For me to come to this realization has been profoundly shocking. If anything makes me feel alien here, it is my utter incomprehension of such violence, my inability to shrug it off. My generalization of Gujarat, too, was naïve, I realize; but, there it is, in tatters.[29]

As Vassanji's lament demonstrates, the Partition did not fully resolve political rights or minority representation issues in any of the independent nations of South Asia. As evidenced in Rakesh Sharma's documentary film *Final Solution* (2003), even in a state such as Gujarat that had not been directly involved in the 1947 Partition, it was easy to ignite fires of communal hatred and violence in 2002, fires that continue to burn intermittently throughout the land.

Even more troubling are the territorial tensions between India and Pakistan that have spilled over into full-scale wars in 1948 and 1965, in addition to making regular headlines through frequent cross-border incidents of insurgency and violence visited upon civilians. Immediately following emancipation from the British Raj, India and Pakistan went to war over Kashmir, which had been an autonomous kingdom ruled by a Hindu king with a Muslim majority population. While many semi-autono-

mous kingdoms and principalities decided to join either India or Pakistan in the period leading up to independence, both Kashmir and Hyderabad (the latter with a strong Muslim Nizam at its helm) held out. When Pakistani "irregulars" attacked Kashmir, the ruling Dogra Hindu Maharaja Hari Singh sought Prime Minister Nehru's military help and signed an instrument of accession to India as a condition for Indian military assistance. A promised U.N. referendum on Kashmir never took place, and the territory has become a warzone pitting rebels seeking an independent Kashmir against an occupying Indian army that claims to "protect" the people.[30] In his essay for our volume, Ilyas Chattha exposes the controversial nature of this accession, even as he examines the communal bloodshed in Jammu in September–November 1947 that led to the migration of over 200,000 Muslims to Pakistan against the backdrop of continuing cyclical violence in Jammu and Kashmir. As Nazia Akhtar's essay in our volume explains, Hyderabad was forcibly incorporated into India in what the central government described as a "police action" in 1948.

Pakistan had been yoked together as a two-part nation out of the Muslim-majority areas of Punjab and Bengal, along with several other areas that comprised West Pakistan. From its inception, Pakistan struggled continuously and often violently with a national identity. Whereas Indians narrated Partition as a loss, and often used the metaphor of a house divided, Pakistan attempted, especially in the mid-1970s under General Zia-ul-Haq, to reinvent itself as part of a continuous Pan-Islamic heritage and culture aligned with the Arab world—a history that Masood Raja and Amber Riaz unpack, in distinctive ways, in their respective essays in this volume. Although they shared a common religious identity, Punjabis and Bengalis had little in common with each other linguistically and culturally. Furthermore, the creation of an Islamic republic of Pakistan next door contributed to the widely held perception in independent India of a monolithic Muslim identity that was strongly contradicted by the diversity of everyday beliefs, attitudes, and practices of Indian Muslims, a large minority analogous in size and potential to African Americans in the US today. Within Pakistan, fault lines had begun to emerge as early as 1952 in the still nascent nationalist discourses based in religion when West Pakistan reiterated its imposition of Urdu as the official language upon East Pakistan, whose population deeply cherished Bengali language and culture. Tensions peaked between East and West Pakistan in 1970, when West Pakistani leaders refused to honor the election results that gave the Awami League of East Pakistan a clear majority and instead launched a full-scale military attack. Forced to cope with millions of East Pakistani refugees, India felt compelled to intervene, thus leading to the formation of the new nation of Bangladesh—a historical trajectory that poet-scholar Kaiser Haq examines through the lens of literature and personal experience in his essay for our collection. For Bangladeshis, 1947 did not signal freedom but just a change in imperial mas-

ters—the British left but were replaced, as it were, by Punjabi Muslims who administered East Pakistan like a colony. For many South Asians, the tragic events of 1971 unraveled the postcolonial euphoria of Islamic nation-building in a culturally and geopolitically diverse region where culture, memory, and faith were intricately interwoven.[31]

Even Jinnah, who had been an ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity for the first three decades of the twentieth century, only gradually reached his resolve to ask for Pakistan, a separate homeland for Indian Muslims. As Ayesha Jalal has noted in an interview,[32] it would be erroneous to equate Partition with the demand for Pakistan, as Jinnah was in fact lobbying for a stake in power for Muslims in India once the British quit. In the 1940s, in order to break the impasse between the Congress and the Muslim League, both Gandhi and C. Rajagopalachari had embraced the idea of dividing the two Muslim-majority states, Punjab and Bengal, to form a new Muslim homeland—an idea that Jinnah had initially rejected as "a moth-eaten Pakistan." As Jalal puts it,

> By insisting on a wresting power at a strong center with only the most nominal concessions to the provincial autonomy demanded by the Muslim-majority provinces, by endorsing the Hindu Mahasabha's call to partition Punjab and Bengal, and above all, by refusing to grant Muslims the share of power at the all-India level demanded by Jinnah, the Congress led by Nehru and Patel foreclosed the possibility of keeping India united. Jinnah did miscalculate in believing Gandhi's voice was still dominant in the Congress. Such cynical maneuverings by hostile political parties turned into ground realities very quickly, leaving millions in distress.[33]

With the emergence of a new Muslim nation that sat in unease on both the eastern and western borders of India, it became much easier in many ways to feed the frenzy of Hindu fundamentalism in postcolonial India. On January 30, 1948, a zealot named Nathuram Godse—seeing Gandhi as a figure intent on endlessly appeasing Muslims—assassinated Mahatma Gandhi as he arrived for the evening prayer meeting at the Birla Mandir in New Delhi. Muslims throughout India heaved a sigh of relief that Gandhi's assassin was not a Muslim—avoiding another bloodbath of communal violence when the nation was still reeling from the Partition tragedy.

Hindu reactionary thought had in fact begun to surface in the 1920s—quite powerfully so with the anonymous publication of V. D. Savarkar's monograph *Essentials of Hindutva* (1923). Savarkar (known affectionately as Veer Savarkar within the widening right-wing Hindu circles) propagated a distinctive Hindu cultural identity (Hindutva), contradistinguished from the identity of Indian Muslims and Christians whose sources of inspiration and identity were tagged as "foreign." Savarkar linked "Hindutva" to "Hindu Rashtra," a concept of Hindu polity that

called for the protection of Hindu people and their culture and placed emphasis on the need to develop political and economic systems rooted in native thought instead of Western ideas. During the following three decades, other thinkers and activists such as K. B. Hedgewar, M. S. Golwalker, Shyama Prasad Mookerjee, and Deendayal Upadhyaya contributed variously to these discourses. Such ideological developments would give rise to to the formation of many Hinducentric organizations such as the Hindu Mahasabha, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Shiv Sena, and eventually to a political party named the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (rechristened the Bharatiya Janata Party, BJP, in 1980). The BJP had major electoral success and headed a coalition government in New Delhi from 1998 to 2004 with Atal Bihari Vajpaye as the Prime Minister. Around 1990, a strong desire to place Hindutva at the center of India's polity and national identity allowed Hindu fundamentalists to coalesce around reclaiming the birthplace of Rama, the hero of the ancient Hindu epic *Ramayana*. Hindu fundamentalists claimed that Emperor Babar, the first Mughal, had constructed the Babri Masjid on this mythical birthplace of Rama and destroyed the temple at the site. On December 12, 1992, a Hindu mob, led by BJP leader L. K. Advani, marched to the historical mosque and destroyed it with their hands, thus sparking large-scale violence between Hindus and Muslims across India. In 2002, similar violence spread when a train carrying Hindu pilgrims marking the tenth anniversary of the destruction of the Babri Masjid was allegedly set afire by Muslims at Godhra, Gujarat. Retaliatory violence flared across Gujarat, and the erstwhile Chief Minister of Gujarat, Narendra Modi, was widely held responsible for directing and abetting violence against Muslims. Twelve years later, as leader of the Hindu-centered BJP party, Modi swept the polls to become India's Prime Minister. Such communal riots are catalyzed by and have their repercussions on cross-border relations between India and Pakistan, making the subcontinent one of the most politically volatile regions in the world. In the South Asian context of the global "War on Terrorism," the December 13, 2001, attack on the Parliament of India, the November 26, 2008, attack on Mumbai, and the continued violence in Kashmir offer concrete examples of the Long Partition—examples that are not simply subcontinental political problems but rather embody global political tensions of the new millennium between the West and current extremist movements within Islam.[34]

All these developments demonstrate that despite the secularist ideals promulgated by Prime Minister Nehru and others, sectarian tensions had continued to expand through the decades, pitting Hindus and Muslims in communal riots throughout the country and reinforcing the "two-nation" sensibilities that had buffered the demands for the Partition in the first place. No attempt was made to investigate the gargantuan failures of how the Partition was carried out, and it became common in a Hindu-majority India to place the blanket blame for the Partition on Muslims,

ironically even more so on the Muslim citizens who had chosen to stay on in India! Rana Dasgupta, author of *Capital: The Eruption of Delhi* (2014), claims that most South Asians have still not come to terms with the Partition, for which we may partly blame the absence of monuments, museums, or devices such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa that might have helped that process. In describing the growth of slums in Delhi and the concomitant land deals of developers that have marked the steady and ambitious building of the National Capital Region (NCR), Dasgupta argues that the erudite and syncretic civilization that united Muslims and Hindus in Delhi in the early twentieth century was destroyed by the 1947 Partition and its turmoil. In fact, Dasgupta arguably blames the greed, corruption, hubris, and violence of contemporary Delhi upon the immediate consequences of the Partition—the departure of so many Muslims and the influx of huge numbers of bitter and scared Hindu and Sikh refugees from West Punjab.

Those of us who are familiar with short stories like Sadat Hasan Manto's "Khol Do," Rajinder Singh Bedi's "Lajwanti," and Shauna Singh Baldwin's "Family Ties," novels such as Bapsi Sidhwa's *Cracking India* (originally published as *Ice-Candy Man*) and Shauna Singh Baldwin's *What the Body Remembers*, as well as films like *Earth* (based on Sidhwa's novel and directed by Deepa Mehta) and *Khamosh Pani* (Silent Waters, 2004, directed by Sabiha Sumar), recognize the poignancy of a frequently made observation that the Partition played out on the bodies and spirits of women of all religious backgrounds. Not only did Partition solidify definitions of what it means to be Hindu, Sikh, or Muslim while minoritizing the subcontinent's other religions like Sufism, Christianity, Judaism, and Zoroastrianism, it also validated violence—especially gendered violence—as a means of formulating citizenship, ethnicity, and belonging. In *Violent Belongings: Partition, Gender, and National Culture in Postcolonial India*, Kavita Daiya argues that Partition has shaped the discourse of citizenship and belonging in South Asia and its diaspora since 1947. She writes, "The Partition constitutes a field of transformation and a discourse that became the condition of possibility for the gendered ethnicization of citizenship and belonging in postcolonial South Asia."[35]

Several scholars have examined the violence against women perpetuated during Partition. As Butalia has noted,[36] the women were victims of violence when they were raped, mutilated, killed and when they lost children, spouses, parents, and siblings. She also underscores the importance of not just seeing women as victims but also recognizing that women have agency in these situations as well. Enumerating several stories from Partition and also afterwards in the violence against Sikhs in 1984 and the Bhagalpur communal violence of 1990, Butalia demonstrates women's agency by recognizing that some women chose to die to save their honor or sometimes participated in violent acts or prevented aid being given to the "other" victims. Thus women were both victims and

agents of patriarchy during riots. Similarly, it was not just women who were subject to a variety of violations; so also were men. There were scores of real life stories of men who were during the Partition forcibly converted to Islam and circumcised to indicate change of faith. Bapsi Sidhwa uses this narrative line effectively in her novel *Cracking India* (1992) in relation to Hari, a Hindu, who converts to Islam to survive in Lahore after partition. In *Borders and Boundaries*, Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin[37] examine the impact of state interventions in returning abducted women and the trauma that followed for the individuals and their families, which add another dimension to gender assaults.

The essays in our volume trace these variant ethnic, nationalist, and transnational trajectories of postcolonial South Asia in distinctive interdisciplinary contexts and provide a multifaceted approach to Partition and its aftermath. In this collection we have attempted to establish a dialogue among a diverse group of scholars and perspectives to help rethink Partition studies in the twenty-first century. Our contributors have engaged contemporary scholarship and theory from such diverse fields as trauma studies, postcolonial studies, gender studies, ecocritical studies, and digital humanities to examine many neglected areas of the Long Partition. Essays in this collection explore, among other topics, border issues in the Northeast, the impact of Partition on Southern India including the police action in Hyderabad, the impact of Partition on postcolonial politics in Pakistan and Bangladesh, the recasting of Partition narratives in advertisements by corporations like Google and Coca-Cola, as well as Partition in Sindh and the Long March from Burma 1943.

THE ESSAYS THEMSELVES

Against the backdrop of growing scholarship on the subject, nineteen contributors from all across the globe have come together in our volume to offer a multi-vocal and transnational analysis of Partition, and to push forward a discussion of the legacy of decolonization in South Asia. In particular, we have sought to explore new areas of Partition studies beyond Punjab and Bengal, and to recognize how generations of South Asians at home and abroad continue to engage with collective memories and new art forms, such as graphic narratives of Partition by Vishwajyoti Ghosh.[38]

This book is organized into five sections. The first brings together four essays on different approaches to Partition studies. Drawing upon Jacques Derrida's *Spectres of Marx*, Radhika Mohanram examines the links between cultural memory and democracy and in particular how Partition's specter haunts Indian democracy. Jasbir Jain examines a variety of Urdu literary texts by writers such as Sadat Hasan Manto, Tahira Iqbal, and Sorayya Khan to understand the cultural baggage of terms

such as refugee or *mohajir* that articulate our sense of belonging and "at-homeness." In unpacking these terms, Jain demonstrates how the past (the migrations across the Radcliffe Line in either direction) continues to live in the present. Building on the work of historians such as Gyanendra Pandey as well as feminist readings of Partition by scholars like Urvashi Butalia, Parvinder Mehta examines female silence in select texts of Partition. Such silence must be decoded, she notes, to examine patriarchal assumptions and female agency in Partition narratives. Rahul K. Gairola suggests how insights from digital humanities, particularly #DHpoco, help us think critically of the use of Partition narratives by Coca-Cola and Google. Taken together, these four essays offer nuanced theoretical approaches to the Long Partition that might help us in transcending the Partition's dark legacy toward new understandings, healing, and reconciliation.

The second section, "Nations and Narrations," brings together three essays that focus on specific narratives—from Partition memoirs to a study of Amitav Ghosh's novel *The Hungry Tide* and narratives about single women in Bengali literature. The essays in this section emphasize the importance of literary narratives in capturing the trauma of the Long Partition. Saint's essay examines a variety of Partition memoirs by Maulana Abdul Azad, Ram Manohar Lohia, and others that have been relegated to the margins of Partition discourses. By refocusing our attention on these memoirs, Saint invites us to consider their testimonial functionality as they bear witness to the trauma of Partition and its persistent afterlife. Amrita Ghosh's essay examines the significance of the Morichjhapi massacre of Dalit refugees in 1979 and its literary representation in Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide.* Ghosh argues that the dynamics of the state marginalizes the narratives of Dalits affected by the Long Partition. Debali Mookerjea-Leonard examines the impact of Partition on middle-class women who were brought into the workforce following their displacement. Using literary representations from fictional works by Narendranath Mitra, Shaktipada Rajguru, and others, she studies the double displacement of such women who must navigate the tensions between familial bonds and work skills and often choose to be displaced once more.

The four essays in the third section called "Borders and Borderlands" examine the arbitrary and shifting borders and boundaries that emerged during Partition and their impact on nation, identity, and belonging. Building on the work in her book *The Making of Exile: Sindhi Hindus and the Partition of India* (2013), Nandita Bhavnani examines the comparatively low levels of violence in Sindh in the summer of 1947 and the role of landed property as a major catalyst for subsequent violence there. In her essay, she examines how disputes over property—including Hindu evacuee property—shaped the violent conflict between Sindhi Muslims and muhajirs after the Partition in Sindh. Focusing on Kashmir, Ilyas Chattha

examines how communal violence led to the production of refugee populations. He argues that this communal violence played a central role in defining the ongoing crisis in Jammu and Kashmir as well as in the state-formation processes in both India and Pakistan. The essays by Babyrani Yumnam and Amit Rahul Baishya extend the discussion of the Partition beyond Bengal to Northeastern India and Burma. Yumnam examines political processes in the Northeast that have received scant attention in political and academic discourses of Partition and contextualizes her discussion of political mapmaking as part of the capitalist expansions and state formations in the region. Baishya studies the "Forgotten Long March" of Indians from Burma during World War II and explores this mass displacement through the Assamese novel *Jangam* by Debendranath Acharyya.

The fourth section, "From Pakistan to Bangladesh," explores postcolonial politics in Pakistan and in the formation of Bangladesh. Amber Riaz examines why the secularist Muslim nation-state imagined by Pakistan's founder, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, failed after General Ayub Khan's reign. Riaz focuses in particular on the new challenges of self-definition faced by Pakistan after President Zia-ul-Haq began reframing Pakistan as part of the pan-Islamic world under the Wahabbi influence imported from Saudi Arabia. The execution of former Prime Minister Z. A. Bhutto under Zia ul-Haq had already signaled the end of social democracy and the hegemony of military dictatorships. Eminent poet and scholar Kaiser Haq explores the evolution of Bangladeshi literary responses to Partition and how the Partition in Eastern India differed from what occurred in the Western borderland, as he weaves into his analysis his own experiences with the 1971 freedom struggle in Dhaka. Masood A. Raja studies the longest serialized Urdu novel *Baazigar*, by Shakeel Adil Zada, published over a thirty-year period in the magazine *Sab Rang*, to explore how its author offers a perspective on the foundational narrative of Pakistan within a cosmopolitan framework. Tasneem Shahnaaz and Amritjit Singh's essay focuses on the works of Intizar Husain to explore his ambivalence toward Pakistan, his country, and his position as an autonomous artist, which sometimes conflicts with his location as a Pakistani citizen. In particular, this essay suggests that Husain's memories of a utopian life in undivided India and its inclusivity challenges the novelist's ability to build a new identity as a Pakistani. Md. Rezaul Haque studies the Partition narratives of Hassan Azizul Huq, who migrated to East Pakistan in 1954 and whose stories engage the duality of identity as Bengali Muslim and middle class.

The fifth and final section, "Partitions Within," focuses on the impact of Partition in regional areas seldom discussed within Partition studies. Jeremy Rinker studies the legacy of authoritarian colonialism and Partition in contemporary Banaras and its complex social dynamics. He examines the role of custodial torture in prisons and how it marginalizes com-

munities and reconstructs inequalities in the city. Ultimately, Rinker proposes that the work of reducing communal antagonism must unbuckle important identity paradoxes embedded in the intertwined caste and religious lives in modern Banaras. The two essays by Nazia Akhtar and Nalini Iyer deconstruct the idea that Partition did not have an impact on Southern India. Akhtar examines the experience of Nizam's Hyderabad where, in the 1940s, the Muslim elite made up 90 percent of the officials and where the Razakars, a paramilitary organization, forced the migration of thousands of Hindus in 1946. Through an analysis of a Telugu short story "Durga" in Kishorilal Vyas Neelkanth's *Razakar*, Akhtar demonstrates how the Hindutva nationalists—the Hindu right wing—represent the history of sexual violence perpetrated by the Razakars to justify present-day Hindutva violence against Muslims. Iyer's essay examines how literary works by R. K. Narayan, Lalithambika Antherjanam, and Balachandra Rajan represent Partition experiences of those in Southern India who experienced Partition indirectly and witnessed the events at a distance. She argues that these authors imagine a secular nation as they are engaged in accounting for regional differences and expressing anxiety about the loss of the secular ideal through the communal violence of Partition.

In conclusion, we hope that the essays in *Revisiting India's Partition* will shed new light on how British India's 1947 Partition and its sectarian consequences have had an enduring impact on the peoples of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh and even allow new readings of the many literary texts and films widely associated with the subject. The arbitrariness of the border, coupled with the ambivalence of the people divided by it, has led to a legacy of violence that has significant diasporic and postcolonial consequences. By teasing out the implications of ethnic difference and cross-border nationalism, the nineteen essays in this volume illuminate the many ways in which the Partition is not a static event of the past, but an evolving moment in history with a resounding impact on all of contemporary South Asia and its inhabitants. With special attention to voices that have been historically silenced—the voices of women, ethno-religious minorities, and other marginalized populations—we seek through this volume to understand the past, hoping to signal a new way forward.

NOTES

1. Amitav Ghosh, *The Shadow Lines* (New Delhi: Ravi Dayal, 1988), 151.
2. Ibid., 152.
3. At the 1930 Muslim League conference, well-known poet Muhammad Iqbal (1877–1938) first introduced the idea of a separate state for Muslims. Taking his cue from the 1905 Partition of Bengal, he indicated that such a state would comprise majority-Muslim areas, to be severed from Hindu-majority areas. In 1933, Chaudhry

Rahmet Ali in "Now or Never: Are We to Live or Perish Forever?" suggested that a state called "Pakistan" could be formed from Punjab, Afghanistan, Kashmir, Sind, and Baluchistan. The acronym, Pakistan, means the "land of the pure." This idea gradually developed into the "two-nation" thesis. Later, when Rahmet Ali was asked about Bengal, he suggested that the Bengali Muslims should form their own state that could be called "Bangistan" (http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Partition_of _Bengal_ (1947; Accessed October 26, 2015). In a letter sent to Jinnah on June 21, 1937, Iqbal articulated his vision of Muslim autonomy: "A separate federation of Muslim Provinces . . . is the only course by which we can secure a peaceful India and save Muslims from the domination of Non-Muslims. Why should not the Muslims of North-West India and Bengal be considered as nations entitled to self-determination just as other nations in India and outside India are?" In an earlier letter of March 29, 1937, Iqbal had clarified his concern for Indian Muslims in the broader context of the Ummah, the global Muslim community: "While we are ready to cooperate with other progressive parties in the country, we must not ignore the fact that the whole future context of Islam as a moral and political force rests very largely on a complete organization of Indian Muslims" (http://www.allamaiqbal.com/person/biography/biotx tread.html. Accessed, October 26, 2015). Iqbal, less than a year before his own death, saw Jinnah as the right leader to enunciate and protect the rights of the Indian Muslims in a pan-Islamic context. In the late 1970s, the progressive pan-Islamic vision shared by Iqbal and Jinnah would get reduced to a monolithic mold of strict orthodox Islamization or "Wahhabism."

At the same time, the evolution of the "two-nation" theory in colonial India was not confined to Muslim thinkers. In 1923, V. D. Savarkar, as much a non-believer as Jinnah, had espoused his own version of the "two-nation theory" in his essay "Hindutva": "We Hindus are bound together not only by the love we bear to a common fatherland and by the blood that courses through our veins . . . but also by the tie of the common homage we pay to our great civilization—our Hindu culture . . . we are one because we are a nation, a race and own a common Sanskriti (civilization)." In 1937, in his presidential address at the open session of the Hindu Mahasabha in Ahmedabad, Savarkar declared: "India cannot be assumed today to be a unitarian and homogeneous nation, but on the contrary there are two nations in the main—the Hindus and the Muslims." However, when Gandhi met with Jinnah in September 1944 to reconsider Rajagopalachari's proposal conceding the demand for Pakistan, Savarkar expressed his reaction quite furiously: "The Indian provinces were not the private properties of Gandhiji and Rajaji so that they could make a gift of them to any one they liked." Cited in Maloy Krishna Dhar, *Battleground India: Prognosis of Hindu-Muslim Exclusivism* (New Delhi: Vitasta, 2012), 272. Empathizing with the alienation that Muslims, like Dalits, would experience in a Hindu majority India, the Dalit leader B. R. Ambedkar had also supported the case for a separate Muslim homeland in his monograph *Pakistan or the Partition of India* (1940). Here is a snapshot of his thinking from the introduction to his book: "It is beyond question that Pakistan is a scheme which will have to be taken into account. The Muslims will insist upon the scheme being considered. The British will insist upon some kind of settlement being reached between the Hindus and the Muslims before they consent to any devolution of political power. There is no use blaming the British for insisting upon such a settlement as a condition precedent to the transfer of power. The British cannot consent to settle power upon an aggressive Hindu majority and make it its heir, leaving it to deal with the minorities at its sweet pleasure. That would not be ending imperialism. It would be creating another imperialism. The Hindus, therefore, cannot avoid coming to grips with Pakistan, much as they would like to do. . . . Coercion, as an alternative to Pakistan, is therefore unthinkable. Again, the Muslims cannot be deprived of the benefit of the principle of self-determination [that the Hindu Nationalists rely on in asking the British to leave India (http:// www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00ambedkar/ambedkar_partition/. Accessed January 8, 2016).

4. Amitav Ghosh, *The Shadow Lines* (New Delhi: Ravi Dayal, 1988), 228.

5. Egregious delays in resolving outstanding border disputes are best exemplified by the July 2015 agreement signed between India and Bangladesh. India and Bangladesh Land Boundary Agreement, http://www.mea.gov.in/Uploads/PublicationDocs/24529_LBA_MEA_Booklet_final.pdf. Accessed, October 25, 2015.

6. W. H. Auden, "Partition," http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/partition-2/. Accessed, October 27, 2015.

7. Christopher Hitchens, "The Perils of Partition," *The Atlantic*, March 2003, http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2003/03/the-perils-of-partition/302686/. Accessed October 25, 2015.

8. Saros Cowasjee, "Introduction," *Orphans of the Storm: Short Stories on the Partition of India*, Eds. Saros Cowasjee and Kartar Singh Duggal (New Delhi: UBS Publishers, 1995), xi–xii.

9. Ibid.

10. William Dalrymple, "The Great Divide: The Legacy of Indian Partition," http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/06/29/the-great-divide-books-dalrymple (Accessed November 5, 2015).

11. Nisid Hajari, *Midnight's Furies: The Deadly Legacy of India's Partition* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015). Offering theories about how and why the British chose to partition India in 1947 has become a small-scale industry. Two other recent examples are Narendra Singh Sarila, *The Shadow of the Great Game: The Untold Story of India's Partition* (New Delhi: HarperCollins, 2009) and Venkat Dhulipala, *Creating a New Medina: State Power, Islam, and the Quest for Pakistan in Late Colonial North India* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

12. For the full text of Nehru's speech, see https://www.wwnorton.com/college/english/nael/20century/topic_1/jawnehru.htm. Accessed, December 17, 2015.

13. *After Midnight: Indian Modernism to Contemporary India, 1947/1997,* Art Exhibit Program. Queens Museum, New York City, March 2015.

14. http://mea.gov.in/Uploads/PublicationDocs/24529_LBA_MEA_Booklet_final.pdf.

15. William Faulkner, *Requiem for a Nun* Act I, Scene 3, 1951 (New York: Knopf Doubleday, 2011), 73.

16. Ayesha Jalal, *The Pity of Partition: Manto's Life, Times, and Work across the India-Pakistan Divide* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 1.

17. Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali Zamindar, *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 2. Further readings on Partition history include Mushirul Hasan, Ed., *India's Partition: Process, Strategy, and Mobilization,* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994), Yasmin Khan's *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), and Gyanendra Pandey, *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism, and History in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

18. Rita Kothari, "From Conclusions to Beginnings: My Journey with 'Partition,'" *Partition: The Long Shadow*, ed. Urvashi Butalia (New Delhi: Zubaan, 2015), 45.

19. Siddiq Wahid, "Converging Histories and Societal Change: The Case of Ladakh," *Partition: The Long Shadow*, ed. Urvashi Butalia (New Delhi: Zubaan, 2015), 1–29.

20. For a discussion of border issues in the Northeast, please see Gyanesh Kudaisya and Tai Ton Tang, *The Aftermath of Partition in South Asia* (New York: Routledge, 2000).

21. Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence*: *Voices from the Partition of India* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 6. For a critical review of Butalia's work, please see Anindya Bhattacharya, "Significant Moves: Urvashi Butalia's Contribution to the Women's Movement in India," *The Gendered India: Feminism and the Indian Gender Reality*, ed. Arnab Bhattacharya (Kolkata: Books Way, 2012), 141–57. Similar to Butalia's gathering of oral histories is the more recent work by Devika Chawla who has gathered cross-generational oral histories from ten Hindu and Sikh families living in Delhi. See Devika Chawla, *Home, Uprooted: Oral Histories of India's Partition* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014).

22. There is considerable murkiness about the tragic events in the Punjab from the late 1970s to the 1990s—another example of the unresolved Long Partition. One of us (Amritjit Singh) has researched the issue extensively to formulate a balanced narrative in this long endnote. In the 1970s, the Akalis, the Sikh political party in the Punjab, presented a memorandum of demands to PM Indira Gandhi for resolution. These issues were for the most part enshrined in the 1973 Anandpur Sahib Resolution (http://oxfordindex.oup.com/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195673098.003.0020 (Accessed December 17, 2015). While the Resolution did not include a demand for a separate Sikh nation, Mrs. Gandhi touted its focus on enhanced state rights (a concern that was also being voiced in West Bengal and Tamil Nadu) as a step toward secession. She did not respond to issues and demands raised by Akali leadership in good faith or in a timely fashion, instead letting the situation fester well into the early 1980s. In 1982, Congress leader Swaran Singh negotiated an agreement on behalf of the central government with the Akalis on the distribution of water and key issues from the Anandpur Sahib Resolution, but Mrs. Gandhi quickly backed out without any explanation. Around 1977, when the Akali-Janata coalition came to power in the Punjab after the defeat of Congress Party in assembly elections, Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, a charismatic religious leader, had emerged on the Punjab scene. By 1978, both the Akalis and the Congress had begun to use the Sant to their own ends in their ongoing tussle over electoral politics and related matters. Within a few years, the Sant would become the Frankenstein's monster for both sides. The Akalis allowed the Sant and his armed followers to move into the Golden Temple complex, from where he apparently directed the killings of dissenting Sikhs and Hindus (55 percent of his victims were Sikhs). State and central authorities did little to stem the growing violence in the state or to flush the Sant and his cohorts out of the Golden Temple. By 1984, the situation became too egregious to ignore and, in June 1984, Mrs. Gandhi ordered the storming of the Temple in a military-style attack named Bluestar Operation, in which thousands of innocent pilgrims apparently died along with the militants. On October 31, 1984, Mrs. Gandhi's Sikh bodyguards assassinated her in retribution for her desecration of their most sacred house of worship. What followed in Delhi and elsewhere on the first three days of November 1984 was a vicious pogrom that ignited painful memories of the 1947 horrors. Although many Congress politicians were directly implicated in the bloodshed, none of them have been brought to justice to this day. In the Punjab, young Sikh militants began openly to espouse a separate Sikh state, "Khalistan." Many in the large Sikh diaspora in Canada were incensed by the deteriorating political situation in the Punjab, and some allegedly supported the Khalistan movement by supplying money and arms to separatist groups in India. In 1985, a couple of Sikh extremists allegedly bombed an Air India flight with 187 passengers, largely Indo-Canadians bound for India from Toronto. This tragedy transformed inter-ethnic relationships within the South Asian Canadian community along religious lines as had happened during the days and months leading up to the 1947 Partition. Meanwhile, the state of Punjab experienced a reign of terror at the hands of two major adversaries—the Sikh separatists and Indian security forces (including the corrupt and cunning Punjab Police) whose targets included not just Sikh separatists but also thousands of innocent young Sikhs who were framed as militants or harassed on suspicions of sympathy or abetment. Gulzar's film *Machis* (Matchsticks, 1996) is one rendition of that trajectory. Fortuitously, Punjab did not witness orchestrated mob violence between Sikhs and Hindus at any time during the 1980s and 1990s, although there were abundant misperceptions between the two communities, both of whom suffered the turmoil and violence over many years. This brief narrative of the tragic events in the Punjab is based on many sources, especially: Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs: Volume 2: 1839–2004*, Revised Edition (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005); Gita Mehta, *Snakes and Ladders: Glimpses of Modern India* (New York: Anchor, 1998); Mark Tully and Satish Jacob, *Amritsar: Mrs. Gandhi's Last Battle* (New Delhi: Penguin, 1985); and Kristin Bakke, *Decentralization and Intrastate Struggles: Chechnya, Punjab, and Québec* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

23. Tehmina Qureshi, "The year was 1971, but it felt like 1947, says Intizar Hussain." *The News* (Karachi), February 8, 2014, http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-4-231111-The-year-was-1971-but-it-felt-like-1947-says-Intizar-Hussain (Accessed December 23, 2015).

24. Alok Bhalla, "Partition, Exile and Memories of a Lost Home," in Intizar Husain, *A Chronicle of the Peacocks* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002), 234.

25. Ibid., 248.

26. Cited in Thomas L. Friedman, *The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the 21st Century*, Third Edition (New York: Picador, 2007), 457.

27. Anita Rau Badami, *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?* (New Delhi: Penguin Viking, 2007).

28. Ananya Jahanara Kabir, *Partition's Post-Amnesias: 1947, 1971 and Modern South Asia* (New Delhi: Women Unlimited, 2013). See also, "Ananya Jahanara Kabir: In Conversation with Prathibha Umashankar," *Muse India*, 59 (January–February 2015). Accessed November 14, 2016: http://www.museindia.com/viewarticle.asp?issid=59andid=5472.

29. M. G. Vassanji, *A Place Within: Rediscovering India* (Toronto: Doubleday, 2008), 236.

30. For other discussions of Kashmir and Partition, see Suvir Kaul, "Indian Empire (and the case of Kashmir), *Economic and Political Weekly,* 46, no. 13 (2011): 66–75; Nyla Ali Khan, *Islam, Women, and Violence in Kashmir: Between India and Pakistan* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Nitasha Kaul, "Kashmir: A Place of Blood and Memory," *Opendemocracy.net* 31 (2010).

31. For a detailed account of events that led up to the formation of Bangladesh, see Srinath Raghavan, *1971: A Global History of the Creation of Bangladesh* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2013).

32. "It is a mistake to equate the demand for Pakistan with the Partition of India," Interview with Ayesha Jalal by Shoma Chaudhury, *South Asia Citizens Web*, September 11, 2009, http://www.sacw.net/article1097.html (Accessed October 14, 2015).

33. Ibid. While Gandhi stayed above the somewhat impatient power dynamic that defined the communications among Jinnah, Nehru, and Sardar Patel, many Muslims (and some Sikhs) felt they could not fully trust Gandhi, viewing him as a wily Hindu politician despite his refrain on "Ramrajya," signaling mutual respect for all religions. On the other hand, Hindu nationalists thought of Gandhi as much too "pro-Muslim." Nathuram Godse, Gandhi's assassin, remained unrepentant during his trial and regarded Gandhi's continuous "appeasement" of Jinnah as a huge giveaway of Hindu interests in Gandhi's delusional ambition to be recognized as the moral leader of both Hindus and Muslims before and after the Partition. See, Nathuram Godse and Gopal Godse, *Why I Assassinated Gandhi*, Revised Edition (New Delhi: Farsight Publishers, 2015), 58, 71, 98.

34. On Saravkar, please see endnote 3. This section is based on several sources including the following: Koenraad Elst, *Decolonizing the Hindu Mind: Ideological Development of Hindu Revivalism* (New Delhi: Rupa, 2011); Maloy Krishna Dhar, *Battleground India: Prognosis of Hindu-Muslim Exclusiveness* (New Delhi: Vitasta, 2012); V. D. Saravkar, *Essentials of Hindutva*: http://www.savarkar.org/content/pdfs/en/essentials_of_hindutva.v001.pdf (Accessed January 20, 2016); Ramachandra Guha, "The Guru of Hate" (on Saravkar). *The Hindu*, November 26, 2006; http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-features/tp-sundaymagazine/article3232784.ece (Accessed January 5, 2016); Amartya Sen, *The Argumentative Indian: Writings on Indian History, Culture and Identity* (London: Penguin, 2005).

35. Kavita Daiya, *Violent Belongings: Partition, Gender, and National Culture in Postcolonial India* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008), 5.

36. Urvashi Butalia, "Community, State and Gender: On Women's Agency in Partition," *Economic and Political Weekly*, 28, 17 (1993): 12–21, 24.

37. Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin, *Borders and Boundaries: How Women Experienced the Partition of India* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1998).

38. Vishwajyoti Ghosh, ed., *This Side, That Side: Restorying Partition* (New Delhi: Yoda Press, 2013). Asked about the meaning of "Restorying" in the title of his edited book, Ghosh stated the following in an interview: "One thing we felt from the beginning is that we should do away with these myths that Partition is a 1947 thing. Partition is not only about the exodus, but about the little Partitions that we carry in our heads. . . . So what has happened is that memories have also gotten partitioned and stuck on the timeline. . . . We all know what happened. It's also to see how we reprocess all of that, and how subsequent generations negotiate around that." Sonia Paul, "A Conversation With: Graphic Novelist Vishwajyoti Ghosh," *India Ink* (January 21, 2014), http://india.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/01/21/a-conversation-with-graphic-novelist-vishwajyoti-ghosh/?_r=0 (Accessed December 17, 2015).

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Part I

Approaches to Partition

ONE

Specters of Democracy/ The Gender of Specters

Cultural Memory and the Indian Partition

Radhika Mohanram

If the past can be brought back to life through the act of remembering, can it also be completely obliterated? What happens to memories within a new beginning, a radical inauguration, or the birth of a new future? Paul Connerton, states that "[a]ll beginnings contain an element of recollection," thus suggesting that the past cannot be excised completely as even a wholly new start partakes in the habits and loyalties of the discarded past.[1] For Marc Augé who famously states, "Remembering or forgetting is doing gardener's work, selecting, pruning," memory and forgetting are in constant negotiation in the construction of the past.[2] This essay focuses on how memory and forgetting work in tandem in national politics. It unpicks how cultural memory shapes the forms of citizenship and democracy in India and how the 1947 partition, though not always factored in, is significant to their narration. Crucially, it also examines how critical theory, an underutilized tool in topics that surround traumatic national history, can open up interpretations of memory and history so that India's official invocation of the past can be perceived to be largely an invited one, a domestication of difference that serves present-day politics, even though the latter itself has been shaped, in a circularity, by this very domestication. If historic beginnings are predicated on a historic rupture for both India and Pakistan, it is British colonialism that is perceived to be a rupture—but with a difference. For Pakistan, British colonialism enabled the eventual new beginning of the land of the

pure;[3] for India, independence from British colonialism meant the end of a foreign disruption and the restoration of a fictional and imaginary timeline of the past. Thus the common past and history and the disruption that they shared when they were one have been relegated by both nations to a prescriptive forgetting,[4] a particularly politicized selective memory in the present.

The 1947 partition of the subcontinent does not feature to a great extent in postcolonial narratives of India as is evident in the lack of its memorialization either through museums or during independence day celebrations, the topic being confined to studies made by a few scholars.[5] In contemporary India, the new projects of postmodernity and economic liberalization with their built-in compulsory obsolescence of the past have demanded a break from the historical memory of the 1947 partition and India's long travel down the road of Nehruvian socialism. Within the nation's feeble collective memory of 1947, of India's "tryst with destiny,"[6] narratives of the partition have been mostly relegated to personal or local histories indicating an asymmetry of memories across the national geography. In short, the Punjab, Bengal, and Kashmir have different landscapes of partition memory and refer to a different collective memory in Pakistan than the one that the rest of India is made to remember.

But forgetting, too, is replete with memory and this is the focus of my essay, which is divided into three sections. In the first section I explore cultural and collective memory's relationship to the construction of national identities. Scholarship on the memories of the 1947 partition tends to focus on the individual and develops on the assumption of the recuperation of repressed voices and historical memory as a form of resistance to grand, totalizing, national narratives. However, if we intersect collective memory with that of traumatic memory—as was the 1947 partition to the fifteen million refugees from both sides of the border who all suffered a loss monetarily and emotionally—we are able to draw on psychoanalytic contexts for our analysis, to track traumatic displacements and repetitive compulsions. This line of argument reveals that trauma can be experienced not just by individuals but *by entire nations*. In the second section I examine how the very notion of a democratic government and citizenship in India are marked by the repressed or unacknowledged trauma of the 1947 partition. I particularly want to trace the metamorphosis of threatening and destabilizing memories, investigating how these change shape, fragment, and remanifest themselves in disguise. Traumatic memories being painful are also bodily memories and, as such, bodies become important sites of memory in the analysis of Indian citizenship. The final sections, therefore, inspect bodily memory and, in particular, the metonymic significance of women's bodies as signifiers of 1947 partition memories. In these, I want especially to read partition trauma through Jacques Derrida's notion of the ghost and of hauntology as conceptualized in *Specters of Marx*. The significance of this chapter lies in

my intersection of affect with critical theory, exploring trauma through Derrida rather than trauma and repetition, a framework that gained in popularity with Holocaust scholars. The use of abstract poststructuralist thought might seem to be problematic for some partition scholars as the human costs and the horrific nature of this event can often be quantified only in materialist terms, with facts, figures, names, losses, and recuperated voices, as doing anything less would seem to be trivialising this traumatic event. However, notwithstanding the philosophical abstractions of poststructuralist thought, we would do well to remember Derrida's injunction that his deconstructive framework is also an intervention and a politicizing of that which is often normalized and therefore invisible. In reading the issue of woman as Indian citizen I want to move beyond the analysis of women's losses in 1947 on both sides of the border and examine questions such as: What does the ghost metaphor reveal about the construction of gender in India? And how does the examination of gender refer back to the 1947 partition? My focus on gender is to reveal how their treatment in the hands of history makes them a metaphor for all victims of the Indian partition.

Much of Derrida's work on deconstruction is built around the notions of memory, forgetting, recalling, losing, and mourning, embedded not only in his arguments on the function of language in *Of Grammatology* but also in the very idea of the trace, which is a memory of an absence, and in *The Work of Mourning*, *The Specters of Marx*, and his 1984 lectures on *Memoires: For Paul de Man*. For Derrida, there is an intricate relationship between mourning and memory in that mourning is a result of memory and the act and process of mourning, in a loop and in turn, evokes memory. In his work, memory is not a simple reproduction or repetition, but an inheritance. As Gerard Richter points out, "Derrida's writing works to define and perpetually to redefine the meaning of inheriting without following, the meaning of acceptance without repeating . . . and the meaning of setting to work an idea while taking it to a different direction."[7] Thus, the presence of memories which refer to a trace are marked by a différance. In this essay, I particularly use his work *Specters of Marx* because I think his idea of the ghost that haunts the dense, material, solid reality of the present is so rich and helps to tease out the relationship not only between the past, present, and the future but also the relationship between the 1947 partition and the contemporary militarization of Kashmir and the constant muted threat of nuclear war in South Asia. As Frederic Jameson comments on Derrida's spectrality, "[they are] like the vibrations of a heat wave through which the massiveness of the object world—indeed of matter itself—now shimmers like a mirage."[8] In the first section of *Specters of Marx*, Derrida invokes the ghost of Hamlet's father, "The time is out of joint," and it is this that I want to explore—how does the ghost of the Indian partition haunt the concepts of democracy in the nation-state?

NATION AND CULTURAL MEMORY

It is important to consider the way cultural memory functions alongside national injunctions in the Indian context.[9] August 15, Indian independence day, is celebrated every year in New Delhi, as well as other state capitals, with great shows of military and police strength which serve to keep alive memories of the moment of maturation of the Indian polity, its current sustainability, as well as relegating British colonialism to a past moment in the nation's history. Forgotten in these celebrations is the fact that Indian independence is forever linked with the Indian partition as both were brought into being simultaneously. Yet the Indian partition with its shocking statistics of twelve to fifteen million refugees in the transaction of population, two million deaths in the ensuing violence, 75,000 women abducted and raped, 50,000 children abandoned or orphaned, is not part of these national commemorations. How does one event get remembered and celebrated and the other forgotten? Indeed, in India today, almost seven decades later, some 1947 partition refugees still lack resolution for their losses and continue to appeal for justice to the Department of Relief and Rehabilitation in New Delhi.[10]

In one of the earliest works on memory studies, Maurice Halbwachs suggests that time and space are imposed upon people thus imparting a sense of reality and an anchor for our memories.[11] We can see that in the forgetting of partition trauma India colonizes a sense of time by correlating only certain events with important dates, a move by which the trauma can be ignored. In "What Is a Nation" Ernest Renan posits that forgetting as much as remembering should play a large part in issues of national cohesion. Renan suggests that remembering the past requires selective memory as "unity [in a nation] is always brutally established" and it would be disruptive to a sense of shared identity to keep all memories of the past alive. Renan distinguishes between the memories of communities and that of cities by suggesting that individual communities within cities, for instance, often have memories that do not coincide or intersect with each other but the essence of a nation is evident in the fact that "individual members have a great deal in common and also that they have forgotten many things."[12] Indeed, the nation is a great mnemonic community "for its continuity relies on the vision of a suitable past and a believable future."[13] Nations, then, are communities of memories whose identity resides in having traits of ethnicity, religion, culture, and experiences in common. Nationalist movements are enjoined with constructing shared memories, for it is only through these that successive generations can establish shared identities, destinies, and a sense of continuity. This constructed memory or collective amnesia of details not only ensures the forgetting of disturbing elements of the past but also that of the present—only by forgetting the partition can the Kashmir problem be reframed as Pakistan clamoring for our territories. In fact, the valorization of selected

memories is a form of forced forgetting imposed by the nation and carried to extremes in repressive regimes such as during the Stalinist era of the USSR or Nazi Germany or the Cultural Revolution in China. In these situations, the very act of remembering details of the past becomes a form of critiquing and questioning the truth expounded by the regime in power. In the striking opening of Milan Kundera's *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting,* this theme of questioning the nation and its relationship to memory and forgetting is underscored. The text starts with an iconic 1948 photograph of the communist leader Gottwald taken in Prague in which he is flanked by his comrade Clementis. Four years later when Clementis is hanged for treason, the photograph is recirculated with a blank wall where the figure of Clementis had stood. The very act of narrating this story here points to the questioning of official history. Indeed, in their promotion of a coherent and unified identity, the nation and nationalism not only protect memories of the past but *memory itself is perceived to be a political instrument.* The political nature of memories is linked to what Stanley Cohen refers to as open secrets or a "social amnesia," the latter term being defined as a mode of forgetting by which a whole society separates itself from its discreditable past record. This might happen at an organized, official, and conscious level—the deliberate cover-up or the rewriting of history—or through the type of cultural slippage that occurs when information disappears.[14]

But the nation's mediation of collective memory is also challenged by family memory. The family, along with ethnic groups, is the other mnemonic community that our memories are shaped by as it is their social contextualization and their embeddedness that make memories vivid and resonate with meaning and significance. These contexts are often supplied by the various communities or groups in which we have membership. Families, in particular, affect the depth of our memory, regulating how far back in the past we can remember and what we need to forget. Furthermore, as memories are linked to landscapes, monuments, and places, family stories of lost homes often create a longing and a familiarity in those who might never have seen these very sites of memory. In partition narratives, there is often a sense of coming home in post-independence-born Indians when they visit Pakistani cities for the first time.[15] Notwithstanding national ideologies of perceiving Pakistan as an enemy state and supported by a state-sanctioned selective memory, these Indians often find themselves having more in common and a sense of community with their Pakistani counterparts. In this, the sense of "community" invoked by the two different and new nation-states is superseded by the memory of an alternative, pre-Partition community, marked politically and strongly by the local.

DEMOCRATIC MEMORY

It is important to explore the relationship between collective memory, democracy/citizenship, and the Indian partition because the events of 1947 reformulated not only notions of citizenship and belonging but also those of difference and otherness. Indeed, undemocratic colonial rule under the British followed by the massacres of the partition and an artificial division of population and the destruction of communities have shaped a melancholic form of democracy in India. Notwithstanding the political nature of partitions and the function of a democracy, I want to track how these terms are imbricated within aspects of cultural memory. Within the context of memory studies, remembering and forgetting are closely linked to the very origin of democracy in that in 403 BC, after the oligarchic coup against the Thirty Tyrants and civil war in Athens, Athenian citizens publicly swore that they would not recall the misfortunes in order to reconcile and live together as a community. Recalling the past—especially past injustices—had to be a forbidden activity if Athenian democracy was to survive and become politically stable.[16] This selective operation of memory and amnesia has also been a fundamental principle in discourses that hold the nation together so much so that official narrations of history of a nation can often be perceived as not entirely having truth-claims. Within democracies, the question that lingers is who gets to decide what must be forgotten and what remembered. Indeed, it is this selective process in the constructions of democracy and collective memory that Theodor Adorno argues against in the context of the holocaust. He states:

> "Coming to terms with the past" does not imply a serious working through of the past, the breaking of its spell through an act of clear consciousness. It suggests, rather, wishing to turn the page and, if possible, wiping it from memory. The attitude that it would be proper for everything to be forgiven and forgotten by those who were wronged is expressed by the party that committed the injustice.[17]

This destruction of memory demanded by history for the successful functioning of democracies is located within selective understandings of guilt and psychiatry. Because within psychiatry, feelings of guilt are located in the psychological makeups of individuals, the past is deemed to be part of guilty imaginations and "inadequate to reality."[18] Adorno suggests that "a real and terrible past is rendered harmless by being transformed this way—into a mere figment of the imagination of those who are affected by it."[19]

In late twentieth century the relationship between cultural memory and democracy became particularly visible within issues of justice, for instance, in the Tribunal on Genocidal Civil War in Rwanda, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, or the cases that come

up before the International Criminal Court. Newly democratized post-communist societies have valorized this relationship with policies that screen the pasts of candidates, exclude former Communist Party officials from high public positions, or give restitution for property that had been seized under the previous regime. Thus, two types of collective memory have to be negotiated for the proper functioning of a democracy: a nationally orchestrated memory that can bring about cohesiveness to a society and one that is open-ended, non-fixed, and non-politicized that can critique and question the former.

How has the Indian partition of 1947 influenced the shape of democratic forms in India? If democracy shapes and affects the public sphere, can the reverse also be true—can the public sphere also shape democracy? Partha Chatterjee's work *The Nation and Its Fragments* hints at exactly such a notion when he argues for the particularity of anti-colonial nationalism in colonized countries.[20] If nationalism is considered to be a product of European political and cultural history, organic to European nations, Chatterjee asks how could we conceptualize nationalism in non-European nations? Would it be a derivative discourse implying that even forms of national identity have trickled down from Europe? He suggests that one of the strategies adopted by the independence movement in India was to redefine nationalism by making it an anticolonial struggle. This was achieved by dividing social institutions and practices into two domains—the material and the spiritual. The material world encompassed economy, statescraft, and science and technology, where the West was deemed to be superior. The spiritual domain remained essentially indigenous and it was from this domain, Chatterjee affirms, that the creative spirit of Indian nationalism emerged. If the colonial rule of India was justified by its lack of modernity and democratic forms, the Indian independence movement had to remake democratic forms to suit its specific needs so that it became purely an Indian modernity. By redefining the private sphere it redefined the notion of the national itself.

I want to follow Chatterjee's method of analysis to see how the 1947 Indian partition reshaped forms of democracy in India. Three central events coincided in South Asia in 1947—independence, partition, and the formation of two democratic states—thus suggesting a close imbrication between all three events. That is to say, the material conditions that had caused one event had contributed to the shaping of the other two as well. In fact, the concept of citizenship prevalent in India is closely linked to the partition. In December 1946 the issue of what constituted a citizen was first debated before the question of partition had been settled.[21] The principle of *jus solis* was first forwarded as the basis of Indian citizenship—if you were born in India, then you had the right to citizenship. But as events unfolded in the nine months to independence, followed by the effects of the partition, this principle transmuted into different shapes in India. Joya Chatterjee points out that as the idea of partition solidified in

both India and Pakistan, a territorial definition of citizenship emerged—whosoever domiciled in India or Pakistan was considered to be a citizen of that country. Partition violence and the increasing flood of refugees shifted the comprehension of citizenship to one predicated, though unacknowledged, on religious affiliation. For instance, in the ongoing violence and continued chaos the two new sovereign nations decided that minority refugees could not be protected by the armed forces. Hindu and Sikh refugees trapped in Pakistan and Muslim refugees in India could be protected only by the armed forces from the dominion across the border. Joya Chatterjee also suggests that the Evacuee Property Acts which gave the government in both India and Pakistan the right to distribute unoccupied homes to refugees, the establishment of passports, and the Displaced Person's Compensation Act all changed the tenor of citizenship.[22] From *jus solis*, it transformed to something that was based on religious affiliation, and minorities in particular were vastly affected by their status as it created a sense of a minority citizen who was unequal in rights to the citizen of the dominant community. Pakistan's definition of itself as an Islamic country determined its minorities, but notwithstanding professions of being secular, Indian state actions implied that its Muslim citizens were less than equal. Even more than Hindus or Sikhs, Indian Muslims who visited Pakistan after 1947 were put in a precarious position as it cast doubt on their commitment to their Indian citizenship.

SPECTERS OF DEMOCRACY

What, then, is the relationship between the past and the present or that between the 1947 partition and the contemporary nation-state (India)? The excavation of this past is to highlight not only that which has been conveniently forgotten but also to ask what the implications of the partition are, not to 1947, but to the present. How does the history of 1947 constrain or occupy the present? How does it contour contemporary political or cultural life? If the past evoked by the nation-state is an invited one that shows its control over memories, are there still ghosts of the past that escape their domestication by the future? And what sort of ethical relationship does the past and present hold to the future? In her examination of visual arts and writing saturated by the experience of the Holocaust in *The Generation of Postmemory*, Marianne Hirsch indicates trauma's lasting hold on subsequent generations. She suggests that her term "postmemory" encapsulates

> [t]he relationship that 'the generation after' bears to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those who came before—to experiences they "remember" only by the means of stories, images, and behaviours among which they grew up. But these experiences were transmitted to them so deeply and affectively as to seem to constitute memories in

> their own right. . . . To grow up with overwhelming inherited memories, to be dominated by narratives that preceded one's birth or one's consciousness, is to risk having one's own life stories displaced, even evacuated, by our ancestors.[23]

Hirsch's provocative and useful term suggests a transmission of memories through the generations such that even the present is shaped and marked quite strongly by memories of the past. Yet the question remains of how these memories can be transmitted if there is no attempt, as in India and Pakistan (and also Bangladesh), to preserve them. In the battle for supremacy between sustaining memories of independence or partition, it is the former term that is venerated while the latter term is almost absent in considerations of contemporary life, mediated as it is by the nation-states' sense of history.

In *Partition's Post-Amnesias*, Ananya Kabir correctly points out that Hirsch's term "post-memory" constitutes "a memory of a memory" that is more appropriately used for Holocaust survivors' narratives. Since the partition emerged from a different history than the Holocaust, Kabir proffers a term that she considers to be more nuanced and pertinent to South Asian history—"post-amnesia"—that tracks the forms of contemporary recuperation of memory and links to the past after the nationally and psychologically enforced amnesia of 1947 (and the 1971 formation of Bangladesh). Kabir suggests that "post-amnesia imagines the layering of national belonging, inevitable in the modern world, with affiliations deriving from pre-modern economic and cultural histories" in South Asia.[24] Thus the recuperation of these memories skews notions of linear temporality and history in that if memory is a trace, then it rarely recuperates history completely but rather constitutes a creative reiteration of a trace.

It is this skewing of linear history and temporality that is also central to Derrida's notion of hauntology and that allows for disturbing questions to be asked of an assessment of the 1947 partition and permits new ways of thinking about gendered citizenship. It asks primarily what a society does with history, especially with the ghosts of the past. Unlike Kabir's notion of post-amnesia, which is a resurrection of the past in the present that follows different temporalities of modernity and the premodern, Derrida's ghosts are the traces of those who have not been allowed to leave a trace. Hauntology—a play upon ontology—refers to the past which is not, yet which is simultaneously present. While the psychoanalytic frame focusses on repression and mourning, Derrida explores the relationship between the past, present and future through the ghost as this figure destabilizes linear concepts of time so that even the present is not static or singular. The present is psychically interrupted by the past and even the future. Through this rupture of the present, the routine, and the everyday, ghosts gesture toward unresolved history and pasts that are impossible to forget. Derrida suggests that specters reverse the under-

standing of history as origin and the present as being a teleological outcome of the past. Derrida's specters, as Wendy Brown points out, politically activate "the spirits of the past and the future, the bearable and unbearable memories of the past and the weight of obligation toward the unborn."[25] This essay seeks to investigate how Derrida's ghost and its insubstantial presence might be useful to a reading of Indian democracy in the aftermath of the 1947 partition.

The shifting principle of citizenship or the contestation between secularity and Hindu faith that was initiated during the partition in India erased memories of a coherent racial, cultural, and national Indian identity that had been the primary strategy for the success of the Indian independence movement. This tension reverberates to the present day. There is also an ideological disconnection between the history of partition and contemporary cultural politics in India in that the violence and massacres of 1947 are somehow located within a pre-historical period and, therefore, not perceived as being in a continuity with the present. Such a disconnection is made possible by the relative paucity of information of archived material of the event and any focus on the sense of loss, chaos and massacre is generally limited to regional languages—principally Punjabi, Bengali, and Hindi/Urdu. This results in localizing what was a nationally catastrophic event. As Faisal Devji has pointed out,

> Insofar as partition is problematized at all, it is done so as a "horror" which cannot be grasped by a narrative, or as "a mindless cycle of violence." And this simply removes the event from normality and history both by withholding rational agency from its participants, and by separating it from one's own narrative reason. It is the nation's disclaiming of responsibility for its own actions—its dehistoricization of the event into something uniquely elemental.[26]

Partition violence is rerouted in India nowadays by a reconceptualization of it as communal violence or as "the Kashmir problem" or in the nuclear arms race in South Asia. Communalism was a term used by the colonial British which posited primordial hatred between Hindus and Muslims and therefore justified colonial rule as neutral and fair governance. The circulation of this term in contemporary India and the repeated communal violence between Hindus and Muslims (or even between Hindus and Sikhs) since independence in India suggests the failure of nationalism. This is especially evident in the rise in popularity of political parties such as Bharatiya Janata Party (Indian People's Party), the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (National Volunteer Service Society), and Vishwa Hindu Parishad (World Hindu Congress).

The ghosts of partition and the meaning of citizenship have become particularly visible now with the election of Narendra Modi as the fifteenth Prime Minister of India. Modi who had been the Chief Minister of the state of Gujarat between 2001 and 2014 is a member of both the BJP

and the RSS and oversaw Gujarat during the violence of 2002 in which over 2,000 Muslims and over 250 Hindus were killed in communal violence. Though the intercommunal violence had been committed during his watch as Chief Minister, he had not suppressed it, especially the massacre of Muslims, and has often been accused of overseeing state complicity. In 2012 Modi was cleared of state complicity by a Special Investigative Team of the Supreme Court of India notwithstanding testimony to the contrary by NGOs and, in the general elections of 2014, led the BJP to a landslide victory on a ticket of economic progress for India.

The presence of Muslims in India and the partition as the underside to independence reveals a sense of the failure of nationalism, of a nation "unachieved" in the words of Devji.[27] It functions as a failure in two ways: First, if Indian nationalism is based on a European ideal of liberal democracy, its failure to give equal status to all citizens and the pogroms against Muslims suggest that it does not partake of the Enlightenment teleology of progress. Second, rather than the metonymic association of the Indian Muslim with the Pakistani Muslim and thus a threatening figure, it suggests a weakness of the secular-nationalist agenda which is the primary representation of India as a democratic state. It implies that a homogeneous Indian nationalism is a myth. In fact, one could say that the anxiety that the Indian Muslim evokes within the nation-state is an anxiety over the dis-unified nature of the state with the demand for secession in Kashmir, Assam, and Punjab, the Muslim a signifier of the nation-state coming apart.[28]

The Indian Muslim, then, is an uncomfortable reminder of an India wanting to forget the past of partition. One can say that, in fact, cultural memory in India focuses on the norm, the status quo. This is where Derrida's notion of hauntology offers a fresh insight on how to negotiate with the past. Derrida's nuanced suggestion that the ghosts of the dead haunt the living and affect and shape it and, through their absent presence, undo the line between life and death gestures to a thought process which discards the opposition between the past and the present, and the real and the fictive and questions inconsistencies and delusions. For Derrida, the presence of ghosts is linked to the issue of justice. He states:

> No justice . . . seems possible or thinkable without the principle of some responsibility, beyond all living present, within that which disjoins the living present, before the ghosts of those who were not yet born or who are already dead, be they victims of war, political or other kinds of violence, nationalist, racist, colonialist, sexist, or other kinds of exterminations, victims of the oppressions of the capitalist imperialism or any of the forms of totalitarianism.[29]

Thus justice is a demand not only of the forgotten past but also of the future that is to come, the ghosts of which also live in the present. Identity as we know it is shaped by social and group demands and con-

straints, but for Derrida the future also has a say in the formation of identity. The present is responsible to the future and the ghosts of the future inhabit the present as much as those of the past. The investment in remembering the partition, then, is an investment in "communal" harmony in India.

THE GENDER OF GHOSTS

In my attempt to rescript the hermeneutical trace between the 1947 partition and India's present within the scope of democracy, I want to examine briefly how the partition has affected representations of gender. Indeed, there were implications for the postcolonial construction of Indian gendered identity in that the Indian constitution written and adopted after independence promised all citizens, male and female, justice, equality, and liberty by creating an ungendered version of a citizen. It is a commonplace to state that the privileged citizen of postcolonial India has been the urban, well-off, English-speaking male. In "Woman in Difference: Mahasweta Devi's Douloti the Bountiful," Gayatri Spivak suggests that the Adivasi (Aboriginal) Indian woman is left behind as a residue in assessments of Indian citizenship as she doesn't embody the idealized construction of this figure. But what is the status of the postcolonial Indian woman? Is it equivalent to that of her male counterpart? What does Derrida's ghost that is linked to justice and the future (as much as to the past) have to do with the women of the Indian partition? Is the treatment of the Indian woman refugee who survived the partition linked to contemporary Indian women? What would the ghosts of the Indian partition say about the construction of gender in India?

The suffering of women refugees during the 1947 partition has been the focus of research only in the past twenty years.[30] The horrific statistics that surround women refugees—between 75,000–100,000 Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh women who were abducted by men of the other communities, subjected to multiple rapes, mutilations, and, for some, forced marriages and conversions—is matched by the treatment of the abducted women in the hands of the nation-state. In the Constituent Assembly in 1949 it was recorded that of the 50,000 Muslim women abducted in India, 8,000 of them were recovered, and of the 33,000 Hindu and Sikh women abducted, 12,000 were recovered.[31] The Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation in the newly formed states ensured that these women were returned to their respective countries, even the ones who had come to terms with their abductors and started a family with them. Yet, these women's lives—the ones who were abducted, the ones who died, the ones who were never recovered—were not even deemed worthy of being recorded or their memory being kept alive. In most of the instances of the recovered women, their voices, their preferences, and their wishes were not

heard and they lacked agency; they were subject to the whims of the men and the state which were structurally at an equivalence with each other. Urvashi Butalia points out that she had come across a ledger in a second-hand bookstore which consisted of 1,414 pages with a list of 21,809 names of abducted women and children compiled by the Commissioner of Ambala and Jalandhar districts. The discarding of this ledger, a refusal to archive it, shows the lack of value that the new nation-state placed upon its women citizens.[32] She also adds that ashrams (monasteries) were set up for abducted women who were recovered and discarded by their families as they were considered to be "polluted" and that these ashrams continued to house these women unclaimed and with nowhere to go as late as 1997, fifty years after independence and partition.[33] For Veena Das, "the circulation of the figure of the abducted woman, with its associated imagery of social disorder as sexual disorder, created the conditions of possibility in which the state could be instituted as essentially a social contract between *men* charged with keeping male violence against women in abeyance."[34] The privileging of male citizens and women being denied justice, despite equality and liberty being promised by the Constitution, also points to the limits within which women are placed in the formation of the nation-state.

These limits, post-partition, in the subcontinent are highlighted in a recent Pakistani film that deals with the aftermath of 1947 partition. I have selected to exemplify my point on the Indian state with a Pakistani film because of the scarcity of recent examples in India which deal with Hindu or Sikh women affected by the partition. Sabiha Sumar's 2003 Punjabi film *Khamosh Pani* [*Silent Waters*] deals with an abducted woman, Ayesha, who lives in a small village in Punjab along with her son, Salim. Set in 1979 when Pakistan was on the road to further Islamization during President Zia-ul-Huq's tenure, the film includes flashbacks of Sikh women being coerced by their menfolk to commit suicide during partition by jumping into a well to protect their family, especially male, honor. We find out that Ayesha had been Veeru, a Sikh, before 1947 and was an abducted woman who had eventually converted and married her abductor, Salim's father, and that her Sikh origins had been kept a secret from her increasingly radicalized son. Eventually, in the face of her son's demand that she prove her commitment to Islam by publicly declaring it, and following her realization that, notwithstanding her current life as a Muslim woman, she could never escape her Sikh origins in the eyes of the village, she commits suicide in the very well she had refused to enter in 1947. Ayesha functions as a ghost, the undead, between 1947 and 1979, and as such signals the unresolved matters of the partition which haunt the postcolonial state. The suppression of memory proves impossible as Ayesha's spectral presence shows the political irresolution of the legacy of violence and the unfinished business of the past that has been left as an inheritance to the present. What is inherited in this case is not only the

demand put on the young Veeru in the past to commit suicide so that the male family members' sense of honor remains unblemished but also the specter of what could have been and what is yet to be achieved and to materialize. Salim, the village, the sense of Islam represented in the movie could have all accepted the history and life of Veeru/Ayesha and given her voice and agency.

CONCLUSION

This essay has argued that it is important to take note of the 1947 partition in considerations of Indian democracy, citizenship, "home," and contemporary life. In its focus on the overthrow of British colonialism and postcolonial life, I have proposed, there has been an occlusion of this catastrophic event which occurred simultaneously to independence and which has underpinned governance, defense policies, multicultural life and the status of the minority, and a sense of community and safety in contemporary India. I have suggested that reading the partition and the modern Indian state through the lens of Derrida's *Specters of Marx* allows for the ghostly rescripting of that which the history of the powerful leaves behind as detritus. By engaging with Derrida's work I have shown that "abstract" critical theory can nuance and add meaning to histories of trauma which are generally analyzed in a realist mode.

In his well-known article "The End of History," Francis Fukuyama posits that the wholesale adoption of Western liberalism has led to the "end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government."[35] For Fukuyama, like for Marx, the end of history signals the achievement of an ideological utopia—in this case the triumph of liberal democracy over other ideologies. He suggests that in the "post-historical period there will be neither art nor philosophy, just the perpetual caretaking of the museum of human history,"[36] thus suggesting the beginnings of a democratic present that leads to a permanently democratic future. What will be the status of cultural memories of the Indian partition in Fukuyama's globalized future? Could there be a future for a collective memory framework by which to remember the partition within a globalized present informed by liberal democracy and the liberalization of the market? What happens to all the idealism and the willingness to sacrifice lives for one's cause that the independence and partition was about? Where do they go?

With their ability to destabilize linear conceptions of time so that the present cannot be perceived as static, Derrida's specters signal and highlight that which is forgotten in the rerouting of national narratives, and "anachrony [rather than synchrony] becomes the law."[37] This anachronous presence of ghosts disrupts the perceptions of the smooth linearity

of time, of the past followed by the present and the future, their very presence giving a disembodied voice and a form of presence to those who are politically voiceless. Indeed, the ghosts of the Indian partition, the politically voiceless, those erased from nationalist history, and the intercommunal violence are linked to broader memories of being part of the same community in the past and of having had a shared history. The rupture and the aftermath cannot be contained by dealing with the partition in isolation. One could say that intercommunal relations in India is heir to, in Derrida's words, "a bottomless wound, an irreparable tragedy."[38] It is the ghosts of partition that remind us of the gap between the promise of the future and the practices of contemporary Indian democracy. If national history shows the power the living have over the dead, the ghosts of the partition dead show the power the dead have over the living and the unfinished work of democracy that has been left to the present as an inheritance. Transmuting or misnaming partition violence as communal violence and electing Modi as PM just reveals what is yet to materialize, what failed to materialize. Just as the partition revealed an India "unachieved," the ghosts of partition and the location of the minority reveal a democracy that is unfinished.

Derrida's work is relevant to analyze the significance of the 1947 partition precisely because it partakes of the memory framework as well as raises issues of justice and ethics to it. If justice and equality in democracy is rights-based or ordained by law, Derrida's ghosts break with these notions and posit a responsibility that the present has to connect the past with the future. Derrida's ghosts insist that justice and democracy are always yet to come, always works in process, and not only refer to a past but also to *pasts foreclosed by loss*. Yet their very immaterial presence challenges both power and history and the power that history has to the present. Derrida's suggestive work, then, is valuable to trace not the rupture but the continuum between the past and present day—the time out of joint—in India.

NOTES

1. Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 6.

2. Marc Augé, *Oblivion*, trans. Marjolijn de Jager (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 17.

3. I refer to the meaning of the word/name Pakistan—the land of the pure.

4. See the chapter on "Seven Types of Forgetting" in Paul Connerton's *How Modernity Forgets* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

5. Considering the cataclysmic nature of this event, not many scholars have given it proper attention. Among the most significant works are: Gyanendra Pandey's *Remembering Partition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Kavita Daiya *Violent Belongings* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008); Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence* (London: Hurst and Company, 2000); Joya Chatterji, *The Spoils of Partition 1947–1967* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Jill Didur, *Unset-*

tling Partition: Literature, Gender, Memory (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006); Ayesha Jalal *The Pity of Partition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013); and Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, *South Asia, History, Culture, Political Economy*, 2nd Edition (New York: Routledge, 2004).

6. I refer to Jawaharlal Nehru's well-known speech on Independence Day 1947.

7. Gerard Richter, "Acts of Memory and Mourning: Derrida and the Fictions of Anteriority" in *Memory, Histories, Theories, Debates*, ed. Susannah Radstone and Bill Schwarz. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), 152.

8. Frederic Jameson, "Marx's Purloined Letter," in *Ghostly Demarcations: A Symposium on Jacques Derrida*, ed. Michael Sprinker (London: Verso, 1999), 38.

9. I focus on the Indian context particularly as I have never been to Pakistan like most Indians of my generation. I have no family across the border. It has only been in recent years that Indian and Pakistani civilians have been able to visit each other's countries.

10. See, for instance, Ravinder Kaur's "Distinctive Citizenship: Refugees, Subjects and Post-colonial State in India's Partition," in *Cultural and Social History* 6.4 (2009): 429–46. In this work and in *Since 1947: Partition Narratives among Punjabi Migrants in Delhi* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007), she discusses the ongoing, unfinished stories of the Indian partition.

11. See Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 53.

12. Ernest Renan, "What Is a Nation?" *Nation and Narration*, ed. Homi K. Bhabha. (London: Routledge, 1990), 8–22.

13. See Barbara Misztal, *Theories of Social Remembering* (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2003), 17.

14. See Stanley Cohen, "State Crimes and Previous Regimes: Knowledge, Accountability and the Policing of the Past," *Law and Social Inquiry* 20.1 (1995): 7–50.

15. See for instance Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence*.

16. See Barbara Misztal, "Memory and Democracy," *American Behavioural Scientist* 48.10 (2005): 1324–25.

17. See Theodor Adorno, "What Does Coming to Terms with the Past Mean*?" Bitburg in Moral and Political Perspective*, ed. Geoffrey H. Hartman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 115.

18. Ibid., 117.

19. Ibid., 117.

20. See Partha Chatterjee, *Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*.

21. See Joya Chatterjee, "South Asian Histories of Citizenship: 1946–1970," *Historical Journal*, 55. 4 (2012): 1052–53.

22. Ibid., 1060.

23. Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture after the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 9.

24. See Ananya Jahanara Kabir, *Partition's Post-Amnesias: 1947, 1971 and Modern South Asia* (New Delhi: Women Unlimited, 2013), 26.

25. Wendy Brown, *Politics Out of History* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2001), 150.

26. See Faisal Fatehali Devji, "Hindu/Muslim/Indian," *Public Culture* 5, 1, (1992): 16–17.

27. Ibid., 1.

28. Ibid., 1–2.

29. See "Exordium," in Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International* (New York and London: Routledge, 1994), xviii.

30. See Kamla Bhasin and Ritu Menon's *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition* (New Delhi: Kali for Women Press, 1998) and Urvashi Butalia for some of the earliest analyses of women's lives in the partition. That they have been published only fifty years after the partition suggests the muting of women's voices in the recording of history of this event.

31. See Veena Das, *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).
32. See Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence*, 107.
33. Ibid., 129–30.
34. Das, *Life and Words*, emphasis in the original; 21.
35. Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History," *National Interest* (Summer 1989): 1.
36. Ibid., 17–18.
37. Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 7
38. Ibid., 21.

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TWO

Lost Homes, Shifting Borders, and the Search for Belonging

Jasbir Jain

The Partition of India dislocated millions of people on both sides of the border, a dislocation much more than just a physical one. It created a feeling of helplessness and desolation and challenged the definitions of nation and homeland. Memories and histories of the past continue to haunt the children and grandchildren of those who experienced dislocation and violence during the Partition, and the social fabrics of the two (now three) countries have been deeply affected. Partition is an experienced reality, a history which in itself is an incomplete process through its continued resurfacings in our present. For many of us, who did not live through it ourselves, it becomes an exploration of the suppressed texts of memory. The past in itself is neither "real" nor stable; it finds a tentative reality through recollections and memories.

This essay seeks to work with home and homelessness in the context of cultural memories. It also seeks to widen the meaning of the word refugee to take it beyond mere political immediacy and relate it to the existential sense of belonging, estrangement, and exile as these terms come to express the psychological states of the dislocated and to stretch it to include the word *muhajir*. Derived from the word *hijrat, muhajir* carries a reference to the Prophet's exodus and signifies the idea of a religious mission. The Muslim migrants from those parts of India lying outside the newly formed boundaries of Pakistan, especially from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, are referred to as *muhajirs*. There are other economic and political power equations that also come into play, but the fact remains that they are still considered as outsiders. In the case of Partition-related migra-

tions, not only are homelands left behind but community affiliations are also displaced. No one was able to carry the cultural artifacts with them. Another complex aspect of these cross-border migrations is the constant negotiation which the self is called upon to make with both belonging and estrangement.

What is a home? Land, territory, neighborhood, the environs, community, citizenship, a dwelling, or a national unit? Bachelard has commented on the integrating function and the psychological impact of the physical home,[1] and Avtar Brah wonders whether it is a mythic place and thus one of no return.[2] Does home denote possession or a sense of being-at-home and does dispossession disconnect a person from all social affiliations? In India's culture, the renouncer, the ascetic, and the fakir live through non-possession and yet have a social significance and claim the householder's hospitality.[3] The self was not annihilated. Derrida extends the notion of hospitality as an offering of refuge to a stranger unconditionally.[4] But that doesn't happen and the temporary 'homecoming' never takes place. Both the Indian and Abrahamic traditions collapse when the fact of homelessness is thrust upon contemporary society. There can be no return to the purist condition, for the *return* is not to an existing home where one can belong. As Brah points out, "If the circumstances of leaving are important, so, too, are those of arrival and settling down."[5] Homecoming is associated with earlier memories of the lived space and brings with it warmth and restoration and has its own pleasures, the kind that Hölderlin in his 1802 poem "Homecoming" and Wordsworth in "Tintern Abbey" experience. The return home brings about a conjunction between self and environment and builds a bridge across time. It, as Heidegger has observed, literally holds the being.[6] But a violent, traumatic exodus brings about a total uprooting in which the very sense of being is annihilated. The process of rehabilitation remains limited to the material concerns. Later in the essay I seek to problematize the various footholds for the act of belonging. An act of hospitality across differences facilitates and sets in motion the process of belonging.

It is in the above context that Bishen Singh's preference to die on the barbed wire fencing marking the border between India and Pakistan rather than submit to a forced deportation from the land of his birth in Manto's short story "Toba Tek Singhs,"[7] makes sense. A profound and painful comment on the Partition, the story captures the anguish of being exiled as also the difficulty of accepting the finality of "no return." Even a supposedly insane man resists it. The story is also a comment on the unbridgeable gap between the abstract notion of nation, a formation of people, and the actuality of peopling it by shifts of populations. At the same time it exposes the futility of this division; if people have got along so far, where is the logic in disrupting them? There is an incident in the story, the visit of a friendly Muslim neighbor who brings news to Bishen Singh of his family's departure and the cattle they have left behind. The

episode demonstrates that human relationships can survive even in a time of conflict. The nation imagined or real and its geographical counterpart have no meaning for Bishen Singh. Toba Tek Singh happens to be a little hamlet where Bishen Singh has lived all his life before being shifted to the asylum fifteen years ago. One wonders why Manto zeroes in on a lunatic asylum and its inmates to expose the insanity of the seemingly sensible political decisions. Through its irony, the narrative also comments on power—political power, police power, and power of the regulations—impersonally acted upon, deprive the individual of both choice and agency. There is a questioning of the artificial division governed by political considerations, encroaching on personal space. In the process families, properties, and relationships are all affected. Again, the deportation will only sink them further into anonymity and cut off their moorings from all that is familiar. Bishen Singh's very sense of being in the Heideggerian sense of the word collapses at the possibility, just as his swollen legs do at the border. There is an insistent refusal to surrender to the political will. The question he asks repeatedly is about the location of this space labeled Pakistan. Bishen Singh is known as one who continuously keeps standing on one leg with the result that his legs are swollen. His upright vertical position signifies a variety of things: the strength of a lone pillar, uprightness of thought and approach, as well as a separation from the other two-legged animals of the world. One can only speculate as to Manto's reasons for locating him in this eccentricity, but it definitely is an action which resists the environment and opts out of doing as others do. There are several others in the asylum who like him are resistant to dislocation.[8] Even though disconnected to the world outside, they are reluctant to leave, bewildered as to how spaces, towns, and villages can be allotted and distributed at will and fear that it may become a recurrent exercise.[9] Finally, Bishen Singh collapses on the barbed wire, willing himself to this crucifixion rather than cross the border.[10]

Reflecting Manto's own anguish about the Partition through its layered irony, "Toba Tek Singh" is scathing in its criticism of the madness of the times and an unforgettable exposition of home and homelessness. Manto's own birthplace lay in East Punjab and his adult life was grounded in Bombay. In "To My Readers," a piece he wrote in October 1951, he shares his grief with us, "My heart is steeped in sorrow today. A strange melancholy has descended on me. Four and a half years ago, when I said goodbye to my second home Bombay, I felt the same way . . . that piece of land had offered shelter to a family reject. . . ." He goes on to add, "I rebelled against the great upheaval that the Partition of the country caused. I still feel the same way."[11] The decision to come to Pakistan was an 'idea lane' because of the fear that the future was already blotted.[12] In "Letters to Uncle Sam," written between 1951 and 1954, Manto expressed his feelings of abandonment and betrayal. In the very first letter, he recalls his village in India, "My mother is buried there. My

father is buried there. My first born is also resting in that bit of earth."[13] In these letters he comments on political alliances, art, America's own injustices and discriminations, and pursuit of military control over the subcontinent, reinforcing the wedge that Britain had first driven in through its divide and rule policies and eventually the Partition of the subcontinent. He reflects too on the social and political conditions, the incomplete freedom offered to the Indians is compared to birds whose wings have been clipped.[14] "Toba Tek Singh" questions the re-formation of nationhood. It is not for nothing that the soil of our country, our native place holds an emotional meaning for many of us. This echoes the power of *desh* (often the village left behind) in the oral narratives of migrants in both Eastern and Western sections of Partition.

In Tahira Iqbal's story "*Deshon Mein*,"[15] an old woman who had migrated to Pakistan remembers the smell of the soil and the taste of the radishes grown back in her home in India at the foothills of the Himalayas in Punjab. And even if it is an infertile land, the émigré turns back to it in memory. Sumathi Ramaswamy in her essay "Thinking Territory," draws our attention to explorations of cultural memory associated with particular places and referring to them as place-worlds, observes that "territory is not simply a pre-determined area within which certain physical actions are performed . . . rather, it is a complex outcome of discursive meditations and everyday mediations, and a structure of sentiment produced through imagination, memorialisation, recollection and visualisation."[16]

As Intizar Husain's story "The Unwritten Epic"[17] testifies, place-worlds and nations may run counter to each other, tearing the individual into two, leaving no choice but to die. The recurrent theme of most Partition narratives is the transference of self, of locale or monument, in actuality of history and familiarity: can the Taj Mahal be carried over from its current location and be relocated?[18] What is rationally argued at the political level makes little sense at the personal and emotional levels. Pichwa in Intizar Husain's "An Unwritten Epic" hoists up a Pakistani flag when its birth is announced but has soon to pull it down as it is a foreign flag. He is further bewildered by the quiet migration of many of his neighbors and feels compelled to follow. But in Pakistan he is labeled a *muhajir*, an outsider, and tolerated on the fringe. The return to India is inevitable just as his death is. Soon after his return, one morning the body of the failed hero is found hanging on the branch of a tree.[19] The epic remains unwritten. The logic in Pichwas's reasoning outstrips the political action. Like Bishen Singh in "Toba Tek Singh," migration is a tearing away, and neither Bishen Singh nor Pichwa is able to make the crossing. The very idea of the dismantling of a known home is traumatic and fatal. Together the two narratives, focusing on space, attempt a definition of nationhood and work with emotional loss. "An Unwritten Epic" despite its mock heroic tone unfolds into a tragedy, transcending the narrative

structure to inhabit our inner beings and our consciences. What price rationality and what price new-found freedom?

Houses, like environments and surroundings, also hold a sense of belonging and define a relationship between the self and the past. Heidegger in his essay "Building Dwelling Thinking" points out that men dwell in buildings and treat them both as ends and means. There is a difference between inhabiting and dwelling. The latter includes the whole of our being encompassing our activities and the changes in our growth, the way we are on earth. The three processes of building, dwelling, and thinking are interlinked.[20] The absence of any one of them subtracts from the act of living and the meaning of existence. Does the transition of dwelling from a noun to a verb reflect the memories and histories which the place holds? Again, thinking can never be governed by linearity. It moves in multiple directions. When dislocated, what is it that we manage to salvage from the past and carry with us? The very centrality of space in writings of dislocation supports the connection of the outer space to the inner self, though each writer approaches it differently. Intizar Husain's novel *Basti* goes even further and takes up two dislocations: the Partition of India and the Partition of Pakistan. The second Partition placed Bangladesh in the same relation to Pakistan as Pakistan had stood in relation to India in 1947. As the historian Mushirul Hasan has observed: "Perhaps Partition does not convey the same meanings in Lahore and Islamabad as it does to people living in Delhi, Lucknow, Calcutta or Dhaka. It is not bemoaned, for understandable reasons, as an epic tragedy but celebrated as a spectacular triumph of Islamic nationalism."[21] The birth of Bangladesh dismantled this very idea of Islamic nationalism, and Pakistan was compelled to think of its prisoners of war and the life of the nation after the division. Sara Suleri in *Meatless Days: A Memoir* writes about her sister's husband, Zaved, who was taken a prisoner in the '71 war, and when he finally returned, it was to a world "that did not really want to hear the kind of stories they had to tell." Suleri recounts how she had felt that his mind was overwhelmed with the incongruity of violence and the perpetual nightmare that had begun to inhabit his mind. The question that worried her was, "How will Ifat do it, make Javed's mind a human home and take these stories away from his head?"[22]

Husain's *Basti* reflects his own reasons for migration: a *hijrat* undertaken on the lines of the Prophet's journey. But the novel also questions the validity of this *hijrat* working with two time frames and part fantasy, part history and part personal memories; it creates a ghost town unnamed right till the end. The narrative begins at mid-point and the past flows in through memories and letters. In this hazy combination of political history and personal memory, it recreates the desolation and the temporariness of the past. Zakir is a teacher of history, an occupation he finds boring, caught as he is in the turbulence of new histories taking birth as ideological warfare, civil strife, and finally dislocation disrupt their lives.

His father's generation veil all their anxieties behind their faith in religion. They communicate through riddles:

> "Maulana, when will Doomsday come?"
> "When the mosquito dies and the cow is without fear."
> "When will the mosquito die, and when will the cow be free of fear?
> "When the sun rises in the west."[23]

And thus the question-answer session goes on to be completed much later in the narrative through the parables from Buddha's discourses, stories from the Bible, Muslim folk tradition, and references to the Koran. When Buddha fell silent, the shoelaces, if they spoke, would be conspicuous; when Husain and his brothers are martyred, the shoelaces speak. Death follows death. The "crooked cannot be made straight."[24] Thus the initial question-answer session marks the need for the world to set itself straight. A recurrent theme through all history is: Why does brother kill brother; why did Cain kill Abel?

Where is the *basti*? Where does one dwell? Memories travel, but can cities and collectivities travel? And what about graves? One Hakimji had refused to migrate, because of the shade of the trees in the graveyard. His query was, "How could my grave have such a shade in Pakistan?" Many an elderly person stayed back in India, held back by the thought of his grave. Zakir's friend Surendar, comments on this: "Yar, you Muslims are wonderful! You're always looking toward the deserts of Arabia, but for your graves you prefer the shade of India."[25] And those who have migrated, and have lost their houses still hold on to their keys and keep them rust-free. Zakir's mother asks her husband for the keys—not the property but the keys—but he gives them to her only on his deathbed which she later passes on to her son.[26] They are symbolic of an identity, a past and a history. These migrants are engaged in salvaging memories of a once-lived past. Zakir's friend Afzal recalls his grandmother, who kept on saying till her death, "My child, the flood must have gone down, let's go home."[27] But as the floods have now risen on this side, there is no going back, the *basti* is inhabited by perpetual nomads. Repeatedly, in different ways, the question is asked, "How does one belong?" Even a public place like a hotel is desolate and melancholy. Shiraz is almost abandoned. The emptiness around them merely echoes what they feel and experience: estranged, rootless, held by an inheritance which binds them to a past no longer within their reach or accessible.

In contrast to the almost dead city that Intizar Husain presents is Sorayya Khan's novel *Five Queen's Road*[28] where Dina Lal, a Hindu, chooses to stay on in Pakistan much against his sons' and wife's wishes. Dina Lal's property is a recently purchased one; he has bought it from a British officer who was to leave for England in 1947. When the riots take place and his sons decide to migrate to India, he refuses to accompany them. His wife, Janoo, the hapless woman, bemoans this division of her

family and is later abducted, leaving Dina Lal to himself. He sets about populating his house and his front lawns in different ways. He invites a colleague to occupy the front portion of his house as a tenant. Later, a car mechanic's shop is set up on his front lawns and a kind of slum colony springs up. Dina Lal converts to Islam and takes the name D. L. Ahmed. His behavior is difficult to explain in terms of rational argument. He needs space, but then sets about shrinking it by crowding it and later cushions his walls to keep the noise from the mechanic's workshop out. His food comes from Amir Shah's house. Yunus, the sweeper and the odd-job man, does the cooking. The inner partitions in *Five Queen's Road* keep on shifting depending on circumstances. A huge billiard table with which he associates the memories of his sons pushes all else to the corners. The friendship with Amir Shah is built on a series of arguments and quarrels, and finally when Dina Lal dies, Amir Shah discovers that all the electricity and water bills, an amount far in excess of the rent he had been paying, have all been paid by Dina Lal. Friend or enemy, refugee or outcast, or none of these but a generous, lonely man who holds on to his roots while accepting all other kinds of changes—in religion, name, caste, and relationships. Why? Is it because it is difficult to leave the place where one has grown up and where childhood memories are stored? Or is it a total refusal to accept the borders drawn as a dividing line? It is not children, nor family inheritance, nor property, nor graves in this instance but his adherence to his own past, which holds him back. There is no future and the present he has constructed is one which contracts and expands simultaneously. The colony with which he inhabits his environs is loud, noisy, and an agglomeration of odds and ends.

The partitions in the house are also borders; Amir Shah when he sits in the garden of an evening is "careful to set his folding chair on his side of back lawn's imaginary border."[29] He follows this pattern of life even when Dina Lal is dead. Despite the barriers and divisions, Dina Lal connects people with people, memories with other memories, and cultures with other cultures. The jewelery of his wife has supported them and his private collection of newspapers holds an archive. But now there is no jewelery left and, after his death, the newspapers make a huge bonfire on the front lawns and finally even Amir Shah and his family move away from Five Queen's Road to a smaller box-like house while missing out on both the magnificence and the crowding of the house on Queen's Road. Amir Shah belongs, but Dina Lal is constantly in search of a human community and hence the world he surrounds himself with where the past of his memories is held in place by the archives he builds in his house through the neat stack of newspapers and the connections with the noise of the reality around him. Fully aware that he has no future, no family heirs, no ties that he can hold on to, he still chooses to live there and later die there to be mourned briefly by Amir Shah's family. Its collection of people represents a cross-section of society.

The Partition gave birth to a "heart-in-pieces" generation.[30] Attia Hosain, the writer on whose work Hasan was commenting when he described their generation as such, had described her generation in a similar matter herself years after the Partition.[31] She wrote a piece for *Voices of the Crossing* reflecting upon the choices she had made in 1947. As millions of people suffered loss and large numbers changed sides, she and her husband happened to be in England. They chose to stay there and hold on to their British passports. They were in a way torn between the two countries with the family also divided along political lines. One of her brothers chose to go to Pakistan. And hence this self-imposed exile began.[32] Did she ever belong to England? No. In an interview with Lakshmi Holmström, she admitted, "Apart from anything else I haven't belonged to it (English society) because I have not been totally part of any family."[33] This was the way she accounted for her long silence after her novel *Sunlight on a Broken Column*. There was a failure of imagination and an inability to enter a self except her own. In another piece that Attia Hosain wrote in 1988, "Second Thoughts: Light in Divided Worlds,"[34] occasioned by the reincarnation of *Phoenix Fled* and *Sunlight on a Broken Column*, she rendered an account of her sense of exile and its harsh reality. She constantly lamented the absence of a family, and though she has left behind a stack of written work, only a couple of short pieces were published during her lifetime, besides the collection of short stories and the sole novel, which is semi-autobiographical.

Sunlight on a Broken Column is a narrative of division and focuses on the yesterdays, todays, and tomorrows that merge into each other. It is also a critique of religious nationalism, but what is of importance for my present concern is Laila's (the protagonist's) visit to the ancestral house which is to be divided as the house is now declared evacuee property. This last visit for a final farewell is crowded with memories. The spatial images of the house dominate and are overlaid by earlier arrangements and relationships; the double timescape results in a double-layered map of the house. The absent members are present in their ghostly selves and the material and the personal imaginations fuse. Fairly early in the novel, Laila expresses the view that the house was more than a pride of possession, it was "the fulfilment of a deep need to belong, it was a feeling of completeness, of a continuity between now and before and after."[35] Now visiting it after fourteen years, belonging and non-belonging confront each other. The house has been through separation, sorrow, and division. It seems empty as no domestic activity is humming around. It indicates the dispersal and the fragmentation of the family. In short, the house is now rejecting its erstwhile owners, leaving them literally unhoused. And even as the sunlight pours in when she opens a window, she, unable to move out of the past, shivers in the sun, "There were ghosts that could not be laid by the passing of years."[36] The unkempt gardens announced and identified with her own sense of loss, of being in a wilderness, which

in later years, was to inhabit Attia Hosain herself, silencing and isolating her and pushing her into a withdrawal, resulting in a total disconnect from the outer world. The haunting presence of nothingness is somewhat in the manner of Zakir's sense of loss in Intizar Husain's *Basti* where the ghostly town is an external symbol of inner emptiness. In this connection Attia Hosain's last published work which appeared in *Wasafiri,* is a significant piece, the poem of a lost soul. Titled "Journey to No End," it works through the consciousness of the narrator and is loaded with images of closure, coldness, and loneliness, "imprisoning buildings, darkness absorbed"; "incisive cold entering each pore and probing inwards." There is no laughter, no open space, no trees, one is "just a tenant," a temporary occupant: "Yet always I am going back through years of space; and there is no way of stopping this scattering of myself for I have no guard against the sly abductors concealed and springing out from every vulnerable perceptive sense." There is a recurrent desire to be lost in a crowd, to be among strangers, to feel the silence of alien speech. The narrator asks, "Went home? I have never left it though I am not there. But I have no home. I have to repeat the thought to myself to believe in it, because it is incredible."[37]

Does a human being always dwell in an incomplete unfinished home, or is it a temporary condition that can be healed? Or is it the political upheaval that ruptures connections? Does one have to belong to a category such as race, religion, region or does there exist the possibility of living in relationships outside these categories? Political divisions search for a redefinition of the term "nation," in order to construct a sense of belongingness, of being "at-home." Perhaps, loneliness is a permanent condition of modernity, but then we need to distinguish between the existential sense of loneliness and the one related to exclusion, memory, and history. Exile literally entered Attia's being. Many others feel similarly estranged on account of divided families and being labeled as *muhajirs*, immigrants, hence outsiders. With political developments rendering movement across borders difficult and rehabilitation laws applicable to evacuee properties, the division of families has also left a heartache which inhabits the mind and the soul.[38]

The Urdu poet and writer Munawwar Rana, a post-partition Indian, also feels this pain. I draw attention to the introductory essay to his long poem *Muhajirnama*. Titled "*Hum khud udharne lagte hain, turpai ki tarah*," (We ourselves come undone like the seams), he begins with an account of the uncomfortable feeling that invades him as he awaits the announcement of his turn in a *mushaira* in Pakistan, because the poetry of others constantly works with images of Partition. The essay serves as an introduction to his long poem, *Muhajirnama*.[39] The lost possessions of the *muhajirs* include memories, graves, homes, neighborhoods, and unfinished tasks. In *Muhajirnama* Rana writes, *"Yahan aate huye sab keemti samaan le aaye/Magar Iqbal ka likha tarana chod aaye hain"*[40] (On the way here

we carried all that was valuable/but left behind the lyric that Iqbal wrote). The reference is to the lyric "*Saare Jahan se accha Hindustan hamara*" (Our country is the best in the world), a poem which was considered at one time as a possible choice for the national anthem and speaks of unity and belonging. Partition has ruptured this feeling of oneness. Rana feels that these immigrants will be referred to as *muhajirs* till the end of the world because they have abandoned so many, "*kisi ka saath chuta hai, kisi ko chod aaye hain*," we have parted from some and left behind others.[41]

In the introductory essay to *Muhajirnama*, "*Hum khud udharne lagte hain*," he moves beyond its initial reference and asks that if Partition *was* the solution to religious conflicts, why are Muslim of various regions and denominations within Pakistan caught up in conflictual situations and Muslims divided among themselves in other countries? Extending this argument to other Islamic nations, he lists the numerous conflicts which entangle them. Israel would never have been able to encroach on Palestine, Afghanistan would not have become a battlefield for Russia and the US to fight their wars and the race for armaments would not have been so competitive.[42] The division of the country has rendered us vulnerable as a nation to the power politics of the major international players. The gaze backwards is now part of our present reality as longing, nostalgia, and regret play with one another at the Wagah border camouflaged by jingo patriotism.

Is there no homecoming? Is there no way of belonging? Is the outsider eternally doomed to this sense of homelessness? Perhaps not. The only way borders can be crossed is by going across, by allowing culture a priority over violence. Asghar Wajahat's play *Jis Lahore Nahin Dekhiya O Jamiya hi Nahin*[43] explores this possibility. Wajahat, like Rana, is an Indian and teaches Hindi at Jamia Millia Islamia. Born in 1946 he has no lived experience of the Partition but his writerly imagination has gone over to a Punjabi woman's situation who is living alone in her huge house, uncertain whether her son and his family have survived the exodus or have perished. Declared evacuee property, a Muslim family from Lucknow is allotted the house, which they believe to be unoccupied. But soon they realize that there is another occupant—a ghost, a woman, or who? The son of the family wants to eliminate her as she refuses to go. It is immaterial whether she lives in India or Pakistan; she refuses to be unhoused, kinless as she is at the moment. But through her willingness to accommodate, she acquires a family. The man addresses her as *phuphi,* paternal aunt, and the children as grandmother. Her being at home amid her surroundings is of great help to the newcomers as well as their kin. There are two occasions which capture this spirit of belonging. On one occasion the woman expresses a desire to leave for India, but the family refuses to let her go into an unknown and uncertain future, an exile as it were;[44] the second occasion is when she dies—should she be cremated according to Hindu customs or buried according to the Muslim rites? The Maulana

advises them to be true to her religion and the men then start trying to put together whatever they have observed of Hindu rites.[45] These two moments capture the meaning of the title "He who has not seen Lahore, is not yet born," the allusion being to the culture of Lahore which embraces the other, offers hospitality, unconditionally.

But these moments in themselves point to individual reciprocal goodness and are not enough to bring about a large-scale shift in the exiles' non-belonging. Yet, Wajahat shows a way, which if adopted can change our present. The Pehlawan, full of hatred, takes it out on the Maulana which brings the reader/viewer down to the ghastly reality of our existence. To repeat Heidegger's question: "What is it to dwell?"[46] One finds no satisfactory answer. Do we dwell in houses, in memories, in history or in art? How do we sustain ourselves and cope with a sense of exile—through language or through silence? The search for home is an ever-continuing search for belonging, for a placement in the new social formation which perhaps every individual has to engage in at an individual level. The political realities work through multiple discourses and one of them is power. Any aspiration to power comes up against histories of the past, of immigration, of nationalism and against minority-majority discourses. Munawwar Rana is not far wrong when he traces the conflicts in Muslim countries to the rupture that the Partition of India. The individual has to work out his own salvation through a conscious act of belonging and perhaps survive on substitutes as Dina Lal does in *Five Queen's Road,* or in nostalgia and regret as in *Muhajirnama*, where Rana goes so far as to say, "*Yeh hijrat to nahin thi buzdilli shayad hamari thi/ ki hum bistar pe ek hadiyon ka dancha chod aaye hain*,"[47] (This was not hijrat but perhaps our cowardice/ we left behind a skeleton on the bed).

Migration, in itself, is a disintegrating fact and partition migrations even more so. The task of integrating involves both the outside and the inside worlds. It is difficult to arrive at a satisfactory equation between political and personal space. It is even more difficult when cultural spaces and languages overflow. One finds sameness everywhere. They are just like us; then, why are we separate? One can only work out solutions at an individual level and home, in the final instance is a memory home.

NOTES

1. Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, translated by Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), 6–7.

2. Avtar Brah, *Cartographies of the Diaspora* (London: Routledge, 1996), 192.

3. Romila Thapar, in her study of the Buddhist tradition and of renunciation as a counterculture has underlined the moral and emotional base of both as they work through compassion and concern for others and resist ideological pressures. The act of dispossession does not annihilate the self or disrupt the renouncer's relationship with society. See Romila Thapar, "The Householder and the Renouncer in the Brahmanical

and Buddhist Traditions," *Cultural Pasts: Essays in Early Indian History* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000), 914–45.

4. Jacques Derrida, "Hospitality," in *Jacques Derrida: Basic Writings*, ed. Barry Stocker (London: Routledge, 2007), 237–64. Derrida refers to the politics of the late nineties, especially in France, and refers to the "cities of refuge" and debates the possible hospitality one can extend to a refugee. This essay should be read along with Derrida's essays, *On Cosmopolitanism* and *Forgiveness*, translated by Mark Dooley and Michael Hughes (London: Routledge, 2012). Offering hospitality to the outsider requires first of all the attitude of trust; it demands reciprocity and is, at present, conditional.

5. Avtar Brah, *Cartographies of the Diaspora* (London: Routledge, 1996), 182.

6. Martin Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (London: Routledge, 1978; Indian Reprint 2012), 243–55.

7. Saadat Hasan Manto, "Toba Tek Singh," in *Bitter Fruit: The Very Best of Saadat Hasan Manto*, edited and translated by Khalid Hasan (New Delhi: Penguin, 2008), 9–15.

8. Ibid., 10–11.

9. Ibid., 11–12.

10. Ibid.,15.

11. Saadat Hasan Manto, "To My Readers," *Bitter Fruit: The Very Best of Saadat Hasan Manto*, edited and translated by Khalid Hasan (New Delhi: Penguin, 2008), 655–56.

12. Saadat Hasan Manto, "Ashok Kumar: The Evergreen Hero," *Bitter Fruit: The Very Best Saadat Hasan Manto*, edited and translated by Khalid Hasan (New Delhi: Penguin, 2008), 460.

13. Saadat Hasan Manto, "Letters to Uncle Sam: Letter I," *Bitter Fruit: The Very Best of Saadat Hasan Manto,* edited and translated by Khalid Hasan (New Delhi: Penguin, 2008), 610–52.

14. Tahira Iqbal, "*Deshon Mein*" in *Rekhat* (Islamabad: Dost Publications, 2003), 42–51.

15. Sumathi Ramaswamy "Thinking Territory: Some Reflections," Foreword to *Thinking Territory: Some Reflection,* eds. B. P. Giri and Prafulla Kar (Delhi: Pencraft International, 2009), 11.

16. Intizar Husain, "The Unwritten Epic," translated by Leslie E. Fleming and Umar Menon, *Stories About the Partition of India*, 3 volumes, ed. Alok Bhalla (New Delhi: Harper Collins, 1994), 635–57.

17. Mohan Kalpana, "Traitor to the Tajmahal" in *Reading Partition/Living Partition*, ed. Jasbir Jain (Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 2007), 35–39.

18. Martin Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (London: Routledge, 1978, Indian Reprint 2012), 243–44.

19. Intizar Husain, *Basti*, Translated Frances W. Pritchett (New Delhi: Harper Collins, 2000).

20. Mushirul Hasan, "Memories of a Fragmented Nation: Rewriting the Histories of India's Partition," *Economic and Political Weekly*, October 10, 1998, 2663.

21. Sara Suleri, *Meatless Days: A Memoir* (London: Flamingo, 1991), 144.

22. Ibid.

23. Intizar Husain *Basti*, translated Frances W. Pritchett (New Delhi: Haper Collins, 2000), 7.

24. Ibid., 256–57.

25. Ibid., 139.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid., 231.

28. Sorayya Khan, *Five Queen's Road* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2009).

29. Ibid., 201.

30. Mushirul Hasan, "Heart-in-Pieces Generation," *Financial Express,* 21 Feb. 1998. www:/financialexpress.com/del/ / le /daily (accessed 28 October 2014.)

31. Suman Bhuchar, "Attia Husain 1913-1998," *Wasafiri*, 13, 27 (1998), 43–44.

32. Attia Hosain, *Voices of the Crossing, Serpent's Tail*, 1998. Transcript of the audio version of the paper written for this volume was made available to me by Attia's daughter, Shama Habibullah, hence page references and other details are missing. *Voices of the* Crossing was BBC Third Programme. Attia worked for some time in the BBC for the Third Programme, Eastern Service and Home Service and there was a controversy about a non-Pakistani running a program in Urdu. A part of the recording is included in the Memorial Meeting video. My access has been through Shama Habibullah, hence no print references.
33. Attia Hosain, Interview with Lakshmi Holmström, "Sunlight and Shadow," *Indian Book Review*, September, 1992. Holmström has another piece on her "Cerebrations: Attia Hosain, Her Life and Her Work," *Indian Book Review*, 16 February–15 March, 1999.
34. Attia Hosain, "Second Thoughts: Light in Divided Worlds," *The Independent,* Thursday, 18 August, 1988.
35. Attia Hosain, *Sunlight on a Broken Column* (New Delhi: Arnold Heinemann, 1979).
36. Ibid., 88.
37. Ibid., 310.
38. The word *muhajir* is derived from the Prophet's *hijrat* and is generally applied to immigrants. In Pakistan the reference is to Muslim immigrants who have migrated from the areas allocated to India, more specifically Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. The poet Nida Fazli has two autobiographies: *Deewaron Ke Beech* (New Delhi: Vani Prakashan, 2001), and *Deewaron Ke Bahar* (New Delhi: Vani Prakashan, 2005), which narrate his family's story at the time of Partition. Again Mushirul Hasan's edited two-volume *India Partitioned: The Other Face of Freedom* (New Delhi: Roli Books, 1995, 1997) has an extract from the poet, Josh Malihabadi, from his autobiography, *Yaadon ki Baraat*, titled ''My Ordeal as a Citizen of Pakistan" (196–206). This extract has been translated by Mushirul Hasan. Josh writes about the difficulty of the decision to migrate. While the then Prime Minister Nehru wanted him to stay or divide his time between the two countries, his friends in Pakistan advised him to migrate fearing a dark future after Nehru. The migration was much against his emotional self (200–201). His welcome in Pakistan was marked by hostility, ''*Jis jagah hum ne banaya ghar sadak pe aa gaya"* (the place where I built a house, turned into a road). It comments on his sense of homelessness and non-belonging. "To be on the road" is a way of expressing homelessness.
39. Munawwar Rana, "*Hum khud udharne lagte hain*," introduction to *Muhajirnama*. (New Delhi: Vani Prakashan, 2011), 9–29.
40. Munawwar Rana, *Muhajirnama* (New Delhi: Vani Prakashan, 2011). 47
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid.
43. Asghar Wajahat, *Jis Lahore Nahin Dekhiya O Jamikya Hi Nahin* (New Delhi: Vani Prakashan, 2001).
44. Ibid., 51–52.
45. Ibid., 76–78.
46. Heidegger, 243.
47. *Muhajirnama,* 35.

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THREE

A Will to Say or Unsay

Female Silences and Discursive Interventions in Partition Narratives

Parvinder Mehta

The issue of deliberate silence, especially in traumatic history-laden narratives, revolving around nationalism and superseding the personal and private tragedies in favor of building a collective consciousness, becomes a metaphoric apparatus of repression, even strategic dominance in some cases. The tug-of-war between "silence" and "narration" of traumatic events—a predominant engagement in many history-inspired literary narratives—reveals a dichotomous struggle between repressive paradigms of fragmented history and the confessional urges to express and articulate that which has not been narrated yet. Silence becomes a non-narrated discourse which seeks articulation and demands inquiry into its own subject formation. Mute experiences of traumatic incidents, especially those acts committed with atrocity, when represented in creative expressions, offer a discursive framework underscoring the limitations of the mainstream history as well as interrogating, even challenging them on the one hand, and creating possibilities for alternative narrative spaces, albeit marked by belatedness. Thus, for example, in the Indian historical context, a plethora of narratives about the 1947 Partition of British India have traced the official discourse/history that celebrates nationalistic imperatives and endorses the courage of the freedom fighters and national leaders. Although many narratives about the partition have highlighted the Partition violence, including mass killings, rape of women on both sides of the border, as well as homelessness and abduc-

tion leading to a catastrophic loss in India's recorded history, there is a remarkable tension between silence and discourse. Thus while the predominantly celebratory, nationalistic aspect of India's awakening at the dawn of its independence from the British rule is resplendently eulogized through narratives of patriotic history, glimmering with tales of bravery, there is also another emerging trend of narratives that has evolved from discourses on loss and nostalgia. In recent decades, narratives revealing shame and sexual violence that were intrinsically ignored or passingly referred to in mainstream history have emerged to underscore aberrations and an alternative history of Partition.

History, especially in the context of Indian independence and Partition, reveals a strange bifurcation between the official history endorsing the Nehruvian/Gandhian vision of nation-formation, and the countless individual stories of victimhood, and trauma encoded within enforced silences. Historians such as Gyanendra Pandey, and many others, have written about historiographic interventions needed to understand the gaps and silences about the unspoken subject positions that struggle against a shallow homogenization of historical analysis. In "In Defense of a Fragment," Pandey establishes that the history of sectarian violence in modern India is written as an "aberration" and as an absence as "violence is seen as something removed from the general run of Indian history: a distorted form, an exceptional moment, not the "real" history of India at all."[1] Such a disjuncture between different versions of history—one that endorses ultra-nationalism and the other history on the margins that is only partly channeled through inadequate examination and/or representation—reveals a willful indifference and even contributes to a collective amnesia. "[Violence's] contours and character are simply assumed: its forms need no investigation."[2] The history of partition linked with the mainstream, inflated rhetoric of nationalism, that ignores the agonies suffered by minorities, is limited and unacceptable: "because it tends to be reductionist and not only because it continues to ply a tired nationalist rhetoric. It is unacceptable also because, willy-nilly, it essentializes "communalism" and the "communal riot," making these out to be transparent and immutable entities around which only the context changes."[3] Pandey urges historians to do away with a sanitized history; the scars of history must be examined deeply to reveal "the totalizing standpoint of a seamless nationalism that many of us appear to have accepted."[4] His call for doing away with an inadequate, aberrant history of Partition and instead recuperate from its amnesiac lethargy and question its hegemonic parameters has indeed led to many critical works that followed on the inadequacy of mainstream history. His sense of urgency has been acknowledged in many scholarly books that have come out since 2000. As Urvashi Butalia investigates, "Why had the history of Partition been so incomplete, so silent on the experiences of the thousands of people it affected? Was this just historigraphical neglect or something deeper: a

fear, on the part of some historians, of reopening a trauma so profound, so riven with both pain and guilt, that they were reluctant to approach it?"[5] Butalia also draws attention towards "the patriarchal underpinnings of history as a discipline" and challenges the feminists to retrieve female agency in a predominantly male-centered discourse.[6]

Many writers have traced unheard, unspoken limns of empowering moments in adversity, so to speak, and have reflected on the inane humanity as well as inhumanity of Partition.[7] Despite such a plethora of narratives, there are critical imperatives defined within nationalistic/masculinist frameworks that attempt to revoke the trauma of violent violations especially with female victims through repressive silences and non-representations. By relegating experiences of female victims of Partition in terms of unspoken, shame-induced moments of violation, a non-represented discourse does not merely ontologically negate the experiences of female victims and survivors, but is also rendered a collateral necessity that must be forgotten. Such histories, curbed through the rubric of shame and trauma, remain embedded and unresolved because the silence surrounding these histories becomes a male-sanctioned attestation, an iconography of selectively chosen moments of valorization and limited remembrance. The wide disjuncture between the State-endorsed, textbook history and its step-sibling, revealed through individual personal histories that are either framed within the specialized modes of academic dissemination by social scientists or creative writers or filmmakers, must be and has been critically acknowledged by scholars in recent decades.

My central argument in this article relates to the representations of such an unspoken discourse through female silence and opacity that becomes imperative, even instrumental in suggesting a closeted, totalizing notion of history in them. Sometimes, such representations reveal a bifurcatory politics: they valorize masculinist ideals of martyrdom and courage while relegating shameful incidents of female violations and victimhood to discursive frameworks of amnesiac, forgetful narrations. Referring to selected works such as Rajinder Singh Bedi's short story "Lajwanti," Shauna Singh Baldwin's *What the Body Remembers,* and Sabiha Sumar's *Silent Waters* (*Khamosh Pani*), this chapter underscores the discursive implications of this metaphoric female silence or inchoate narrations and highlights the legitimate, feminist questions that these writers highlight. In most partition narratives, a ubiquitous sense of urgency is blocked by notions of shame, willful forgetting, and erasures. The hidden voices that emerge may be framed by their silence or even whispering vocality rather than an assertive intervention, a transgressive take on mainstream history. In registering the discursive framing around silence, I also want to explore viable theoretical standpoints to understand the private, unspoken discourse around Partition and the complicit politics of representation, especially of the female voice or lack thereof, which affirms a particular kind of totalitarian history in collective memory. For

example, in her oft-cited essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak offers an interventionist claim that the subaltern, always placed in a subordinate position, cannot speak in a hegemonic framework and is already effaced by gender politics.[8] Silence, merely seen as an absence, frames the non-utterance as a quiet act of choosing not to speak or narrate—a repressive act of curbing secrets and/or traumas. However, silence can also be seen as a presence, as a yet-unuttered discourse that has been *denied or delayed* narrative space within available paradigms. Even when attempts of articulation are made, they are either consigned to secret, private spaces or usurped over dominant narrativity that can then choose to interpret it strategically. Likewise, choosing to be silent endorses a willful relinquishing, a surrender of articulation. Yet not being allowed to speak from a particularly subjective vantage point becomes a censorial, oppressive act of regulation, a disciplinary decree that must negate any affirmation through totalitarian control. Silence can thus operate through strategies that must be acknowledged. As Foucault explains (albeit in the context of seventeenth-century repression of sexuality), silence as the discretion between different speakers is less a limit than "an element that functions alongside the things said, with them and in relation to them within over-all strategies."[9] Instead of focusing on binary divisions between what is said or not, Foucault insists, "we must try to determine the different ways of not saying such things, *how those who can and those who cannot speak of them are distributed, which type of discourse is authorized, or which form of discretion is required in either case*" (emphasis added). The forbidden, unuttered silence thus operates not necessarily through the limits of discourse—that which is narrated and related—but even constituted through it.[10] Another valuable, theoretical concept about silences can be drawn from what Barrett Watten describes as a "non-narratives" in *The Constructivist Moment: From Material Text to Cultural Poetics:* "Nonnarratives are forms of discursive presentation where both linear and contextual syntax exist but where *univocal motivation, retrospective closure, and transcendental perspective are suspended, deferred or do not exist*"[11] (emphasis added). Through "non-narratives," as I will show later, silences can be attributed with an alternative to its teleological understanding by way of a creative history that not only intervenes, but also suspends or displaces given interpretation of totality, thereby revealing hidden structures of passive complicity.

A CARTOGRAPHY OF SILENCE ON THE MARGINS OF HISTORY

The issue of silence in relation to voice has been a predominant concern with feminist thinkers, scholars, poets, and activists. Thus Adrienne Rich, Tillie Olsen, Audre Lorde, Cherrie Moraga, Gloria Anzaldua, bell hooks, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, and several others, have addressed the bi-

naries of silence and voice, powerlessness and agency amid dichotomies created within discursive formations of gender. The deployment of female silence amid masculinist, patriarchal narratives and utterances becomes a strategic intervention. Many feminist writers have underscored the ethical imperatives of understanding the oppressive or liberating silence (depending upon the context), overcoming it and even interpreting and/or translating the encoded resistance as counter-hegemonic to lackadaisical or patriarchal voices. Adrienne Rich writes on silence in her poem "Cartographies of Silence"—silence can be a plan, a presence and should not be confused with any kind of absence.[12] Likewise, Trinh T. Min-ha underscores the use of silence as a subversive intervention and its multifarious aspects:

> Like the veiling of women . . . , silence can only be subversive when it frees itself from the male-defined context of absence, lack, and fear as feminine territories. On the one hand, we face the danger of inscribing femininity as absence, as lack and blank in rejecting the importance of the act of enunciation. On the other hand, we understand the necessity to place women on the side of negativity and to work in undertones, for example, in our attempts at undermining patriarchal systems of values. Silence is so commonly set in opposition with speech. Silence as a will not to say or a will to unsay and as a language of its own has barely been explored.[13]

I am interested in exploring this idea of silence as its own language and as "a will to say or a will to unsay" that inscribes female silence through absence, non-utterance, or enforced silence. When voiced, the fictionalized incidents of rape, murder, and suicides of countless women are revealed through the male prerogative and a masculinist language. Notably, the female silence about the traumatic encounters or memories depicts the female victims and survivors on the margins of otherness. Despite diverse authorial interventions, the female voice or silence is relegated to the condition of impossibility: an aporetic conundrum of irresolute struggle. As Ramu Nagappan maintains: "To confront social suffering is to struggle with silence: both to respect the silence of survivors who cannot speak and to break the political silences that veil social calamity. The silence of survivors, that chilling aporia, points again and again to the desecratory potential of narrative."[14] Nagappan also maintains that despite the guiding humanism and/or moral outrage that may be the intentional motives, many a times, controversial or shocking accounts can cause narrative ambivalence through critical and pedagogical jostling of diverse isms.

Examining the representations of history and social sufferings, coded within the rubrics of shame, dishonor, trauma, and acceptance, brings forth key ethical and moral arguments (if any) raised by the writers of partition narratives where unheard silence is a metaphoric presence.

When writers represent the violence, more so, through their representation of *silently* passive female victims, what function does the silence offer for the readers of these narratives? Is silence only a punishment, a cover-up, a shame-coping mechanism, or can it also reveal the dysfunctional deficiency of language? Likewise, the employed language and its operation on the narrative requires a critical examination: the implications of a narrative that attempts to create or destroy historical nostalgia by framing it with suffering could be a repetitive, mimetic act of performance. Being silent does not necessarily mean being powerless, and likewise, being vocal does not simply imply articulation of power.

The ethics of portraying female victims and survivors predominantly through a spectacle of their silent otherness and mute narratives must be examined. Implicated in an inaudible address, are such women characters, in most cases, maybe essentially placed only as arbitrary descendants of inherited shame and loss? For instance, portraying female victims within a nationalist framework, especially in colonial setting as victims of history and/or postcolonial rebels, does bring the risk of commodifying their marginality/shame. A cross-comparative examination of how women writers have represented the trauma of partition and its historical implications in contrast to multiple narratives written by male writers also reveals an interesting dynamic that mostly attributes to male victims of Partition a more provocative sense of mimetic sympathy compared to female victims struggling against the trauma and shame.[15] Take for instance, Rajinder Singh Bedi's acclaimed Urdu story "Lajwanti" that depicts the recovery efforts of abducted women during Partition. The protagonist, Sunderlal, yearns for his own missing wife Lajwanti/Lajo, whose name invokes the sensitive "touch-me-not" plant that withers at human touch. The story begins with reference to the Punjabi folk song admonishing against touching lajwanti "for she will curl up and die."[16] Each morning, Sunderlal, as the secretary of the newly formed rehabilitation committee for abducted women, along with his supporters, would chant the song and end up choked with tears and follow in silence. The plant's sensitivity is related to the fragility of human beings: "the mere shadow of a hand could make them tremble and wither."[17] Sunderlal recalls his abusive behavior towards his wife, Lajo, and yearns for her. "How frequently had he thrashed her because he didn't like the way she sat or looked, or the way she served his food!" His reminiscences of Lajo's personhood "with the mercurial grace of a drop of dew on a large leaf" highlights his casual stance on his physical abuse of his wife, almost as if she expected it and had accepted it as a part of her life.[18] Lajo's passive reticence about the abuse is responded to only through a non-serious statement that if he beats her again, then she will not speak to him. Domestic abuse of wives is referred to as a norm in patriarchal culture. Even as Bedi reveals Sunderlal's progressive views on accepting and honoring the innocent, abducted women, he also underscores Sun-

derlal's restrictive views and inability to handle any traumatic experiences.

The emphasis on the frailty of women as leaves of lajwanti can be seen as Bedi's commentary on Sunderlal's own sense of insecurity and fragility in dealing with the bitter truth. The way his sermonic pleas are ignored or dismissed by people also indicates a sense of apathy towards words and ideals: "one repeats them like a futile argument, collides with them, hums them as one goes about the tasks of the day."[19] The denial and rejection of some of the returned women by their relatives also reflect on their cruel expectation of death instead of rehabilitation. Bedi's story does not only depict the cruelty of dismissive emotions shown through the condescending remarks or passive dejection but also demonstrates an innate sense of weakness, an essential crisis of communication especially for progressive citizens like Sunderlal. In an attempt to encourage people to rethink their insular, dismissive attritions about the survivors of partition violence, his efforts to intervene and offer correctives to his friend, Kalka Prashad's failing rhetoric drawn on religious scriptures, would always bring him to face his own expressive inabilities: "His voice would choke. Tears would begin to flow down his face, and overcome with emotion, he would be forced to sit down."[20]

During a conversation between Sunderlal and Narain Bawa, Bedi skillfully brings the Hindu mythological reference of the Hindu God, Ram, who had evicted his wife, Sita, because she had lived with her abductor, Ravana. By alluding to the Hindu mythology, Bedi juxtaposes these responses in a post-partition context and reveals the rigid expectations in patriarchal thought and how their validation, even sought via mythological references, remains framed by silence. Through irony, Bedi allows the two discourses—religious and socio-political—to coalesce on how silence can be used as a repressive tool for argument. Thus when Sunderlal's voice is initially unheard by others, he suggests that in "Ram Rajya," a washerman could express his thoughts unlike now when he is not allowed to speak. Sunderlal emotionally exhorts his audience: "Did Sita commit any sin? Wasn't she, like our mothers and sisters today, a victim of a violence and deceit?"[21] Although seemingly portraying Sunderlal as a fearless, progressive man with liberal views, the narrative shifts to reveal his limitations eventually. In a strange ironical twist, Lajwanti has been recovered. At the Wagah border, Lajo is perhaps one of the few younger women that has been exchanged as part of the mutual deal. As the people stare at her, she "stood there trying to hide her tattoo marks from the curious gaze of people."[22] Sunderlal's initial response to this news is represented with a vacancy of thought and action. When assured by the description of Lajo's tattoos that indeed his wife has been recovered, Sunderlal nostalgically remembers her tattoos:

> They were like the soft green spots on a lajwanti plant that disappear when its leaves curl up. Whenever he tried to touch them with his fingers, Lajwanti would curl up with shyness . . . as if they were some secret and hidden treasure, which could be despoiled by a predator and a thief.[23]

Initially, Sunderlal is relieved: "he enshrined Lajo like a golden idol in the temple of his heart and guarded her like a jealous devotee."[24] However, when Lajo attempts sharing her sorrow with him, he urges her to not go there. "Let's forget the past; you didn't do anything sinful, did you? Our society is guilty because it refuses to honour women like you as goddesses. It ought to be ashamed of itself. You shouldn't feel dishonored."[25] By imposing silence on Lajwanti, Bedi shows the irony of her recovery. Although the story shows his sympathies, her suffering is never heard and she is marginalized through enforced muteness. "She had returned home, but she had lost everything. . . . Sunderlal had neither the eyes to see her tears nor the ears to hear her sobs."[26] Idolizing Lajo as a Devi, a goddess, and never touching her, Sunderlal deprives her of any vestigial individuality, yet gains sympathy and respect from others. Lajo's re-covering is not merely incidental, but also symbolically constitutive of covering shame.

Another text that visually depicts a silent victim of Partition finally speaking out is Sabiha Sumar's highly acclaimed Pakistani film *Khamosh Pani: Silent Waters.*[27] Initially, it was supposed to be a documentary showing a story about Partition violence against women, but then Sumar changed it into a feature film production as "it would mean scratching people's wounds."[28] In showing a film dealing with Partition, and contemporary Pakistan, Sumar depicts violence as a continuing process and how "politicization of religion" had affected women. The protagonist is Ayesha (Kirron Kher), a widow with a teenaged son, Saleem, living in the village Charkhi in Pakistan. The film's narrative begins in 1979, and Ayesha is respected by all. She manages her livelihood by her late husband's pension and by teaching Quran lessons to young village girls. We learn how Ayesha never went near the village well and had other girls draw water for her from the well. Her haunting memories around the well are revealed partially like pieces of a puzzle. When asked by her friend if she misses her husband, Ayesha replies, "Life catches up with you, what you don't have . . . you have to let it be." Strategically set during the rule of military ruler Gen. Zia-ul-Haq, the film shows the gradual enforcement of Islamic law in Pakistan. We see how Ayesha's son Saleem, under the influence of Islamist fundamentalists, gets estranged from his love-interest Zubeida and becomes more aggressive. Saleem, a flute-playing music-lover fascinated by Zubeida's charm, pursues her romantically but is transformed by his indoctrination through radical Islamic thought.

Later, we find that a group of Sikh pilgrims are visiting Pakistani Punjab to visit holy shrines. A Sikh man, Jaswant Singh, inquires the villagers about his sister, Veero, who had remained in Pakistan after Partition. When the pilgrims visit the Panja Sahib Gurdwara, Ayesha sends sweets for them. However, Saleem gets angry upon finding about such interaction with "non-believers." The film shows moments of stereotypical humor towards the Sikh pilgrims, the respect and affection shown by the village barber and other villagers, and also sensitively depicts the scene where Sikh men, inside the Gurdwara, are combing their unshorn hair. When they talk about the women who were left behind, one of them vehemently refutes it, saying that all twenty-two women were killed for honor, "so the Muslims couldn't touch them." At that point Jaswant thinks about the possibility that some women might have survived the horror of partition. However, he is strongly rebuked to silence as it is a dangerous premise to even think about. Jaswant Singh, relentlessly, wants to search for his lost sister, Veero. Initially, when he inquires about her, he is unable to get much information until Amin, a Pakistani policeman, visits Jaswant at night stealthily and tells him that "she is the one that does not go to the well." Earlier, Amin shares with his wife that he knows "their pain" as he too is grieving for the loss of his sister Mina.

Ayesha is indeed Veero, who had been raped by Muslims during the Partition violence and then later had married one of her rapists, after converting to Islam. When Ayesha's past as a Sikh girl collides with her present as Muslim mother of a young radicalized Muslim man, she is at a critical threshold, reminded of her history of trauma and violence. In an evocative scene, Jaswant meets Ayesha for the first time and is convinced that she is indeed Veero; Saleem enters the house and is upset and questions Ayesha about the truth. All the pieces of her haunting past come together as the sepia-toned memories collate her past, question her present, and portend an uncertain future. Saleem, now a radical Muslim, is visibly displeased upon finding about his mother's Sikh identity, a non-Muslim, *kafir*. This creates a segregationist politics as her friends start avoiding her. Saleem insists Ayesha's "unconditional commitment" towards Islam and demands her public self-acknowledgment as a Muslim.

Ayesha's silences as Veero and her traumatic past, when in a moment of impending crisis, her family tries to preserve the family honor through willful annihilation, require a critical understanding. The women in the family are jumping into the well, as men, fearful of impending danger including potential rape, are urging them to end their lives. Young Veero, hesitant, refuses to jump into the well and runs away from her family, as young Jaswant attempts to call her. Veero's refusal to take her own life has been interpreted by some critics as a feeble attempt to refute the patriarchal imposition of masculine ideals. Even Ayesha retorts when

Jaswant urges her to return with him to meet their dying father. "But he wanted to kill me for his peace . . . seeing me alive and Muslim . . . how will he go to Sikh heaven." Such portrayal of Veero's anger, and its interpretation however, becomes problematic, even complicated in the film. As a young girl, her inability take the consensual, suicidal step, unlike her mother and sister, and in her naiveté her futile escape lead to fateful consequences. She can't save herself from Muslim rapists and suffers victimhood, even though it leads to her subsequent conversion to Islam and marriage to one of the rapists.

In her analysis on *Silent Waters*, Kavita Daiya maintains: "Ayesha's voice articulates the feminist critique of the rhetorics of honour invoked by men to sanction their dehumanizing violence against women."[29] Thus Ayesha's passivity and lack of viable agency is seen in terms of a subalternity. Daiya asserts, "[in] both contexts, through the use of religions, the female citizen subject is increasingly rendered subaltern as object, property and undesired citizen" and Saleem's transformed radicalization is seen as "emerging through the estranging and demonizing of female subjectivity as Hindu and modern."[30] Such an interpretation echoes the Spivakian inability of the subaltern to speak.[31] However, I want to explore another evaluation of Ayesha's final act where she jumps into the well towards the end of the film, without any witnesses, and any imminent danger that propels her to take the drastic step that she avoided as a young girl in Partition. An unexplored facet of Ayesha's past identity is the fact that she was a Sikh girl (not "Hindu and modern" per Daiya's view). While it is easy to interpret that her refusal to jump into the well maybe a neo-feminist refusal to follow patriarchal expectations, we must also see the nuances of that sepia-toned memory in the film. Young Veero sees her mother and sister jump into the well, while the worried men warn about the potential danger from Muslim rioters. The women who jumped into the well may have taken that drastic step in the Sikh spirit of *shaheedi*, to follow martyrdom instead of being forced to convert to Islam. In Sikh history, the struggle against the Mughal rule's dictates to accept Islam or face death, and the *shaheedi* of the Sikh Gurus as Guru Arjan Dev and Guru Tegh Bahadur and many other Sikh followers are seen by Sikhs as exemplary cases of self-affirming heroism. In the film, the women are jumping amid recitation of the *Japji Sahib*, the Sikh meditational prayer on the mystery of God and the Universe; their final act then becomes a similar act of self-affirmation that defies any possibility of conversion to Islam. As Suvir Kaul explains, the seemingly senseless deaths are recuperated by the vocabulary of martyrdom. "In this vision, the nation, or quam (community) demands its shaheeds, and is strengthened by them."[32] It is notable to see that before Ayesha takes the final drastic step, even though she offers her prayers as a Muslim woman, she also wears the necklace (containing her picture as young Veero) that Jaswant gives to her to remind her of her past identity. In jumping into the well, Ayesha

is reclaiming her past identity as Sikh Veero and finally giving her belated *shaheedi* in the Sikh spirit. Later, Zubeida questions the meaning of Ayesha's drastic step: "So this is how Veero went away, and Ayesha stayed behind. . . . Or do we really know who left and who stayed?"[33] Despite her conversion to Islam, Ayesha had not fully discarded her past identity as a Sikh.

After her death, Saleem opens her trunk to find Sikh prayer books, (*Sukhmani Sahib* and *Japji Sahib*) and pictures of the Sikh guru Guru Nanak Dev ji. Ayesha is given a burial; her belongings (including the Sikh prayer books) in the trunk, are dispersed in the river, almost as if performing last rites in the Sikh tradition wherein the cremated remains are dispersed in a river. Saleem hands over Ayesha's necklace to Zubeida and it is Zubeida who is shown remembering Ayesha, and not her son Saleem. The film ends with the urban setting in Rawalpindi, 2002, as it is announced on radio: "Pakistan won't be a haven for Islamic extremists." Zubeida's voice-over acknowledges remembering Ayesha: "Sometimes I dream of her. I preserve each dream and try not to let it go." The film's final question as to why Pakistan was created is answered by Saleem's incomplete utterance as an older, Muslim minister saying, "Pakistan was made for Islam." Ayesha's silence, although seemingly curbed forever within the male discourse, through her final symbolic act of annihilation, is also carried on through Zubeida's personal remembrances.

Another representation of the trauma of Partition is offered by Shauna Singh Baldwin in her debut novel, *What the Body Remembers*. Baldwin narrates the story set in 1937 at Rawalpindi, pre-independent India, about sixteen-year-old Roop, in a bigamous marriage with a Sikh man, Sardarji, who is twenty five years older than her. The first half of book shows the antagonism between Roop and Satya (Truth) vying for power implicatit in being Sardarji's wife. The interesting plot incidents, sometimes too predictable, even incredible, carve female sensibilities marked by patriarchal assumptions, symbolic roles and seemingly feminist efforts. Satya, the uneducated, older wife of Sardarji, belongs to an upper class and although barren, having failed to produce children, she is also the manager of Sardarji's assets. Roop, initially a naïve, child-like, semi-educated, village wife, gives Sardarji three children for his progeny. Their narratives, about what their bodies remember and their experiences, bring out Baldwin's commentary about the partition from a thoughtful, Sikh perspective.

The novel's most horrific experience, also the most relevant section for this discussion, shows us the traumatic violence and its effects through the narration of the killing and eventual dismemberment of Kusum (the wife of Roop's brother, Jeevan). Kusum's killing is drawn from a real incident narrated in Urvashi Butalia's book *The Other Side of Silence* where a father killed his daughter-in-law to save her honor from potential Muslim rapists. Earlier, Baldwin shows how Roop saves Jorimon, her Muslim

maid and herself from potential danger from a group of Muslim soldiers. Through strategic silence and aggressive vocality, Roop prevents Jorimon's potential rape. Roop ultimately meets her brother Jeevan and finds out about Kusum's killing supposedly by Muslim rioters. "This body was sliced into six parts, then arranged to look as if she were whole again."[34] Kusum's breasts had been chopped off and her womb was ripped out too. Jeevan's narrative underscores the message and interpretation of her bodily violation as "a war against [their] quom."[35] The narrative about Kusum's mutilation seems suspect to inquisitive Roop, who is not a passive listener of narratives and questions its viability. "Questions jumped like trapped fish in the loose mesh of her mind."[36] Jeevan's narrative is implied through a focus on interpreting the iconographic implications of Kusum's bodily violation. It is a tangential narrative that sees "*Kusum only from the corners of his eyes*"[37] and one that Jeevan feels should not be shared with others: "It must be ignored, so that *no Sikh man* shows weakness or fear."[38] Roop's counternarrative is her interrogative aside—an interior monologue that, although silent and unheard, contests the very narrative until she finds other plausible meanings. Later Roop learns how her father, Papaji, had killed Kusum by one stroke of his *kirpan*, his ceremonial sword, an article of faith and how Kusum had willingly offered herself to be killed instead of being violated by Muslims. Even though the traumatic experience of Kusum's dismemberment becomes a homosocial discourse, a narrative told separately by Jeevan and Papaji, Roop is given the prerogative of remembering: "Roop will remember Kusum's body, re-membered."[39] The lack of omniscience around Kusum's death might seem to relegate Roop's horror and, by extension, the readers' horror, to margins of unreliable fragments of history, narrated by the male preservers of female honor. Roop becomes the ultimate reader of the narrative of Kusum's mutilation and provides her own "non-narrative" (as defined by Barrett Watten). She assumes the critical role of a translator, which in Judith Butler's terms, is "to bring into relief the nonconvergence of discourses so that one might know through the very ruptures of narrativity the founding violences of the episteme."[40]

TRANSLATING SILENCES OF LAJO, VEERO, AND KUSUM: RUPTURES OF NARRATIVITY AND NON-NARRATIVES

A crucial question worth investigation is: when writers challenge the official, documented narratives of nationalist versions of partition history, to produce alternative, personal histories that might even negate the nationalist discourse, do such interventions enable a more mimetic, empathic understanding of history or trauma, or do they merely show glimpses of fragments of history trying to emerge within the interstices of a silent, passive rhetoric? How do we then formulate the silences repre-

sented through the female subjects vis-à-vis the male narrators studied in this chapter? Can the unheard stories and silences about the traumatic incidents of Lajo in "Lajwanti," Ayesha/Veero in *Silent Waters*, and Kusum in *What the Body Remembers* be reframed to signify more than a lack, an inability, or an absence and rather seen as a mode of cognitive affirmation? Ultimately, the implied legacy of received narration of Lajo, Veero, and Kusum's silent trauma can be contrasted to see how their subjectivities are engendered and received in the process. Interestingly, the *cultural translation* of the traumatic female silence in these stories engenders different responses by the male characters. In "Lajwanti," Lajo's narrative is never heard or even imagined by her husband, who actually denies her any tangible subjectivity, making "her feel as if she was precious and fragile like glass, that she would shatter at the slightest touch . . . she would never be Lajo again."[41] Lajo's silence is never even translated; its interpretation is not possible as it becomes a paraphernalia of absence, an annihilatory assumption, and a logo-centric, nihilistic act of finality prescribed by male hegemonic monopolization. Sunderlal's reinscription of Lajo as Devi is an example of subalternizing her silence, in terms of what Spivak calls "the effaced itinerary of the subaltern subject,"[42] and hence Lajo remains doubly effaced as one without history and a voice. As a subaltern, Lajo cannot speak, because her narrative is illegible and inaccessible. There is no interpreter or translator available to legitimize her experience and agency, as there is no linguistic original accessible. Sunderlal's mimetic replication of Lajo's silence through his own imposed silence in the end merely frames it and controls its meaning via male privilege of interpretation.

In *Silent Waters*, Veero's trauma and silence is only an absence that is never uttered yet is gradually visualized through the sepia-toned interruptions as the spectator is stealthily included in Veero's narrative. Her thoughts on her past experiences, as she is shown sitting by the window many times, are never a part of the film's narrative and we are oblivious to her voice. Likewise, we never learn about her perspectives on why she commits the final act of jumping into the well. Her *own* discourse is never accessible, rather, it is extrapolated in retrospect through Zubeida's internal thoughts presented as a voice-over narration in the end. Veero's narrative is then inherited by Zubeida, who symbolically inherits Veero's necklace, and not Saleem, her son, who simply ignores Veero's past. Veero is not a subaltern, doubly effaced, in Spivakian terms; however, her history and her voice remains framed in Zubeida's private memories. Veero's story reminds us of Foucaldian paradigms whereby we can see how the notion of trauma is circulated through discursive formations and strategic deployment of silence: "how those who can and those who cannot speak of them are distributed, which type of discourse is authorized, or which form of discretion is required in either case."[43] Female silence in

this film, is intrinsically related to trauma which is thus relegated to oblivion and inaccessibility in public memory.

In *What the Body Remembers*, the silence around Kusum's traumatic experience, although initially inaccessible and trapped within male voices of interpretation, is reflectively translated through Roop who, while she listens to Jeevan and Papaji's narratives about Kusum's tragic end, simultaneously questions them. As mentioned earlier, Roop becomes a translator who underscores the "ruptures of narrativity" and the implications of male violence in Jeevan and Papaji's versions. When Jeevan first tells Roop about his wife's dismemberment, he also imagines the motive of killing a young woman: "without first raping—a waste, surely."[44] He also speculates and interprets Kusum's response to the violence: "She looked accepting. . . . How can she actually desire it, move to her captor with a smile on her lips?" Like Sunderlal in "Lajwanti," Jeevan initially feels that the symbolic implications of Kusum's dismemberment "must be ignored, so that no Sikh man shows weakness or fear."[45] The burning of the ancestral house, *Pari Darwaza*, is also a matter of "shame" and Jeevan cannot trust anyone except the Sikhs.[46] Likewise, Papaji's narrative of how Kusum, his daughter-in-law, was his responsibility and duty to protect, and how he killed her with one stroke of his *kirpan*, is a matter of *izzat* (honor), and yet Roop evaluates the stories of loss and death of Kusum, and possible deaths of Gujri and Revati Bhua. We are also told of Sardarji's possible traumatic experience which is never shared and remains relegated to the world of silent secrecy.

The demarcated difference towards personal trauma is thus discernible in how male characters subsume and relegate it towards silence, whereas Roop, a female respondent to these narratives, translates and even assumes the responsibility of not relegating this personal trauma (of Kusum's dismemberment) to unheard silence or through a predominantly male rhetoric of honor and/or shame. As a translator of traumatic experiences, while revealing the Butlerian "ruptures of narrativity" in the male discourse on Partition experiences, Roop's thought-provoking investigations conceptually underscore Barrett Watten's definition of "nonnarratives" that may range from simple to complex forms of articulation, "but their distinguishing feature is an affective/cognitive unity of temporal sequence in their presentation by means of punctual, accretive, associational, or circular forms, whose formal organization and affective force would be lost if subsumed within an overarching narrative."[47] Analyzing the closeted narratives of Kusum's killing for instance, Roop's translated meanings of the violence narrative, enables a non-narrative articulation of female silence leading to counter-patriarchal implications: "In their affective immediacy and associational complexity, nonnarratives engage, rescript, and displace narratives, but they are not reducible to merely deformed or negative species of narrative and thus are not fully narratable as such."[48] Grounded on narratives uttered by Papaji and Jeevan,

Roop's non-narrative confronts the inexactitude of a particular totalitarian history by way of incidental references.

Ultimately, then, the very process of reading narratives on Partition, especially where female experiences are represented within silence, demands a critical understanding of discursive strategies employed for their affective immediacy and cognitive affirmation rather than a myopic examination for historical appropriation and/or representational practices. The enforced silences of women in such narratives, especially those written by women writers, attempt to decode the inaccessible stories to reveal patriarchal assumptions and question the nationalist-statist framework that denies female agency and address. At the same time, I have underscored how these narratives also seem to foreground the urgency of un-silencing female agency. The female subject may be rendered subaltern as an unheard woman, framed within private, discursive spaces and may (sometimes) even transcend narrative limitations imposed through a consciously engendered response. Regardless, the politics of privilege and the privileging of the (female) body as a communal marker for honor/shame can produce violence of epistemic regimes.

NOTES

1. Gyanendra Pandey, "In Defense of the Fragment: Writing about Hindu-Muslim Riots in India Today," *A Subaltern Studies Reader, 1986–1995*, ed. Ranajit Guha (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 1.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., 18.
4. Ibid., 33.
5. Urvashi Butalia, "Community, State, and Gender: Some Reflections on the Partition of India," *Women and the Politics of Violence,* ed. Taisha Abraham (New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications, 2002), 127.
6. Ibid., 128.
7. Thus writers like Saadat Hasan Manto, Bapsi Sidhwa, and Khushwant Singh along with other writers have referred to the amnesiac histories around Partition. Several Bollywood films, likewise, have portrayed the Partition violence. Scholarly books such as Gyanendra Pandey's *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism and History in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), and others have highlighted alternate histories surrounding Partition. Likewise, critical anthologies have endorsed literary and visual representations via critical examination of fictionalized personal memories.
8. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. C. Nelson and L. Grossberg (Basingstroke: Macmillan Education, 1988), 271–313.
9. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction,* trans. Robert Hurley, Vol. 1 (New York: Vintage, 1980), 27.
10. Foucault states that his aim is "to examine the case of a society . . . which speaks verbosely of its own silence, takes great pains to relate in detail the things it does not say, denounces the powers it exercises, and promises to liberate itself from the very laws that have made it function." *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction,* trans. Robert Hurley, Vol. 1 (New York: Vintage, 1980), 8.

11. Barrett Watten, *The Constructivist Moment: From Material Text to Cultural Poetics,* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2003), 200.
12. Adrienne Rich, "Cartographies of Silence," in *The Fact of a Doorframe: Selected Poems, 1950–2001* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company), 139–40.
13. Trinh T. Min-ha, "Not You/Like You: Postcolonial Women and the Interlocking Questions of Identity and Difference," *Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, Nation, and Postcolonial Perspectives*, ed. Anne McClintock, Aamir Mufti, and Ella Shohat (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 416.
14. Ramu Nagappan, *Speaking Havoc: Social Suffering and South Asian Narratives* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005), 14.
15. Obviously, this cannot be taken as an essential predicament, but more as an observation relevant to the specific texts examined in this chapter.
16. Rajinder Singh Bedi, "Lajwanti," *Manoa* 19, 1 (2007): 21.
17. Ibid., 22.
18. Ibid., 22.
19. Ibid., 23.
20. Ibid., 24.
21. Ibid., 25.
22. Ibid., 29.
23. Ibid., 28.
24. Ibid., 30–31.
25. Ibid., 31.
26. Ibid., 32.
27. *Silent Waters: Khamosh Pani*, DVD, Sabiha Sumar (dir.) 8th October, 2004, (Vidhi Films et al.), September 20, 2005.
28. Nermeen Shaikh, "Interview with Sabiha Sumar," *Asia Society* (New York, 2005) http://asiasociety.org/arts/film/interview-sabiha-sumar.
29. Kavita Daiya, "Visual Culture and Violence: Inventing Intimacy and Citizenship in Recent South Asian Cinema," *South Asian Transnationalisms: Cultural Exchange in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Babli Sinha (New York: Routledge, 2012), 143.
30. Ibid., 143.
31. Daiya maintains, "The film thus creates a visual narrative space for the female subject to represent her pain and to critique her abjection by the violence of patriarchal ethnicities which she equates structurally with that of masculine fundamentalism." Ibid., 145. Identifying Veero's past as a "patriarchal ethnicity" serves to present her as an un-understandable otherness and limits ethical perceptions about her dilemmas and their resolution in the end.
32. Suvir Kaul, "Introduction," *The Partition of Memory: The Afterlife of the Division of India* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2001), 7.
33. *Silent Waters: Khamosh Pani*, DVD, Sabiha Sumar (dir.) 8th October, 2004 (Vidhi Films et al.), September 20, 2005.
34. Shauna Singh Baldwin, *What the Body Remembers (*New York: Random House, 1999), 446.
35. Ibid., 447.
36. Ibid., 447.
37. Ibid., 447, emphasis original.
38. Ibid., 448, emphasis mine.
39. Ibid., 451.
40. Judith Butler,"Restaging the Universal," *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on the Left*, ed. Ernesto Laclau, Judith Butler, Slavoj Žižek (New York: Verso, 2000), 37.
41. Rajinder Singh Bedi, "Lajwanti," *Manoa* 19, 1 (2007): 32.
42. Gayatri Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. C. Nelson and L. Grossberg (Basingstroke: Macmillan Education, 1988), 287.

43. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (Vol. 1. New York: Vintage, 1980), 27.
44. Shauna Singh Baldwin, *What the Body Remembers* (New York: Random House, 1999), 447.
45. Ibid. 448.
46. Ibid., 451.
47. Barrett Watten, *The Constructivist Moment: From Material Text to Cultural Poetics* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2003), 201.
48. Ibid.

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FOUR

Migrations in Absentia

Multinational Digital Advertising and Manipulation of Partition Trauma

Rahul K. Gairola

I open this essay with the observation that the current historical moment of Islamaphobia, state-sanctioned genocide, and perpetual war across the globe behooves new genealogies for historically rethinking the tragic Partition of "British India" as its seventieth anniversary approaches. Two critical lenses empower us to formulate and engage in one such genealogy. The first is the much-needed turn to the postcolonial digital humanities (#DHpoco), a call-to-arms issued by Roopika Risam and Adeline Koh,[1] and ongoing work in South Asian Digital Humanities by Sukanta Chaudhuri, Radhika Gajjala, Padmini Ray Murray, and many others. This important work recognizes that engaging with digital humanities enhances our understanding of the imperial dynamics subtending colonialism, partition, and imperialism—even when the subjects and objects of critique themselves are digital texts. I contextualize my interests in #DHpoco critique of transnational capitalism through Partition's economic afterlife in what Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali Zamindar has termed "the Long Partition."[2] This second critical lens allows us to evaluate Partition's economic afterlife in the twenty-first century as part of an ongoing history of South Asia that continues to shape the arms and space race between Pakistan and India as the latter has become the first nation on earth to successfully launch a satellite into Mars's orbit on its first attempt.

A crucial vector of "the Long Partition" that Zaminder explores in her book-length study tracks the biases invested in the economic flows from Muslims in India to the newlyformed country of Pakistan. Zaminder details that "financially crippling Muslims living in India with evacuee property laws was seen as having a positive effect in actually undermining the Pakistani state."[3] Such policies in independent India and similar ones targeting Hindu and Sikh evacuees from Pakistan ensured that the assets of both communal groups would continue to shape each nation's material possibilities for decades. Yet this impulse to capitalize on the misery wrought by Partition is by no means a dusty remnant of the past, or one limited to the geographical borders of South Asia. If we extend transnational capitalism's agenda to capture new markets with respect to the Long Partition, we can deploy postcolonial digital critique to analyze the ramifications of such concerns through an elusive yet powerful twenty-first-century medium—digital media marketing. Curiously yet perhaps predictably, digital advertising of Western brands has sought to tap the trauma and nostalgia of forced communal migration that marks human displacement in the Long Partition of South Asia. With 45 percent of the world's Internet users now located in the Asia-Pacific region, up from 30 percent in 2002, it is evident that a massive global shift in media, technology, culture, communications, etc., is occurring between Asia and the rest of the world.

This dramatic rise in Internet users also reflects the rise of population numbers in both India and Pakistan, as well as the neoliberalization of their markets. The whopping 1.32 billion persons in India and 191 million in Pakistan represent untapped markets whose inhabitants are assailed by the sophisticated technologies of postcolonial advertising, branding, and imaginings of affiliation with the West as an effect of South Asia's colonial past. In *Cyberculture and the Subaltern*, Radhika Gajjala elegantly writes:

> Technocultural agency is produced in the interplay of layered literacies and nuanced identities as the user at the interface is forced into renegotiating his/her ability to act and define herself/himself at the online/offline and global/local interface. . . . It reveals how we are clearly situated within unequal power relations manifested within the current continuum of local-global-local through hierarchies of literacies and connectivity.[4]

Gajjala's observation in the context of the Long Partition is indeed fraught with new historical and cultural stakes with the hegemony of digital advertising and the proliferation of handheld devices through which marketing is efficiently disseminated. Indeed, the "unequal power relations" fraught throughout imbalances of access to technology around the world are too often masked by flaccid neoliberal exclamations that technology can extinguish global poverty. While the digital public sphere

enables and allows new technological subjects to exist that may indeed challenge conventional hegemonies of colonialism, it also gives birth to new avenues for the afterlife of neoliberal capitalist discourses spearheaded by corporate interests which emerge from former modes of domination. In addition, in the frame of "the Long Partition," technocultural agency places subjects in displacement. This essay examines two advertisements by American multinational corporations Coca-Cola and Google which target upper-middle class Indians and Pakistanis, many of whose families carry traces of the Long Partition.

The public relations firms representing these corporations disseminated these advertisements on YouTube, Facebook, and throughout the Internet, and thus the world, where they could be viewed on diverse portable devices. Despite the fact that the Pakistan Telecommunications Authority blocked access to YouTube from within Pakistan in September 2012, a number of programs, like Dailymotion, Vimeo, HideMyAss, and UltraSurf, enabled users to evade censorship and access digital media. Both advertisements attempt to capitalize on the trauma of Partition by celebrating a neoliberal millennium in which the products facilitate harmony between India and Pakistan, Hindus and Muslims, Indians and Pakistanis, men and women, and the rich and the poor. While the Coca-Cola advertisement suggests that old animosity and new friends can be made in India and Pakistan with the marvelous opening of a soda can, the Google ad suggests that Android phones and other Google handheld devices can bring together long-lost patriarchs across the divided subcontinent. In other words, these digital advertisements strategically market their wares, brand, and image through new technologies of imperialism that exuberantly promise transcendence of historical, ideological, and geographical divides by drinking Coca-Cola, using Google, and subscribing to the ideologies and feelings that pervade neocolonial circuits of transnational capitalism that are widely digitally disseminated.

Before comparatively critiquing these digital advertisements, we must identify from the outset precisely what they are selling. Unsurprisingly, they are peddling what many commodities promise and most people want from life: happiness. Sara Ahmed's work on happiness unearths its constructed, racialized nature, on the one hand, while offering us critical insight on the investiture of affect in objects, on the other. In a particularly compelling passage from *The Promise of Happiness*, Ahmed writes:

> Happiness might play a crucial role in shaping our near sphere, the world that takes shape, the world that takes shape around us, as a world of familiar things. Objects that give us pleasure take up residence within our bodily horizon. We come to have our likes, which might even establish *what we are like* [original emphasis]. . . . Incorporation may be conditional on liking what we encounter. Those things we do not like we move away from. Awayness might help establish the edges of our horizon; in rejecting the proximity of certain objects, we

> define the places that we know we do not wish to go, the things we do not wish to have, touch, taste, hear, feel, see, those things we do not want to keep within reach.[5]

Ahmed's critical reading of happiness compels us to question happiness as a motivated social construction in the frame of digital advertising. Yet we should here note that the soda commercial goes beyond the "bodily horizon" and external spaces of the "near sphere." Indeed, it goes beyond the pleasurable commodities and fetishes placed in proximity to our bodily corpuses. The promise of happiness lies precisely in the human consumption, literally visceral ingestion, of joy. Along this logic, the advertisement suggests that the by-product of soda is euphoric urine that can erase historical, geographical, and religious difference and thus act as an amnesiac enema. In contrast to excrement, the abject of the internal bloodstream of the Indian and Pakistani body, this is healing elixer. As Giorgio Agamben has observed in a different context, happiness is the by-product of an experience of that which never happened because it only exist as "happiness" because it was a state of being that was not previously felt.[6]

The history of the Coca-Cola Company in South Asia offers us historical context for my critique. The company re-entered the Indian market in 1993 after a self-imposed sixteen-year exile due to market constraints. As Amanda Ciafone notes, "The Coca Cola Company had long been eager to return to India, one of the largest markets of the 'sweat belt,' as company executives called the hot, developing countries of the Global South with large Muslim and/or Hindu populations that looked down on alcohol consumption and thus held vast potential profits for the soft drink industry."[7] The commercial attempts to reconcile the gulf of time and space between Lahore and Delhi by portraying the "bodily horizon" as a shared experience at the local level of an historical event. The advertisement is the result of Coca-Cola's *Small World Machines* public relations campaign in South Asia led by the Leo Burnett Chicago and Sydney Agency. It begins with: "A moment of happiness has the power to bring the world closer together." It subsequently cuts to a sunrise in New Delhi, crosscut by sunrise over the Badshahi Mosque in Lahore, Pakistan, thus linking both cities in the same visual chronology and consequently suggesting that there is a sameness permeating both spaces. And what exactly bonds together the people of these cities, located 426 kilometers across the gulf of the Long Partition? Why a Coke-dispensing machine, of course!

Featuring life-size touch screen interfaces and webcams on either vending machine in each respective city, Coca-Cola patrons can trace palms, peace signs, and smiley faces together with residents in the other city, after which the vending machines dispense a can of soda. Stylized, neon instructions beckon folks on both sides of the border to "Make a

friend in Pakistan/India to share a Coca Cola," "Join hands," wave, and/or trace peace signs together in a real-time experience that is digitally facilitated, ironically, by a mechanism that is anything but human, indigenous, or altruistic, despite its ability to infuse humans with the senses of touch, sight, and taste. Coca-Cola's feel good messages have often been promoted by famous Bollywood stars like Hrithik Roshan and Aishwarya Rai, yet it seems the corporation identified the pitfalls of marketing through Hindi film stars at the same time it realized that the digital medium was the best way to capture a wider market in India. Scholars in South Asia have taken note of the shift from mass appeal to an appeal to affect. According to Seema Gupta, K. Naganand, and Avneesh Singh Narang, "With the current campaign of Open Happiness, Coca-Cola seems to have achieved both an emotional as well as a mass appeal [sic]." There is a very natural connect with the target segment, that of celebrating every day, and sharing small moments of joy with our loved ones, irrespective of any barriers.[8]

Thus the troubling logic of the advertisement comes into sharper focus: the barriers removed between people are merely barriers removed between markets, and Indians and Pakistanis are motivated to do so under the ruse of communal harmony now a quick fix for the pain of the past. Like the sugar high rendered by the can of soda, the moment of happiness is also fleeting. "I'd like to buy the world a Coke, and keep it company," indeed.[9] Yet at the same time the corporation touts this effervescent message, it presents the opposite. Taking a closer look at the advertisement's rhetoric, we see the fissures inherent in the promise of happiness "to bring the world together" by making a "friend in Pakistan/India." That is not to say that there is no relation between objects and affect, however. Ahmed writes,

> It is possible that the evocation of an object can be pleasurable even if we have not yet experienced an object as pleasing: this is the power after all of the human imagination as well as the social world to bestow things that have yet to be encountered with an affective life. Things might have an affective life as a result of being given or bestowed with affect, as gifts that may have been forgotten. . . . We can also anticipate that an object will cause happiness in advance of its arrival; the object enters our near sphere with a positive affective value already in place.[10]

In other words, in the context of the advertisement and the "happiness" that the product promises, is a condition of the interaction instead of a result of it. Unhappiness is predicated as the affect, while happiness is cast as the effect of purchasing Coca-Cola. Indeed, the first forty seconds of the three-minute commercial works hard to broadcast a dire, negative tone to the relationship between the nuclear-armed neighbors through its script, images, music, and technique.

The camera skillfully juxtaposes the images and the words: while soft lighting illuminates a variety of subjects' faces in tightly framed close shots, their testimonials contain the utmost negative language. A brief inventory of the words and language used before the peppy introduction of Coca-Cola to the brown masses includes: "The relationship between India and Pakistan is one that has seen a lot of loss"; "It's [the relationship] stressful, it's tense—it seems it's not improving and it's getting worse"; "It's only been 60 years that we have been apart—before that we were living harmoniously together"; "I think all the strife would go away if you took away all the barbed wire between the two countries" (cross-cut with close shots of barbed wire and fences); "It saddens me that we have this neighbor that we can't even visit"; "That's the bad guy, but when they actually meet them, 'You know, you're just like me'"; and "They're near us but we have no access to them and it's sad, because together I think we would do wonders." Thus, the advertisement introduces these two nations as rife with loss, stress, tension, (di)vision, sadness, misrecognition, and lack of access. As such it delineates the conditions for which the subjects portrayed in the commercial and viewers themselves will experience "a moment of happiness," be it pleasure from consuming Coke or pleasure from consuming images of Coke facilitating playful interactions between India and Pakistan.

This brand of capitalist manipulation has long been critiqued by scholars working in the field of cultural studies. In perhaps one of the most important, seminal works in the field, Stuart Hall writes, "The domains of 'preferred meanings' have the whole social order embedded in them as a set of meanings, practices and beliefs: the everyday knowledge of social structures, of 'how things work for all practical purposes in this culture', the rank order of power and interest and the structure of legitimations, limits and sanctions."[11] When we apply the notion of "preferred meanings" to the target demography and digital medium of this Coke ad, we can see clearly that the corporation is coercing viewers to accept that the "social order" and "everyday knowledge" of cross-border hatred is the way of the world. If there is a doubt of this corporate advertising agenda, we should critically note how varied the overall tone and representation of subjects on either side of the border are after the establishing shots of the neighboring nations. The screen prominently features the words "A moment of happiness has the power to bring the world closer together" against a soundtrack of music that begins with cheerful whistling as the "Open Happiness" machines are installed in their respective, bourgeois spaces. The music crescendos to an operatic crooning against an upbeat string section featuring a split screen in which Indians and Pakistanis, divided by the material border but brought together by the digital interface, "join hands" and become instant friends.

This instant friendship, like the effervescent pop when we open a can of Coke, is underscored by the attendant testimonials which are designed

to stand out in stark contrast to the dire messages in the first forty seconds of the advertisement. Choice exclamations include: "We are creating an environment where young people can exchange ideas, thoughts, gestures, and take away that communication gap that exists"; "If I have any opportunity to go to India, I will surely go there"; "The whole idea of actually touching hands, it's like communicating with each other without words—and that action speaks louder than anything else"; "This is what we are supposed to do, right? We are going to take minor steps so that we are going to solve bigger issues [*sic*]"; "It is more about, you know, how similar we are as opposed to how different we are"; and "Togetherness, humanity—this is what we want, more and more exchange." The denotative meaning here is very clear in juxtaposition to the earlier testimonials: Coca-Cola is catalyzing communication, interaction, sameness, togetherness, and humanity across the barbed-wire borders. But as Hall has also classically noted, "Certain codes may, of course, be so widely distributed in a specific language community or culture, and be learned at so early an age, that they appear not to be constructed. . . . This has the (ideological) effect of concealing the practices of coding which are present. But we must not be fooled by appearances."[12]

Indeed, a more scrutinizing eye may read the codification of difference not just in the advertisement's script, but also in its images. In one sequence, for example, participants at the interface appear to be engaged in a competitive dance-off between each other rather than a digital simulacrum of communal harmony. In this and other ways which I have previously mentioned, the purported happiness produced via the Coke machine is possible only in and through a number of conditions: 1) The assumption that unhappiness is the normal state between residents in both metropolises; 2) that such unhappiness is due to religious disharmony that can be identified as the residual trauma of the Partition; and 3) that the Coca-Cola Corporation can replace the paternal colonizer in establishing ethos and order between these unhappy patrons. While the first two contentions can indeed be read as sweeping generalizations, I would argue that the third contention is caught up in identificatory web that enables Coke to profit off the trauma of Partition in its digital advertising campaign. This identificatory web is a complex one. Although the digital mechanism trumpets happiness and friendship between users at the opposite ends of the interface, I would argue that identification occurs through difference not togetherness. It occurs, in other words, through Coca-Cola's predication that all South Asians are indeed different from one another based on inherent, natural dictums delineated by the many rationalities of Partition.

This is underscored by the opening and concluding testimonials where tense difference and lack of communication transform into harmonic unity dispensed through Coke machines on either side of the border. While it may seem a commonsense statement to say that all people

are different from one another, this notion is at once the driving force behind the market logic of transnational capitalism at the same time that the difference must stage the condition that the machines in Lahore and New Delhi reconcile through Coca-Cola sales. As such, these machines and this advertisement do not aim to produce happiness between the subjects on either side of the border, but instead produce difference and dissonance between these consumers. Thus the spectacular lie of Coca-Cola perpetrated through US multinational digital advertising: it trumpets that its product inaugurates moments of happiness between people who are "really" the same but in different geographies. But as I have revealed, its message and sales capitalize on the semblance of difference—violent, traumatic difference and the pain of separation—from the get-go to warrant the consumption of soda. Indeed, even the possibility of a bad gesture, wrong touch, physical violence, or mob lynching is abstracted and held at bay, only made possible through a virtual punch, kick, blow, assault in the vacancy of real bodies.

Titled *Reunion*, the Google advertisement is manipulative in a different manner but to similar ends. The ad portrays the elderly (Hindu) Baldev in Delhi tearfully reminiscing about Yusuf, his (Muslim) pre-Partition childhood friend from Lahore, with his granddaughter, Suman. Baldev's savvy granddaughter contacts Yusuf's grandson in Lahore with a few touches on her smart phone's Google search app. Within seconds . . . emotional magic! On either end of the handset, the grandchildren use Google to facilitate plans for the wistful Yusuf to procure an entry visa into India and even check the weather. The happy ending is that Yusuf travels to Delhi and meets his old friend on his birthday, and both happily raise their arms up to the sky sitting cross-legged in the monsoon rains. The first reunion may lead to a marital union as both grandchildren shyly gaze at one another.[13] This subtle suggestion is that Google products can transcend religious divisions and catalyze kinship bonds between generations. Again, here American transnational corporations can allow Indians and Pakistanis to breach the residue of the Long Partition as long as they embrace the digital mechanisms of transnational capitalism that profit US multinationals.

Google indeed hoped to lend a sense of authenticity to the advertisement in selecting Sukesh Kumar Nayek to write the ad and Amit Sharma to direct it. It was published on November 13, 2013, on YouTube and televised two days later with much fanfare and applause. For example, Max Fisher of the *Washington Post* claims, "Yes, it's an ad, meant to prod people in one of the world's largest markets into using Google services. . . . But what this video shows is the human cost of dividing what would today be the world's most populous society had it not split, as well as the hope of, not exactly a national reunion, but a cultural one."[14] An appraisal in *Time* magazine holds that the advertisement showcases that "the personal connections between Indians and Pakistanis run deep"

despite the tensions between both governments.[15] Even in South Asia, the commercial was well received, with Ritu Singh of *Zee News* stating, "This heartwarming ad is sure to overwhelm you."[16] While I do not want to abstract these human emotions to the point where they are treated as insignificant in the frame of cultural critique, we must engage an analysis of the ad that goes beyond the surface message transmitted by the images, music, and stated message postulated by Google.

This advertisement opens with a long establishing shot of the dome of Old Delhi's Jama Masjid, or "world-reflecting mosque," thus giving a sense of exotic historicity to the setting. Baldev wistfully shows his granddaughter Suman a faded, sepia photograph of himself and Yusuf as boys in Baldev's shop. Before the departure of the British colonizers, the boys would fly kites in a large park by an ancient gate, then go to Yusuf's sweet shop and steal "jhajariya," a regional confectionery made of corn, milk, and ghee (clarified butter). Approximately thirty seconds into the 3:32-minute-long commercial, a nostalgic, acoustic guitar-lined song about *bachpan* (childhood) compliments the sequence of Suman on her laptop typing "park with ancient gate in lahore" into Google India. We should note here that while this advertisement differs from the Coco-Cola one, both appeal to the "bodily horizon" of the subjects in the constructed narratives and of the viewers of them. Indeed, it is only after Googling "jhajariya" and discovering that it is a confection that Suman is able to subsequently discover that Fazal Sweets is the "oldest sweet shop near mochi gate lahore [*sic*]" in the search engine. As such, soda and sweets serve as humanizing bridges to bring people together across the Indo-Pak border in and through mechanical devices that do not consume such products.

The second appeal to the bodily horizon is the deployment of a wistful soundtrack to appeal to viewers' hearing sense. Suman locates Fazal Sweets via Google and contacts Ali, Yusuf's grandson, in Lahore and asks him if he remembers stealing the sweets with his old childhood friend with a playful Hindi song on the soundtrack. Both the use of Hindi and a Hindi song also lend a sense of authenticity and history to the commercial's narrative. This accentuates Sharma's aesthetic choice of close-up shots bathed in soft, golden lighting on Yusuf's face when speaking to Suman. Observing the nostalgic countenance of his grandfather, Ali conveniently pulls out his smart phone and Googles "Indian visa requirement." Juxtaposed against this sequence is a scene of Suman and a tearful Baldev sitting in a park with India Gate prominently visible in the background.[17] The suggestive rhetoric of the sequence semiotically links Baldev's nostalgia for his childhood friend to a recognizable edifice that memorializes the heyday of the British Raj. It moreover serves as a moving counterpoint between the close shots of Yusuf reveling in the memory of mischievous childhood mishaps with Baldev and the latter's traumatic disclosure (near India Gate) to Suman: "In the wake of Partition,

we fled to India in the middle of the night . . . I think of Yusuf all the time."[18]

As such, the Google ad frames the search engine and its handheld devices as convenient arbiters of happiness through memory and nostalgia. The happy ending is that Suman and Ali coordinate with one another and Google to procure Yusuf an Indian visa, and Suman moreover intercepts the pair on time, with the help of Google's real-time arrival information for Pakistan International Airlines from Lahore. This is the last time we see a handheld device before the heart-warming reunion with Yusuf at the threshold of Baldev's doorstep. This conclusion to the ad emphasizes a shift from the memory of good times to the production of new memories as Suman and Ali coyly glance at one another as the patriarchs embrace—a gesture that suggests that the reunion of Baldev and Yusuf could lead to a marital union between their grandchildren that would lead to the consolidation of wealth and property between rival nations that previously, as I demonstrated at the opening of this essay, labored hard to prevent this. While the heteronormative undercurrents here are subtle, the light-skinned complexion of all the actors combined with the upper-middle-class status of the characters signifies Google's vision of communal harmony through skin color and class status in both Pakistan and India.

This happy ending reflects the massive number of views that the *Reunion* ad has had to date; nearly thirteen million views are registered on YouTube alone. Google also published a number of other advertisements featuring *Reunion* actors/characters on the same day that it was published on YouTube, which suggests a multipronged marketing campaign of uniquely South Asian Google Search items which anticipated the wide success of the reunion marketing campaign. These additional digital advertisements include "Google Search: Fennel," "Google Search: Sugar-free," "Google Search: Cricket," and "Google Search: Anarkali." Again, these ads target themes that are central to South Asian culture—culinary staples and popular entertainment. I would like to briefly comment on the "Google Search: Anarkali" commercial. This one is particularly crafty because it refers to both a famous bazaar in Lahore and the legendary slave girl for whom the market is named. Anarkali's fraught story of romantic yet tragic love for a prince against all odds is well known throughout South Asia through the blockbuster Bollywood film *Mughal-e-Azaam* (1960) that detailed her life. In the context of the ad, Baldev and Yusuf attempt to capitalize on the film's theme of eternal love by suggesting that Suman find an "Anarkali suit" for Yusuf's granddaughter with Ali in tow. When Suman reveals that she can use Google to find the suit without going to the mall, the men become visibly disenchanted. In response, the savvy Suman uplifts them by concluding that she can nonetheless go out for *chaat* with Ali. In this manner, *Reunion* has an afterlife

that casts Google Search as a search engine for matrimonial match, love, family, community—in a word, happiness.

If we evaluate both advertisements together in the context of the Long Partition, we can draw a few informed, albeit contentious, conclusions. The first key conclusion I would propose is that this kind of advertising, operating through Coca-Cola and Google, is marketing its ware by coercing its target audience to identify with the US. Identification with and "profound and disturbing" mimicry of the West was an effective hegemonic strategy deployed by the British imperialists in striving to assimilate the "natives" spread throughout the Empire to British standards and sensibilities.[19] According to Rey Chow, "In the contexts in which cross-cultural encounters entail the imposition and enforcement of one group's (typically Westerners') superiority over another (typically the 'natives' of African, Asian, American, Australian, and New Zealand cultures), mimesis is a routine rite of initiation: those from the so-called inferior group, the colonized or semicolonized are bound to want to imitate their supposedly superior aggressors as part of their strategy for social survival and advancement."[20] Amrijit Singh and Peter Schmidt further assert that mimicry must be viewed in its more complicated social articulations. They write, "This double-edge aspect of mimicry—homage as well as menace to the colonizer's identity and authority—is present in the idea of brown-skinned Englishmen."[21] That is to say that ambivalence marks the modality of colonial domination because mimicry of the colonizer pays tribute to the imperium in the same moment that it threatens it by attempting to emulate the colonizing authoritarian.[22] When we transpose Singh and Schmidt's notion to the multinational corporate marketing ploys in the context of the genealogy of the Long Partition, we see these identificatory contradictions globally staged at a hyperreal rate.

Moreover, part of the marketing strategy is not only to establish the semblance of sameness, cultural affiliation, with Westerners by drinking Coca-Cola and using Google as they do, but also to establish sameness with the residents living in rival nations. Indeed, the happiness produced by both products entails identification with the other as "one of us," as confirmed by the very human senses of taste, sound, sight, and touch. The digital medium complicates the identificatory web made possible by the user interfaces promoted by the advertisements and the technological tools used by viewers to access them. While both commercials encourage their subjects and viewers to identify with each other in the interest of driving home the emotional affect of the message, it is only through the pre-establishment of difference that this can possibly occur. Here, transnational capitalism's marketing campaign is a familiar wolf in sheep's clothing: recognition of the Indian/Pakistani "other" can be transcended by mimesis of the Occident/Global North, and more specifically in the context of twenty-first-century happiness, with engagement in the profitable technocultures of the West. This leads to a question, then, whose

answer perhaps most effectively explains the shared goal of both advertisements: if happiness is a longing for that which has not yet been experienced, what experience, precisely, does the abstract concept of happiness yearn for as it is presented in these advertisements?

I would assert that the shared goal is bound up, in the genealogical framing of the Long Partition, with the experiences of displacement, migration, immigration, the bodily horizon in relation to territory, home, belonging, etc.; that is to say, the shared goal of both ads is preoccupied with the unbridled freedom of movement across borders and the magical capabilities of the advertised products to bestow that transnational privilege to consumers. It appeals to those who become diasporic subjects because they must flee their homelands (Baldev and his family) and those who become diasporic due to the Radcliffe Line's callous demarcation of two nascent nation-states (Yusuf and those in the Coca-Cola ad). The advertisements, in other words, market their products through the digital medium which engages in time-space compression by promising time and space compression for the "bodily horizon" that Ahmed theorizes. As John Torpey notes, economic liberalization has been associated with freedom of movement since the late 1800s.[23] He continues that liberal Western governments developed passports to facilitate "effective distinctions between native and foreigner founded on documents" and also "to legitimate movement."[24] Though limited to Europe, Torpey's study acknowledges "the extreme explosiveness of the racial politics of passports in the decolonizing United Kingdom, as well as the broader problem of who among the varieties of British subjects was to have unrestricted access to the territory of the U.K."[25]

I would moreover venture that decolonization led not only to insecure mimicry of British governance in India and Pakistan, but also of British immigration policies and their corresponding mix of racism and xenophobia to limit movement across borders by branding postcolonial subjects as "others." Indeed, one of the long-lasting ramifications of decolonization of South Asia is the ongoing racism, classism, Islamaphobia, Indophobia, and other forms of bigotry that limit and curtail movement between Pakistan, India, and the smaller nations of South Asia. To this day, the visa procurement process for nationals of India and Pakistan to visit each other's country is typically arduous, convoluted, expensive, and tainted by institutional bigotry and corruption. As Yasmin Khan writes:

> The permanent separation of Indians and Pakistanis from each other, and their inability to cross the new border, was the most long-lasting and divisive aspect of Partition. . . . In the summer of 1947 few could appreciate the full connotations of the division which would ultimately result in some of the harshest border regulations in the world. . . . By 1951 Indians and Pakistanis required a passport and visa to cross Radcliffe's infamous line in the west of the country. . . . Naturally, the poor

> and illiterate could not afford the passport fee and [navigate] the legal minefield of Pakistani and Indian citizenship caused by hardship and complications.[26]

Khan's historical account of 1947 and 1951 offers a panoramic trajectory into the ramifications of such policies today. Indeed, in the wake of the worldwide "War on Terrorism" and increasing economic injustice in the Global South, the mechanisms that cause poverty and illiteracy have exacerbated and produced innovative class, gender, color, and sexuality divisions. This does not even take into account that engagement in technology is itself a grammar of the West's digital hegemony. Indeed, when we apply this argument to these advertisements, we see that *they operate like virtual passports*, promising the freedom of movement but in a nonconventional manner. I would argue that *Reunion* suggests that Google Search offers a passport into the past, into the halcyon days before Partition when the British established rule and order, and moreover suggest that it can facilitate quick visas for seamless travel to India from Pakistan, ultimately skirting the real complications that Pakistani nationals face when obtaining travel documents to India. The promise of movement constitutes the happiness that Google is marketing to upper-middle-class viewers, and moreover links familial harmony and domestic bliss to its product.

One could argue that Coca-Cola's "Small World Machines" advertisement takes this one step further because it promises happiness and connection without leaving the vicinity: its digital interface acts like a teleportation device that bridges the time and space gap while breaching the complications of visa and flight procurement. It allows the humanistic interaction to be experienced with the other national in absentia and moreover promotes itself as a spectacle in the bourgeois space of the shopping mall and market bazaar. The mimetic impulse to copy the West by consuming Coca-Cola is codified through the rhetoric of mimicking a South Asian "brother" or "sister" on the other side of the border after going through great pains to establish difference between Pakistanis and Indians. Thus the paradox of these advertisements: while they seem to promise that the "bodily horizon" will engage in happy moments that appeal to human senses of taste, touch, smell, sight, etc., they are instead offering what I would call "migrations in absentia," or the sum experience of traveling to another place and imbibing all of its experiences without the cumbersome burden of crossing national borders or dealing with difference through lived experience. This migration in absentia and its reconfigured bodily horizon permeates the cybersphere in contrast significantly to the material violations of bodily horizons that occurred during the migrations/displacements before and after August 1947. It trivializes and invalidates what Nalini Iyer and Amy Bhatt have de-

scribed as a divisive "death knell" that uprooted nearly thirteen million people as Hindus fled east and Muslims shifted west.[27]

People virtually touching through web cams cannot rape, mutilate, or decapitate the other. There is no threat of losing one's self or one's land here—this is a sterile yet safe kind of touching. Before and during the Partition, the British acted as mediators and even commissioned Radcliffe to draw up the plan before they left the subcontinent. In the Long Partition, the digital advertising of corporations arbitrate virtual movement, thus facilitating the migration of absent bodies even as sensory pleasures appeal to their traumatized psyches.

This is not to say, however, that these ads are ultimately successful. For if "migrations of absentia" are one of the key promises made by American multinational corporations in their manipulation of the trauma incurred by the division of South Asia, we must also recognize the agency and tactics of resistance in which scattered South Asian diasporas are engaged throughout the digital realm. Indeed, they are producing migrations of absentia throughout digital windows to produce alternative accounts of Partition. Just a few of these include the online Sindhi Voices Project spearheaded by Natasha Raheja and Neena Makhija, the South Asian American Digital Archive (SAADA) directed by Samip Mallick, and the online 1947 Partition Archive. These resources counter the myths produced by market-motivated advertisements that seek to profit off the happiness and nostalgia around Partition myths. Indeed, I would argue that these digital archives also engage in "migrations of absentia," but not those that promise a capitalistic transgression of the very national borders that continue to demarcate self and other. Rather, these digital archives empower and enable viewers to "migrate" into a collective past whose biographical stories are narrated by survivors. Moreover, these survivors have donated their time and resources beyond the shadows of a capitalist agenda, and their stories range the emotional gamut from "happy" to horrific, nostalgic to forgetful, painful to joyous, and bitter to celebratory. As such, the archives engage in Partition affect beyond the essentialized feeling of "happiness" that Coca-Cola and Google must market for their shareholders.

This essay has critically examined Coca-Cola's *Small Worlds* and Google's *Reunion* digital advertisements to argue that their marketing strategies draw upon familiar colonial tropes like "The White Man's Burden" and Western mimicry to create the illusion that South Asians now depend on these products to reunite decades after the Partition: Coke is the new chai, which South Asians can sip with estranged childhood friends that Google allows them to rediscover. While the threat of traditional violence is no longer efficient or necessary, the ideological and economic violence wrought by twenty-first-century capitalism and its hegemonic advertising, as I have demonstrated, must indeed be kept in check. We must critically examine the ways and means of digital advertising pro-

duction, the histories and interests behind the message, and the gains made by framing Coca-Cola and Google as such to the target market of upper- and middle-class residents of India and Pakistan with respect to the Long Partition. For example, the Coca-Cola machines were placed in shopping malls in both Lahore and New Delhi. This suggests that despite the advertisement's claim to transcend the colonialist split of the subcontinent, the geographical placement of these machines and the demography to which they appeal is intricately bound up with class divisions and conspicuous public consumption that punctuate the very anxieties upon which partition of the Punjab was predicated.

The Google advertisement romanticizes heteronormative bonds that underpin upper-middle-class Hindu and Muslim lives, thus suggesting that neoliberal lifestyles can breach the bitter divisions of national rivals. I do not here intend to undermine the raw emotions and/or nostalgia behind the subjects and sentiments portrayed in these adverts, but rather to critically interrogate the marketing of products that utopically represent migrations in absentia, and the ethical dilemmas that may arise from this. Yet I would say by way of conclusion that these advertisements do far more harm to those they purport to benefit than the help they promise to deliver. The empowering bit in all this is that we identify this reality and draw from it a bittersweet happiness that is not manipulated by fancy soda machines or flashy handheld devices. It is necessary, against the mesmerizing backdrop of digital branding and the dissemination of these advertisements, to recall that transnational technologies are not fail proof. According to David Morely and Kevin Robbins,

> Certainly one should not overestimate the freedom of the media consumer to make whatever he or she likes of the material transmitted. . . . Equally, we should not fall into any technologically determinist argument. Even if media technologies have, historically, been developed and controlled by the powerful countries of the West, they are, none the less, always capable of being appropriated and used in other ways than those for which they were intended.[28]

As I have elsewhere argued in the context of queer women in South Asian cinematic representation, visual culture can be used as a "transnational tool for subaltern speech."[29] In this frame, critical lenses of postcolonial digital humanities, or #DHpoco, must vigilantly interrogate the subjects and representations of corporate digital marketing's representation of South Asia and the Global South, and its continued drive to extricate resources from the subcontinent. This is especially crucial as South Asia and its diasporas grapple with the religious, nationalistic, sexist, and queerphobic violence that punctuates the ongoing trauma of the Long Partition. Indeed, in light of a historical event that continues to make travel between both countries difficult for the nationals who live in and beyond South Asia, we must also note that migrations in absentia are

false hopes and empty promises; like the sugar high of Coca-Cola and jhajariya they come and go quickly. Though the promise of having easy access to those we love without having to actually be present is enticing and becomes larger than life when such advertisements go viral, we must always unearth whose happiness is being privileged and whose is being compromised, and by who, in the context of the Long Partition.

NOTES

1. Roopika Risam and Adeline Koh, "Mission Statement," *Postcolonial Digital Humanities*, http://dhpoco.org/mission-statement-postcolonial-digital-humanities/ (Accessed on March 22, 2015).
2. Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali Zamindar, *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia: Refugees, Boundaries, Histories* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 2.
3. Ibid., 133–34.
4. Radhika Gajjala, *Cyberculture and the Subaltern: Weavings of the Virtual and Real* (New York: Lexington Books, 2013).
5. Sara Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 24.
6. Giorgio Agamben, *Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy*, trans. and ed. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 159.
7. Amanda Ciafone, "Water for Life, Not for Coca Cola: Transnational Systems of Capital and Activism," *The Sun Never Sets: South Asian Migrants in an Age of U.S. Power*, Vivek Bald, Miabi Chatterji, Sujani Reddy, and Manu Vimalassery (New York: New York University Press, 2013), 205.
8. Seema Gupta, K. Naganand, and Avneesh Singh Narang, "Image Advertising: The Advertising Strategies of Pepsi and Coca Cola in India," *tejas@iimb: Best of Faculty Student Collaborative Enquiry*, http://tejas.iimb.ac.in/articles/58.php (Accessed on September 14, 2014).
9. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ts_4vOUDImE.
10. Sara Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 27–28.
11. Stuart Hall, "Encoding and Decoding," in *The Cultural Studies Reader*, 3rd ed., ed. Simon During (New York: Routledge, 2007), 483.
12. Ibid., 481.
13. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uygMxk6FKcY.
14. Max Fisher, "This Powerful Video Is Dominating Indian Social Media. Here's Why." http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/worldviews/wp/2013/11/15/this-powerful-video-is-dominating-indian-social-media-heres-why/ (Accessed on November 15, 2013).
15. Nilanjana Bhowmick, "Why Indians and Pakistanis Find This Ad Incredibly Moving." http://world.time.com/2013/11/14/why-indians-and-pakistanis-find-this-ad-incredibly-moving/ (Accessed on November 14, 2013).
16. Ritu Singh, "Google Search: Reunion Video goes viral, reconnects India and Pakistan." http://zeenews.india.com/news/net-news/google-search-reunion-video-goes-viral-reconnects-india-pakistan_890072.html (Accessed on November 14, 2013).
17. The India Gate, originally designated as the "All-India War Memorial," was commissioned by the Imperial War Graves Commission and inaugurated by Viceroy Lord Irwin on February 12, 1931, to commemorate the Indian soldiers who died fighting for the Allies in World War I.
18. My translation is more literal despite the translation supplied by Google in the subtitles.

19. Homi Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," *October* 28 (Spring 1984), 126.

20. Rey Chow, *Entanglements, or Transmedial Thinking about Capture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 93.

21. Amritjit Singh and Peter Schmidt, eds., *Postcolonial Theory and the United States: Race, Ethnicity, and Literature* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2000), 24.

22. In his formulation of colonial ambivalence, Homi K. Bhabha writes: "The ambivalent identification of the racist world . . . turns on the idea of man as his alienated image; not Self and Other but the otherness of the Self inscribed in the perverse palimpsest of colonial identity." See: Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 40 and 44.

23. John Torpey, *The Invention of the Passport: Surveillance, Citizenship and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 92.

24. Ibid., 56.

25. Ibid., 151.

26. Yasmin Khan, *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 194–95.

27. Amy Bhatt and Nalini Iyer, *Roots and Reflections: South Asians in the Pacific Northwest* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2013), 53.

28. David Morley and Kevin Robbins, "Under Western Eyes: Media, Empire, and Otherness," *The Media Studies Reader*, ed. Laurie Ouellette (New York: Routledge, 2013). 363–78; 364.

29. Rahul Gairola, "Burning with Shame: Desire and South Asian Patriarchy, from Gayatri Spivak's 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' to Deepa Mehta's *Fire*," *Comparative Literature* 54, 4 (Autumn 2002): 314.

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Part II

Nations and Narrations

FIVE

Exorcizing the Ghosts of Times Past

Partition Memoirs as Testimony

Tarun K. Saint

In this essay I hope to show how memoirs about the historical experience of the Partition of India engaged with this moment in complex and distinctive ways, encompassing both the personal and public domains, often articulating that which was relegated in the official historical discourse (whether in India or Pakistan) to the margins.[1] Such life-writings in many cases tended to be fragmentary and subjective, as emotions otherwise repressed came to the fore and tinged the description of extremely painful events and aspects of this experience usually deemed unspeakable. Nonetheless, significant memoirs did bear witness to the event, uncovering hidden and untold stories that were often lost to memory, thus performing an important testimonial function, even as South Asia continues to be haunted by the specters of this traumatic history.

There are several interesting political memoirs about the protracted transfer of power negotiations that eventually led up to the decision to partition the subcontinent, as well as accounts by prominent individuals of the fallout of the phase of parlaying for power. Prominent among these are former Congress President Maulana Azad's *India Wins Freedom*[2] and Ram Manohar Lohia's *Guilty Men of India's Partition*,[3] as well as reminiscences and witness accounts from Pakistan such as Jahan Ara Shahnawaz's *Father and Daughter: A Political Autobiography*[4] and Shaista Suhrawardy Ikramullah's *From Purdah to Parliament*.[5] Azad's volume was initially published in a truncated form due to his own sense that some of the judgments about men and events were not ripe for publication. The

appearance of this volume in its complete, unexpurgated form more than thirty years after publication shed further light on conflicts and ideological differences at the highest level of the nationalist movement, especially within the Congress party. Azad's sense of dismay at the hostage theory propagated by communal elements at the time of the acceptance of the Partition demand is especially noteworthy. Azad sharply criticized the acceptance of the Partition on the basis of the minorities in each country being held hostage to the security of the minority community in the other, since this idea of retaliation as a method of assuring the rights of minorities seemed barbarous to him.[6]

Socialist leader Lohia's memoir, written in 1961 (which began as a rejoinder to Azad's volume), makes an independent analysis from a socialist standpoint of the reasons for the Partition.[7] In contrast, the autobiographical narrative of Shahnawaz (from Pakistan) traces the political history of her husband Mohammad Shafi, a prominent Muslim League politician, as well as her own involvement in the Pakistan movement after his death. She also gives us an account of the transformation of her own daughter Mumtaz's political ideology, from being a Congress follower to a Muslim League supporter.[8] Similarly, Begum Shaista Ikramullah gives us a personal description of her experience as a supporter of the Muslim League in East Bengal, who was later to become a parliamentarian in Pakistan speaking up for causes specific to East Pakistan.[9] In both these narratives the transition from the secluded sphere of the zenana, or the inner courtyard, to the realm of active politics is presented with sensitivity and insight.

More recently, studies of the Partition based on memories of survivors, especially women who were abducted during the violence, by Urvashi Butalia,[10] Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin,[11] and Veena Das[12] brought up critical questions as regards earlier silences in mainstream Partition historiography, specifically with respect to the extent of sexual violence that occurred then. The interconnections between history and memory have been further explored in attempts to revisit some of the conundrums pertaining to the settlement that was arrived at, including the speed and pace at which the decision was sought to be implemented, and the ferocity and scale of the collective violence that was unleashed, leading up to one of the longest and most extensive mass migrations in human history.[13] However, the debates pertaining to political history and its narrativization by politicians and community leaders are outside the purview of this discussion.

In this essay, instead, I will focus on selected personal memoirs about the Partition of India. While the tone of these memoirs may be personal, these accounts draw in distinctive ways on the socio-political context of the time, generating different perspectives on the processes at work leading up to the Partition and its catastrophic aftereffects. The translation in recent times of some of the key memoirs which had not received ade-

quate attention in either literary or historical discourses has enabled a renewed critical focus on these texts. The pervasiveness of the Partition's afterlife and continuing manifestations of historical trauma in the present further necessitate this critical engagement with a seemingly minor genre. For one can discern an unmistakable resonance between some of the critical questions raised in these narratives and the continuing reverberations of the Partition debacle.

I focus on Anis Kidwai's *In Freedom's Shade*[14] (1974, trans. 2011) and Kamlaben Patel's *Torn from the Roots*[15] (1977, trans. 2006), both touching upon the recovery of abducted women and the problems of rehabilitation, in the first part of my discussion. In the next section I briefly discuss two very different memoirs by Hindu migrants from West Punjab, Prakash Tandon's *Punjabi Century*[16] (1968) and "The Sixth River: A Diary of 1947"[17] (1948, trans. 2001), an extract from a memoir by Fikr Taunsvi (the pen-name of Ramlal Bhatia), as well as a memoir by a Muslim migrant from Delhi to Karachi, Abdul Rahman Siddiqi's *Smoke without Fire: Portraits of Pre-Partition Delhi*[18] (2011). The basis for this selection from a considerable range of memoirs which are being rediscovered and translated afresh is their respective historical significance, as well as the ability to bring to the fore some of the moral ambiguities pertaining to Partition violence and its afterlife. The contention of this essay is that some of these significant life-writings about this critical event transcended the immediate context of writing, bearing witness to both the darker aspects of Partition violence as well as resistance to such violence by committed individuals and groups. As modes of testimony, these narratives continue to provide inspiration for those reckoning with the impact of extreme forms of violence on the mind and on society, whether social scientists, activists, or imaginative writers.[19]

In Freedom's Shade, written in Urdu in 1949 but published in 1974, and only recently translated into English by Ayesha Kidwai in 2011, is perhaps the most important memoir about the collective violence, mass dislocation, and the rehabilitation efforts that followed.[20] The author's husband Shafi Mohammed Kidwai (a civil servant based in Mussoorie) was killed, likely as a result of his efforts to prevent the forcible takeover of evacuee Muslim properties in Mussoorie. Anis Kidwai then came to Delhi to meet Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi advised her to take up constructive work, since he could ill afford to allow a person of her caliber and talents to remain on the sidelines in mourning.[21] As a result she became involved in the efforts to ensure a safe passage for Muslims who were migrating to Pakistan, and who came to Delhi to live in refugee camps that had been set up for them in the Purana Qila (old fort) area as well as in the grounds of Humayun's Tomb. What is remarkable about this memoir is the way the author sensitively comes to terms with such traumatic memories; Kidwai represents both personal experience and collective suffering both dispassionately and in a literary register. Indeed, this ac-

count qualifies as a literary memoir, not only because of Kidwai's many citations of couplets in Urdu, but also as a result of her reflective stance on the transitions that were taking place across North India, with specific reference to the plight of minority communities.

"September 1947 arrived, bringing in its wake scores of anxieties and tribulations."[22] Kidwai begins by giving a sense of the psychological brunt of the moment of the partition, with the widespread Hindu-Muslim rioting that followed Direct Action Day (16 August 1946) in Calcutta, as well as collective violence in Noakhali, Bihar, Multan, Rawalpindi, and Garhmukhteshwar. Kidwai acknowledges that both Multan and Rawalpindi had seen terrible massacres of Hindus and Sikhs, based on a description by a Muslim friend. She is evenhanded in her criticism of the exultation with which people greeted the misfortunes of others. Kidwai wonders as regards what sort of a nation might emerge that gave birth to such heroic "braves."[23] In her words, a strange bestiality was born in those days.[24] For her, 15th August, the designated day of liberation, was the day of freedom certainly, but also a freedom "slashed and streaked with blood."[25] "All the years we had waited and struggled, were they all for this moment?" she asks, while witnessing the consecration of the new nation-state by Brahmin priests (along with some rituals performed to console the minorities) and the inauguration of what she fears to be a new Brahminical order.[26] She thus articulates the acute sense of betrayal of hopes of many who had participated in the non-violent struggle for independence. It is a measure of her resilience and fortitude that Kidwai was able to muster up the energy and commitment to get deeply involved in the subsequent rehabilitation efforts as well as the attempts to restore peace in the city of Delhi through the formation of a pacifist organization, the Shanti Dal.[27]

In subsequent chapters of this memoir, Kidwai shares a sense of personal anguish at the collective descent into depravity that she witnessed, partly as a result of her own experience of loss, but also based on personal observation. Kidwai critiques the state-sponsored efforts at rehabilitation of refugees and also identifies some of the problems with the basis for the nation-states' functioning that would beset independent India and continue to beleaguer the country for years to come. The asymmetrical and unjust treatment of sections of the Muslim minority, who were too often treated as if they already belonged to another country or were soon intending to migrate, as well as the predicament of abducted women who, in some cases, were sought to be restored forcibly to their families in the wake of the decision of the two countries to sign the agreement to this effect, are delineated with empathy. The outrageous conduct of government officials at the time of Partition, who misused their positions in order to be able to grab the "hottest" women for themselves, and the grotesque system of ratings that was established, according to which the spoils were distributed down the hierarchy, are unsparingly laid bare.[28]

Here Kidwai bears witness to the complicity of the state (and powerful interests within it) in forms of gendered violence that seemed to receive a tacit sanction at this time. It is as if the abdication of the ethical compact became especially visible for her during such transactions, ushering in a monstrous inversion of codified assumptions about the "sanctified" place of women in society. Perhaps as a result of her acute sense of moral horror at the opening out of such zones of irresponsibility, Kidwai's tone does appear at times censorious and moralistic, even judgmental, in her condemnation of the waywardness of some of the abducted women.[29] According to her, some of them were prone to take advantage of the situation they were in, in order to indulge in licentious behavior.[30] Kidwai's personal involvement with the situation may have prompted such a stance as she sought the restitution of a baseline of rectitude, in the context of having to engage with a multitude of such cases that were brought to her attention during the efforts to rehabilitate abducted women.

Kidwai offers her testimony so that the history in the making that she was both part of and witness to would not be forgotten by later generations. The memories presented in this narrative are extremely significant in the context of the paucity of such testimonial narratives. *In Freedom's Shade* is also a personal statement about a process of recovery through writing from the deeply traumatic experience that she went through.[31] Kidwai grapples with the memory of personal loss and breakdown of moral order in the public domain, as well as the later trauma of victims she encountered from both communities, while assuming the role of social activist. Indeed, it is social activism that gave her the strength to reject the rhetoric of blame as well as the tendency to act out repetitively the symptoms of trauma, a phenomenon which she may have witnessed herself in the camps. Through the constant and concerted efforts she made to mitigate the suffering of others who had experienced similar bereavement, Kidwai worked through her own memories of traumatic loss. In her later reconstruction of this personal engagement and unrelenting activism, often in the face of bureaucratic indifference and hostility as well as political opposition, we get a sense of the ambivalences of the moment of Partition and its aftermath, as Kidwai contended with the likelihood of violence being perpetrated by former victims. Even so, she ascribes responsibility for such arson and violence to the effects of RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh) propaganda.[32] Her narrative thus gives us a sense of the prevalence of what Primo Levi termed the "gray zone," as victims themselves became perpetrators.[33] Despite her vulnerability to accusations of bias and even personal attacks, she was able to contend with the challenges she faced, often as a result of the friendships and personal relations she had established along the way. This text also indicates Kidwai's resistance to the propensity to get sucked into a cycle of

vindictive rage and projection of grief and fury onto the perceived enemy.

As testimony and as record of her journey across the landscape of riot-ravaged post-partition Delhi, *In Freedom's Shade* is comparable to important testimonies produced in the aftermath of the Holocaust by Primo Levi, Elie Wiesel, and others.[34] This memoir traverses the intersection between personal spaces and public domains, mapping the ravages of time and history with accuracy and in detail. Just as was the case with such attempts to bear witness to the horrors of the Holocaust that were insufficiently recognized and at first consigned to oblivion, Kidwai's narrative did not initially receive adequate attention; it was published in Urdu only in 1974. After this an Urdu edition brought out by the National Book Trust appeared in 1978 and the Hindi translation in 1981, also published by the National Book Trust. Finally, in 2011 the English translation appeared, though extracts had been published earlier. This delay in reckoning with this major memoir may be symptomatic of widespread collective amnesia in the wake of the Partition as well as modes of structured forgetting. Such erasure of historical memory may have been a contributory factor to near cyclical repetition of instances of collective violence, as well as the systematic targeting of women in the years following the Partition. The translator Ayesha Kidwai herself acknowledges having truly read this memoir only after the Gujarat pogrom of 2002, despite the fact that this memoir was written by her grandmother.[35] This English translation, however belated, has nonetheless acquired a new kind of valence in the context of the crisis following the events in Gujarat in 2002, which seemed to uncannily replay some of the events described for us by Kidwai in her memoir. Thus the English translation and the biographical essay accompanying it became a new testimonial form, as a mode of both primary and secondary witnessing. This memoir has thus enabled a revisiting of the moment of 1947 in the light of the present-day context of repetition of instances of extreme violence.

Kamlaben Patel's *Torn from the Roots* (published initially in 1977 in Gujarati and translated into English in 2006) is another important memoir by a participant in the humanitarian efforts to restore abducted women to their families.[36] Patel was a prominent social worker from Gujarat who became involved from November 1947 in the activities of Operation Recovery, headed by Mridula Sarabhai. She was primarily based in Lahore and had specific responsibilities allocated to her. These included making arrangements for accommodating abducted women who were rescued in the Gangaram Hospital in Lahore, as well as deciding which districts of Pakistan the women social workers would be sent to find the abducted women. She then had to arrange for the rescued women to be sent to the Gandhi Vanita Ashram in Jalandhar in India. Furthermore, Patel's task was to keep in touch with officials of various departments in Pakistan to

ensure that the agreement that had been signed between the governments relating to these women was put into practice.[37]

In the process of recovery, she came across instances of men bursting into tears while coming to terms with the fact that they would be separated from the women that they had abducted; after hearing so many similar stories, her senses became numbed.[38] Patel also became aware of the strong feelings of guilt on the part of women, some of whom felt the need to convince the officers who had come to rescue them that they had committed no wrong.[39] At a certain point, Patel was taken to a village where a well full of dead bodies was shown to her, into which the women had jumped rather than face dishonor.[40] As a result of this, the well had fallen into disuse and the people living nearby had left the area. Patel's narrative falls short of criticizing the dominant assumptions about chastity and honor that compelled many such women to commit suicide in this manner. Later feminist analysis by Butalia underlined the patriarchal basis of the societal codes in question.[41] Such discoveries, as in the case of Kidwai's memoir, undoubtedly had a deeply disturbing effect on the author. However, this narrative adopts a dispassionate tone while describing the various aspects of the recovery operation which the author was part of as an official representative of the government of India in Pakistan.

Another important problem Patel dealt with was the fate of children born in the wake of abduction. While the Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Recovery and Rehabilitation in India sought to make the claim that children born in such circumstances should be regarded as war babies, Patel believed otherwise. For as she argued, while men responsible for the birth of war babies go back to their own countries, babies are always brought up by their mothers, and therefore such children should not be snatched away from their mothers. Finally, the decision was taken to allow mothers to choose whether they wished to bring their children along or leave them behind in Pakistan. While special homes were set up for abandoned children, the Government of India eventually became their guardian.[42]

Patel wonders at one point whether a suspension of moral codes takes place, and if the distinction between good and evil collapses at times of extreme crisis. She too invokes the metaphor of bestiality while seeking to explain the extent of violence in the Punjab.[43] However, it is ironic that while on one hand collective violence disrupted family lives and destroyed community-based modes of existence, widespread strife also led at least to an extent to the suspension of social stigma pertaining to the women abducted by strangers. As she argues, with an implicit understanding of the codified structures that underpin such attitudes, many of the 10,000 to 12,000 women who had been abducted (an underestimation of the actual numbers involved) would not have been reinstated but for the crisis prevalent at the time.[44] Patel's reflections on the dissolution of

categories of good and evil during this moment of extreme violence seem to stem from her perplexity as regards the magnitude and scale of violence in the Punjab. Unlike Kidwai's account, which is scathing in its denunciation of forms of pathological violence that she came to hear of in her interaction with the victims of Partition violence in Punjab and elsewhere, Patel is on the whole more restrained in her description of the reality of such violence and its effects on the mind and body of the victims.

Even so, this volume does capture the sense of ambiguity and ambivalence that would later become the basis for some of the great short stories on the subject of the abducted women and their eventual restoration (or not) to their families; for instance, Rajinder Singh Bedi's "Lajwanti."[45] The suspension of moral codes and ethical precepts she writes about on one hand led to some of the worst excesses, but ironically enough there was at times a setting aside of taboos pertaining to sexuality that often led to an instinctive rejection of women whose honor was deemed to have been tarnished. It is such moments that this narrative acquires a testimonial function, beyond the descriptive account of her experience and personal difficulties while undertaking the task assigned to her across the border in the newly formed nation-state of Pakistan. For while this narrative seems to lack the literary flair and capacity for introspection that we find in Kidwai's memoir, the somewhat different perception of the gray area that came to the fore in the context of large-scale disruptions of established and codified structures of understanding and value is noteworthy. The duality of the Partition cataclysm, with its simultaneously disruptive effects and at times unintended consequence of necessitating rethinking of inherited prejudices and taboos, is the subject of Amrita Pritam's *Pinjar* (trans. *The Skeleton*) as well.[46] Well-known Punjabi poet Pritam's novella sensitively depicts the difference between the treatment of women abducted prior to Partition and during the large-scale abductions that took place in the years 1947 to 1948.

Prakash Tandon's *Punjabi Century* (1968) is another fascinating autobiographical account of not just an individual but of a Punjabi family of the Khatri caste, chronicling events from 1857 to 1947.[47] Although this work does not, strictly speaking, qualify as a Partition memoir, there is a reference in conclusion to the dispersal and scattering of the Tandon family once they were forced to migrate after the Partition. In the final chapter and in the epilogue, Tandon depicts how his educated and well-off family was forced to give up its land-holdings and properties and make a fresh start in the months after the Partition, and the travails faced by the family while joining a military evacuation convoy which took them away from their home in Gujrat, their homeland in west Punjab, via Lahore to Amritsar and later to Delhi and Karnal.

> Today we have no one left in Gujrat. All the Hindus came away at partition. It is strange to think that in all the land between Rabi and Chenab, from Chenab to Jhelum and from Jhelum on to Indus, in the foothills and in the plain down to Panjnad where the five rivers eventually merge, land which had been homes of our biradari since the dawn of history, there is no one left of our kind.[48]

This statement captures the poignancy of the situation of many refugees who had not expected that they would never be able to return to their own homelands and places of birth. The profound disruption of a way of life and a culture is well captured in the final section of this memoir which serves as an auto-ethnographic account and perhaps even as an epitaph for the culture of the Khatri community of West Punjab. Although this family reestablished itself in Bombay and reacquired a certain level of prosperity, the patterns of life and the modes of being prevalent in West Punjab had been irrevocably altered and to a large extent lost. Tandon is sensitive to the human dimension of the process of recovery and rehabilitation of abducted women as well. He alludes to several cases of men who had abducted Muslim women falling in love with them and then becoming increasingly distraught at the prospect of being separated during the recovery efforts. One of them preferred to go on the run and refused to take his abducted Muslim wife for treatment to the hospital at the time of the delivery of their child, which resulted in her eventual death in the field where they had been hiding.[49] Such tragic outcomes of the state-sponsored rehabilitation and recovery process are frankly acknowledged by Tandon, though not in as much detail as we find in Kidwai's and Patel's accounts, and later in the work of Butalia and Menon and Bhasin. Indeed, he is at times rather dismissive of the actions of social workers (whom he describes as "cold, passionless women") trying to get on the trail of women who were proving difficult to locate.[50]

In contrast, Abdul Rahman Siddiqi's *Smoke without Fire: Portraits of Pre-Partition Delhi* (2011) seeks to recapture memories of the way of life of Muslim families in Old Delhi in the time leading up to the Partition.[51] Siddiqi deals with the experience of Partition violence and forced displacement in the last chapter of this memoir. Prior to 1947 Siddiqi worked as a reporter for the pro–Muslim League newspaper *Dawn* (founded by Jinnah in 1942). After August 15, an Indian edition of this newspaper continued to appear, while editorials were sent from Karachi, where the editor Altaf Hussain had reestablished the newspaper. However, it was felt that the tone of these editorials was too strident (reminiscent of the pre-Partition days); therefore the Delhi edition began to carry its own editorial. Siddiqi then describes the burning of the offices of *Dawn* in the aftermath of the bombexplosion in the Fatehpuri mosque, in early September 1947.[52] With this act of vandalism and arson, the somewhat utopian dream of a binational newspaper was shattered; soon after this the author migrated to Pakistan.

Siddiqi's memoir, written recently, includes references to Nehru's speech at Ballimaran in old Delhi, interrupted by Sikh slogan shouters, which led to a stampede in which the author lost his shoes (the nickname "joota–chorr" or "shoe shedder" stuck with him for a lifetime as a result), as well as to the difference made by Gandhi upon his arrival in Delhi (even though Siddiqi disagrees with Gandhi's assignation of responsibility for the 'madness' of rioting to both communities). Siddiqi candidly acknowledges uncanny aspects of the Partition experience in August 1947—while the violence had begun to peak with shooting in the streets, the twenty-three-year-old journalist and his friends kept "romancing" (a euphemism for visits to the kothas where the courtesans plied their trade). Siddiqi confesses to feeling a strong sense of guilt after one such visit to Farash Khana; upon returning, he felt as if everyone in the crowd around him knew what he had done. Though Eros might indeed flourish even in the times of massacres, the ambivalent psychic costs of such forays, even as Thanatos seemed to hold sway, are noted here with honesty. This becomes even clearer in his account of how a maulvi or cleric raped a young (Muslim) Mewati girl from Gurgaon who had gone to the mosque for shelter. Many perpetrators of sexual violence certainly did not, in this time of extreme violence, respect boundaries of either religion or community.[53]

While the unique experiences of authors of the life-writings discussed above are crucial to the kind of descriptive language being evolved, some writers of memoirs took recourse to literary devices such as satire to articulate their sense of outrage, disbelief, and anguish at the partition's impact on society and culture as well as civilizational values. Let us now turn to an extract in translation from "The Sixth River: A Diary of 1947," a dryly ironic memoir of Partition written in Urdu in 1948 by Fikr Taunsvi, the pen-name of Ramlal Bhatia, a Hindu columnist and satirist based in Lahore, who migrated to India in November 1947.[54] The title refers to the sixth river, a river of hate and blood that had begun to flow in the Punjab during the Partition. The extract opens with the diary entry for August 9, 1947, when a bomb explosion took place in a cinema house in Lahore.[55] In a passage that echoes contemporary reportage, he describes how the bodies were conveyed to hospital in tongas, some of whom had been literally dismembered by the blast. A personal and self-ironic tone is evident; Taunsvi laments that as a result, he and his friend Arif could not have their evening tea at the Nizami hotel, nor conduct their "learned" conversations on politics and literature. It occurs to him that the hooligans of Lahore had given a fitting response to the bangles sent to them from Amritsar. The logic of slighted masculinity and of untrammeled retribution seemed to have taken over, as after this explosion, a hundred and fifty "cowards" were put to death. Meanwhile, the police watched the "beautiful" sight of burning houses, while trucks carrying the military roamed all over the place. As Taunsvi puts it, it was as if human

bodies were going cheap in the market and everyone was satisfied, rich and poor, the rulers and the ruled.[56]

In Taunsvi's ironic view, given the absurdity of the Partition, art, literature, philosophy, and science all had become mute; all were in mourning.[57] Taunsvi looks towards images of Einstein, the Buddha, Ghalib, and Iqbal and suggests in a rather hyperbolic vein that lines be drawn everywhere so that the rivers and mountains in Punjab were divided, for otherwise people would suffer themselves to be cut into pieces, but never allow themselves to be free. However, the images of Mahatma, the Buddha, and Iqbal merely stare back at him, seemingly dumb in the face of all that was happening.[58] Next, Taunsvi sees a burning building where scores of workers had been employed to bind printed copies of the holy Quran. A Hindu named Bishan Das inhabited the upper story of this building. So, while on the top floor Das's son was likely to be burned to death, on the bottom floor the holy Quran and God's law were in flames, while Hindus and Muslims jointly attempted to extinguish the fire. Taunsvi brings in an element of black humor as he admits to enjoying this absurd spectacle, for according to him a new kind of history was being written.[59] The deployment of blistering irony here is reminiscent of "Siyah Hashye" (trans. "Black Margins"), Sa'adat Hasan Manto's vignettes written soon after the Partition.[60] Once again the grotesque duality of the Partition experience comes to the fore, as this episode grimly illustrates, as the arson attack separates Hindus and Muslims, then in a macabre moment, brings them together.

On August 14, an extraordinary day according to him, the narrator wonders why a short story writer like himself, who could easily have been done to death, is walking the streets in this raging hurricane of blood and fire.[61] Indeed, he believes that there have been quite enough sacrifices for Islam. Here Taunsvi deploys caustic irony to subvert the ideological basis for Jinnah's two-nation theory. The deployment of such techniques is not unlike Manto's approach in non-fictional pieces such as "A Stroll through the New Pakistan" (trans. of "Savere Jo Kal Meri Ankh Khuli").[62] Taunsvi and Manto certainly opened up a space for a radical interrogation of nationalist pieties and settled conceptions of selfhood and identity, freely incorporating such "literary" devices in their personal accounts. The scope of the memoir and life-writing was correspondingly extended with the emergence of such hybrid models of remembrance and resistance.

On August 15 he tells us that the radio screamed Freedom all night, but he wonders why firing of guns also continued through the night.[63] The difference between the freedom that had been dreamed about and the reality of the sacrifice of innocent children, young women, and old people becomes abundantly clear, even as the narrator and his friend remained imprisoned indoors on the day of freedom. On August 17, further horrific news comes to his attention, as the whole of Punjab seems

to have gone up in flames, despite the efforts of the Punjab Boundary Force.[64] Taunsvi wonders about the continuation of violence despite the efforts of this military force, which had been assigned the task of stemming the rioting. While each side sought to blame the other, what resulted in his view were an increase in responsibility for both sides and a corresponding increase in the number of the dead. Taunsvi makes the wry observation that we seemed to have gone back to the Stone Age; he wonders if perhaps British politicians and statesmen thought that unless we recede to the Stone Age we cannot attain Nirvana and the true taste of freedom.[65]

Here the mode of the memoir becomes a vehicle for critical questioning of the topsy-turvy world and inverted value system ushered in by Partition. The narrative voice shifts from seeming levity to near despair, while retaining a sense of the absurd in the face of the implosion of a way of life. The writer's ironic vision underpins his indictment of the situation unfolding in Lahore in this moment of ethical and social catastrophe. Lahore, the erstwhile cultural capital, seemed to have become bereft of reason and the capacity to make moral judgments. The arid and barren landscape of riot-torn Lahore becomes a figure for the degradation of cultural and civilizational values inherited from yesteryears. While registering his sense of near-helplessness and bewilderment in the face of this disaster, Taunsvi makes a stringent critique by establishing a distance in aesthetic terms from the prevalent collapse of rationality and moral codes, through the use of satire. He identifies a collective regression in the body politic in conclusion in his reference to the collective descent into the Stone Age. The narrative seems to poke fun at clichéd ascriptions of culpability to the departing colonial rulers; however, there is no facile exculpation of blame either. Rather, Taunsvi achieves a negative critique of negative values that seemed to have engulfed Lahore in a monstrous embrace, a process that may have been initiated during the phase of colonial subjection.

"The Sixth River: A Diary of 1947"[66] thus appears as an atypical instance of testimony, not merely cataloguing and recording the moral debasement and horrors being witnessed, but rather registering grief, moral indignation, and anger, emotions sublimated through the use of satirical barbs that unmask the pretensions of the community and political leaders intent on celebrating newly acquired independence. While there is a profound sense of historical trauma stemming from the disruptions ushered in by the Partition in this fragmentary memoir, there is no element of either the nostalgic or the sentimental here. Indeed, Taunsvi takes an ironic view of simplistic nationalist and communitarian explanations of communal violence that project responsibility for this breakdown of moral norms onto the "other" or onto the perceived enemy. The searing costs of the loss of the capacity for accommodation and coexistence, Taunsvi discerns, may be long-standing and continue to reverberate into

the future. Through his writing of this "fictive" memoir he seems to perform the creative act of mourning, which Dominick LaCapra, following Freud, associates with working through the aftereffects and belated manifestations of historical trauma.[67]

We thus find in important memoirs about the Partition a range of concerns and distinctive stances and voices. The narratives by Kidwai and Patel capture in different ways the collective trauma of the abducted women, as well as in Kidwai's case the large-scale rehabilitation efforts, while achieving the resonance of testimony to inarticulate suffering as well as fragmentary resistance to orchestrated forms of collective violence. Tandon's and Siddiqi's narratives are more conventional and nostalgic chronicles of personal and family history to which the Partition becomes a termination point of sorts, prior to a new beginning. On the other hand, as we saw, the extract from Taunsvi's diary unsettles assumptions pertaining to such memoirs about the moment when Independence was attained. He takes a skeptical stance with respect to nationalist illusions and alludes to the risks faced by writers, thus acknowledging without self-pity or nostalgia the climate of intolerance and hostility to such contrarian perspectives and viewpoints at this moment of celebration and self-glorification. The prevalent mood of nationalist euphoria in both India and Pakistan meant that such self-reflexive and self-critical responses to moral ambiguities generated in the context of the attainment of Independence/Partition would not necessarily always be welcome. The long and at times inglorious history of publication of many of the life-writings here under discussion is evidence of collective apathy and disregard of works that plumbed the zero degree in their representation of the collective descent into nihilism and depravity, as well as the sporadic yet enduring resistance to such tendencies. Such testimony, despite the inadequate public reckoning with Partition's fallout, has, nonetheless, proved enabling in the ongoing task of exorcizing the ghosts of Partition-era collective violence.

NOTES

1. Among the major anthologies, Mushirul Hasan's *India Partitioned*, Vol. 2, includes excerpts from autobiographies/memoirs by writers and activists such as Khwaja Ahmad Abbas, Josh Malihabadi, Aruna Asaf Ali, Kamladevi Chattopadhyaya, and others. See Mushirul Hasan, ed., *India Partitioned*, 2 Vols. (New Delhi: Roli Books, 1997). Ahmad Salim's collection *Lahore 1947* incorporates reminiscences by Fikr Taunsvi, Satish Gujral, Prakash Tandon, Khushwant Singh, and Amrita Pritam, among others. See Ahmad Salim, ed., *Lahore 1947* (New Delhi: India Research Press, 2001). Ritu Menon has edited an excellent anthology of nonfictional writing by women from across South Asia, including Sara Suleri, Ismat Chughtai, Anis Kidwai, and Kamla Patel. See Ritu Menon, ed., *No Woman's Land: Women from Pakistan, India and Bangladesh Write on the Partition of India* (New Delhi: Women Unlimited, 2004).

2. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, *India Wins Freedom* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2003).

3. Ram Manohar Lohia, *Guilty Men of India's Partition* (New Delhi: Rupa, 2009).
4. Jahan Ara Shahnawaz, *Father and Daughter: A Political Autobiography* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2002).
5. Shaista Suhrawardy Ikramullah, *From Purdah to Parliament* (revised and expanded ed. Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1998).
6. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, *India Wins Freedom* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2003), 216.
7. Lohia, *Guilty Men of India's Partition* (New Delhi: Rupa, 2009), 1.
8. Jahan Ara Shahnawaz, *Father and Daughter: A Political Autobiography* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2002), esp. 1–49.
9. Shaista Suhrawady Ikramullah, *From Purdah to Parliament* (revised and expanded ed. Karachi: Oxford University Press), esp. 1–78.
10. Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India* (New Delhi: Penguin, 1998).
11. Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin, *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition* (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1998).
12. Veena Das, *Critical Events: An Anthropological Perspective on Contemporary India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996), *and Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007).
13. Gyanendra Pandey's work has been of crucial importance in this regard (especially Gyanendra Pandey, *Remembering Partition* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2001]).
14. Anis Kidwai, *In Freedom's Shade*, trans. Ayesha Kidwai (New Delhi: Penguin, 2011).
15. Kamla Patel, *Torn from the Roots: a Partition Memoir*, trans. Uma Randeria (New Delhi: Women Unlimited, 2006).
16. Prakash Tandon, *Punjabi Century* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968).
17. Fikr Taunsvi, "The Sixth River: A Diary of 1947," in *Lahore 1947*, ed. Ahmad Salim (New Delhi: India Research Press, 2001).
18. Abdul Rahman Siddiqi, *Smoke without Fire: Portraits of Pre-Partition Delhi* (Delhi: Aakar Books, 2011).
19. Manas Ray's "Growing Up Refugee" is an example of a second-generation memoir, revisiting memories of growing up in a refugee camp in Calcutta with a self-consciously theoretical perspective. Manas Ray, "Growing Up Refugee," in *Partitioned Lives: Narratives of Home, Displacement and Resettlement*, ed. Anjali Gera Roy and Nandi Bhatia (New Delhi: Dorling Kindersley, 2008), 116–45.
20. Anis Kidwai, *In Freedom's Shade*, trans. Ayesha Kidwai (New Delhi: Penguin, 2011).
21. Ibid., author's preface to the 1974 edition, xvi.
22. Ibid., 1.
23. Ibid., 2.
24. Ibid., 3.
25. Ibid., 4.
26. Ibid., 6.
27. Ibid., 199–214.
28. Ibid., 141–47.
29. On the emergence of zones of irresponsibility in the context of the Holocaust, when Hannah Arendt's "banality of evil" found fullest expression, see Giorgio Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (New York: Zone Books, 1999), esp. 20–22.
30. Anis Kidwai, *In Freedom's Shade*, trans. Ayesha Kidwai (New Delhi: Penguin, 2011), 149–50.
31. I discuss the role writing, particularly "fictive" testimony, may play while coming to terms with traumatic experiences like the Holocaust and the Partition in greater

detail in an earlier study. See Tarun K. Saint, *Witnessing Partition: Memory, History, Fiction* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2010), esp. 1–60.

32. Anis Kidwai, *In Freedom's Shade*, trans. Ayesha Kidwai (New Delhi: Penguin, 2011), 215–27.

33. Primo Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*, trans. Raymond Rosenthal (London: Abacus, 2002), esp. 22–64.

34. Ibid., also Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz: The Nazi Assault on Humanity*, trans. Stuart Woolf (New York: Touchstone, 1996, first published 1958), as well as Elie Wiesel, *Night*, trans. Stella Rodway (London: Penguin, 1987; first published 1958).

35. Ayesha Kidwai, "Translator's Introduction" in Anis Kidwai, *In Freedom's Shade*, trans. Ayesha Kidwai (New Delhi: Penguin, 2011): vii.

36. Kamla Patel, *Torn from the Roots: a Partition Memoir*, trans. Uma Randeria (New Delhi: Women Unlimited, 2006).

37. Ibid., 1–8.

38. Ibid., 15

39. Ibid., 18.

40. Ibid., 19.

41. Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India* (New Delhi: Penguin, 1998), 166–74.

42. Patel, *Torn From the Roots: a Partition Memoir,* trans. Uma Randeria (New Delhi: Women Unlimited,2006), 144–48.

43. Ibid., 151–53.

44. Ibid., 152.

45. Rajinder Singh Bedi, "Lajwanti," trans. Author, in *India Partitioned*, Vol. 1., ed. Mushirul Hasan (New Delhi: Roli Books, 1995), 179–91.

46. Amrita Pritam, "The Skeleton," trans. Khushwant Singh in *The Skeleton and That Man* (New Delhi: Sterling, 1987). Trans. of Pinjar.

47. Prakash Tandon, *Punjabi Century* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968; first published 1961).

48. Ibid., 249.

49. Ibid., 250–53.

50. Ibid., 251.

51. Abdul Rahman Siddiqi, *Smoke without Fire: Portraits of Pre-Partition Delhi* (Delhi: Aakar Books, 2011).

52. Ibid., 275–81.

53. Ibid., 290–97.

54. Fikr Taunsvi, "The Sixth River: A Diary of 1947," in *Lahore 1947*, ed. Ahmad Salim (New Delhi: India Research Press, 2001).

55. Ibid., 13.

56. The preceding paragraph draws on ibid., 13–14.

57. Ibid., 14.

58. Ibid., 15–16.

59. Ibid., 16–17.

60. Sa'adat Hasan Manto, "Black Margins," trans. Mushirul Hasan in *India Partitioned: The Other Face of Freedom*, ed. M. Hasan, Vol. 1 (New Delhi: Roli Books, 1997, 88–101, trans. of "Siyah Hashye").

61. Taunsvi, "The Sixth River: A Diary of 1947," in *Lahore 1947*, ed. Ahmad Salim (New Delhi: India Research Press, 2001), 22

62. See Sa'adat Hasan Manto, "A Stroll through the New Pakistan," trans. Aakar Patel, in *Why I Write: Essays by Saadat Hasan Manto,* ed. and trans. Aakar Patel (Chennai: Tranquebar, 2014, 83–90, trans. of "Savere Jo Kal Aankh Meri Khuli").

63. Taunsvi, "The Sixth River: A Diary of 1947," in *Lahore 1947*, ed. Ahmad Salim (New Delhi: India Research Press, 2001), 24

64. Ibid., 27.

65. Ibid., 27.

66. Ibid.

67. Dominick LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 142–44.

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SIX
Difficult Choices

Work, Family, and Displaced Women in Partition Writings

Debali Mookerjea-Leonard

Among the many transformations which accompanied, and were to some extent caused by, the Partition in the lives of displaced middle-class Hindu Bengali women was their large-scale participation in wage labor. Forced evacuation, dispossession, and often the loss of male breadwinners in inter-community violence, compelled many formerly homebound women to seek paid employment outside the home in an effort to forestall the family's economic collapse. Educated women favored teaching positions, but the displaced lacked the luxury of being selective about their field of work. Thus, some women found employment as clerks, nurses, cooks, au pairs, and maidservants; others received training in the arts and crafts; and still others applied for jobs which, for middle-class Hindu Bengali women, had so far been stigmatized: door-to-door selling, telephone operating, hawking, and even careers in the entertainment industry. It was a liberating experience for many, and wages held the promise of self-reliance.

For educated upper- and middle-class Bengali women opportunities for professional employment had first opened up in the late-nineteenth century (mostly in the fields of education and medicine), but even in the early decades of the twentieth century applicants were few and far between. However, changes in the economy of the region alongside the displacement and dispossession that followed the Partition altered this circumstance considerably. Now, women in large numbers began to seek

salaried-work outside the home. Attending to this important social reconfiguration, historian Gargi Chakravartty, in her study *Coming Out of Partition: Refugee Women of Bengal*, notes,

> Generally, Partition's gender dimension evokes images of violence, rape of women, cases of abandoned and missing women, and the trauma of a communal situation, but the silent metamorphosis of a woman's life remains unnoticed. The sense of sharing responsibility, and at times taking on the entire burden of the family, was a new phenomenon in the trajectory of women's search for identity in Bengal.[1]

But this significant social change did not pass unnoticed, not in literature. While endeavors to preserve memories of Partition and its impact through oral reminiscence are more recent, Bengali fiction, beginning in the late-1940s, bears testimony to the changes Independence and Partition wrought in the lives of displaced middle-class women. Women protagonists, in this body of writings, who enter the labor market include Arati Majumdar in Narendranath Mitra's *Abataranika* (*The Staircase*, 1949), Bina Guhathakurta and Kamala Mukherjee in Mitra's *Durabhashini* (*Lady Telephone Operator*, 1952), Neeta in Shaktipada Rajguru's *Meghe Dhaka Tara* (*The Cloud-Capped Star*, 1962), Sutara Datta in Jyotirmoyee Devi's *Epar Ganga Opar Ganga* (*The River Churning*, 1968), Pushpabala in Samaresh Basu's "*Pasharini*" ("Peddler-Woman"), Nirupama in Dibyendu Palit's "*Maachh*" ("Fish") to name a few. These novels and short stories capture with sensitivity the quiet courage of women who, without knowing, or intending to, transformed the mindscape of Bengali middle-class women—both displaced and non-displaced—making their employment outside the home not only socially acceptable but also respectable. Composed often in the melodramatic mode, this body of Bengali literary writings documents social and historical processes, and in the absence of other forms of contemporaneous testimonies, serves as an important record of the historical experience of Partition.

Bengali Partition fiction details the subtle nuances of working women's experience in the home and the world, her freedom (and unfreedom), fears, and psychological dilemmas. Many also address the issue of the young woman's self-sacrifice at the altar of the family. Through a reading of Dibyendu Palit's short story "*Maachh*" ("Fish") and Shaktipada Rajguru's novel *Meghe Dhaka Tara* (*The Cloud-Capped Star*), the first section of this chapter, "Dutiful Daughters: Nirupama and Neeta," examines the circumstances of the single working woman, from the middle class. I argue that both of these writings reproduce the trauma of Partition in Nirupama's and Neeta's grim experience of imprisonment within the double bind of wage labor and the family—they fail to find, on the one hand, individual self-realization through wage labor, and, on the other, fulfillment within the traditional family. Each narrative apprehends this in the dialectical tension between the woman's recognition of

her financial responsibilities towards her natal family and the gratification of her romantic and individual aspirations. Together the narratives critique the reproduction of patriarchy through the women's seeming emancipation.

But what about women who were intentionally dislodged from the family? This question animates the second section of this chapter, "Sutara and a Room of Her Own." Sutara Datta, in Jyotirmoyee Devi's novel *Epar Ganga Opar Ganga* (*The River Churning*),[2] offers a counterpoint to both Nirupama and Neeta. Repeatedly traumatized, she, nevertheless, gains autonomy through education and employment, ultimately presenting an example of the self-sufficient single woman. But her freedom comes at a price.

DUTIFUL DAUGHTERS: NIRUPAMA AND NEETA

In her reminiscences, "Women Become Breadwinners," Hena Chaudhuri writes:

> [A] couple from Bangladesh, who had come to our department in search of some documents, once asked me as to why there were so many unmarried women in West Bengal. Perhaps sociologists will be able to answer the question better. But I feel that Partition is partly responsible for this. Girls became bread-earners in many families. They became the shock absorber, sheltering the younger siblings from the harsh realities of life. As a result, they often decided not to marry and have a family of their own. . . . My father, after migrating to this side, would often tell my elder sister, Didi, "Now, you are my eldest son," as my brother and she were the eldest of the lot. In fact, after my father's death, it was Didi who took over the mantle of running the family, and remained a spinster.[3]

Offering literary counterparts of Hena Chaudhuri's sister, Palit's "*Maachh*" and Rajguru's *Meghe Dhaka Tara* also give readers a glimpse into the texture of the women's experience. Dibyendu Palit's short story "*Maachh*," or "Fish," set in a small town in Bihar, tells the story of Nirupama. Coming from a displaced family comprised of an aged father, a bed-ridden mother, and three younger siblings (Monu, Tulu, and Bulu), Nirupama herself is a school teacher. Disenchanted with her work, she eagerly anticipates her upcoming wedding. One evening, while out with her fiancé Bijon, Nirupama encounters poverty in so raw and desperate a form as to lead her to break off her engagement.

Nirupama's deep inner conflict is captured through the third-person narrator's repeated juxtaposition of opposites: Her demanding work-schedule during the day versus the quiet relaxation of the evening (replicated in the opposition of the scorching summer sun to the tranquil moonlight); her resentment at being exploited at work versus her pleas-

ure in Bijon's company, the determination to be of assistance to her family versus her fear of remaining single, in short, her duty to her family versus her desire. And, until the end of the narrative, Nirupama continually vacillates between the two.

That Nirupama feels no pleasure in her professional employment is laid out in her exhaustion at working two jobs, as a private tutor and a school teacher, and her growing indignation at the guardian of the student she instructs as well as the principal of the school, for taking advantage of her vulnerability. Her feeling of entrapment is further heightened by the sarcastic laughter from students at her failure to solve a math problem. She endures it, because her family needs her salary. Nirupama's life at home is also demanding—she is expected to complete her share of household chores—and chaotic, as is suggested by the altercation with a neighbor. Relief comes in the shape of Bijon. After her long fatiguing day, she craves his embrace, because in his arms "there's only happiness and security!"[4] Nirupama daydreams about him and cherishes their evenings together. Yet, her response to his question on whether their marriage will make her happy, to which she "absentmindedly" replies with "who knows,"[5] suggests that her dilemmas remain far from being resolved.

Nirupama's impending marriage to Bijon poses a direct threat to the family's economic security. His visits to Nirupama's home and her enjoyment of his company thus occasion anxiety in her family (represented metonymically through her three siblings). When Bijon invites Nirupama for a walk in the park, "a silhouette of pleasure crossed her pupils momentarily,"[6] but she notices her three siblings watching her, "There was a look of fear in their eyes."[7] The family fears losing her to Bijon and tries to disrupt their relationship. For instance, one evening just as she prepares to go out with him, "Bulu held the end of her saree with both hands; and with helpless eyes was staring at Nirupama's get up."[8] That the unnamed "fear" conveyed in Bulu's "helpless eyes" is financial, at least in part, is made explicit when Bijon, in an effort to resolve the situation, hands Bulu a coin, and the child scampers away. The metaphorical tug-of-war over Nirupama between her family and Bijon sets the scene for the story's denouement.

During her brief excursion with Bijon into the Butchers' Quarters,[9] a part of the town populated by refugees, Nirupama comes across a harrowing scene,

> A thin boy, very dark, a distended pumpkin-like belly below his jutting ribs. Gripping his neck like a pincer was a middle-aged woman, emaciated, a piece of dirty cloth hung from her waist down to her knees, two rag-like breasts on her bare chest. . . . The boy was shrieking desperately; and with his teeth he clenched something, only a part of it was inside his mouth. The woman was pressing on his throat with one hand, and with the other she was tugging at the remainder of the thing dangling from his mouth.

> . . . The weak light of the lantern flickered on the object. A fish!
>
> The boy's eyes were bulging. The woman with the ogreish mien uttered a few rasping words, "Let go, let go I say."
>
> The boy made a gurgling sound. . . . He didn't open his mouth, he clamped his teeth, and made a brutish effort to swallow the fish whole.
>
> "If you wolf down all of the fish, what will the rest eat? Let go I say! Okay, just wait! I'll strangle you to death."
>
> Again, a whimper! A choking sound from the boy.
>
> It was unbearable. . . . A fish, for just a piece of fish![10]

Bringing the narrative to a certain culmination is this brutally dark vision, where a woman chokes her malnourished son who is trying to ingest uncooked fish meant for consumption by the entire family. In this time of scarce resources, the mother, with a family to feed, cannot afford maternal indulgence or compassion, whereas the famished boy, for his part, is incapable of charity towards his family. He would rather consume the fish raw but whole than content himself with a smaller piece cooked and shared with the rest. That for many refugees moral norms were putrefying under the assault of poverty is amplified by the image, repeatedly invoked, of a vulture hovering nearby. Similarly, the name of the neighborhood, "Butchers' Quarters," serves to heighten the macabre ambience of a passage that culminates in an undernourished boy's attempt to swallow whole a raw fish. For Nirupama, this ugly conflict between mother and child exposes the poverty-induced death of decency. That this takes place in a neighboring refugee family, also from East Pakistan (a fact reinforced by the mother's use of the East Bengali dialect), inspires terror in her, impressing upon her a baleful vision of her own family hopeless and destitute: Nirupama "recalled Tulu and Bulu's greedy, piteous faces. The dark circles under Monu's eyes. . . . Who knows why Nirupama thought that the woman resembled her mother? And her father, gasping for breath, collapsed on the street, face-first."[11] The reader has also been informed that Nirupama knows that her siblings Tulu and Bulu "cry daily at meal-times for a piece of fish."[12] Now suddenly, she realizes unmistakably that, if she marries and thereby deprives her parents and siblings of her economic support, her family too will be reduced to a similarly desperate condition, losing in the process all dignity and decorum. It is respectability and decency—the accoutrements of middle-class life—that Nirupama decides to preserve for her family.

As the narrator's interjection—"Who knows why Nirupama thought that the woman resembled her mother?"—suggests, the mother-son tussle is emblematic of Nirupama's irreconcilable dilemma within. The fish, a desired staple of the Bengali diet, is here a symbol of well-being or wealth. The hungry child, who wants the entire fish to himself, represents Nirupama's "greedy-self" or libido that aspires to a life of comfort with Bijon. The boy's mother, on the other hand, solicitous of the welfare of the

collective (the family) rather than of the individual alone (her son), is a symbol of Nirupama's "dutiful-self," less her ego than her super ego. The dutiful-self suppresses the greedy-self's impulse to enjoy the good life (the fish) alone, and, ultimately, the dutiful-self prevails. That said, just as the famished child's need for food is genuine and from his point of view the mother is brutal even if she is right, in the same way, Nirupama's desire for marriage and personal fulfillment is a legitimate need, and the burden of duty is unbearable. In the grueling poverty so many migrant families experienced in the post-Partition era, the individual's legitimate need for self-realization can only be greedy. It is, therefore, forfeited to a collective good, which, nonetheless, precious few could actually enjoy. The individual's duty in such a world has grown tantamount, the story implies, to self-sacrifice. The conflict raging within Nirupama, in this sense, reflects at a personal level an unremittingly antagonistic relationship between the individual and society playing itself out historically.

Nirupama's psychological tug-of-war ends; she has made her choice. The family has won the prize fish, prevailing upon her to keep her job and forsake the marriage with Bijon. But this resolution of her dilemma brings her no happiness, nor even relief. Although her decision is voluntary, Nirupama communicates to her mother her refusal to wed Bijon in a "curiously harsh, lifeless voice," accompanied by a "sharp" smile and repressing a "brokenhearted sigh."[13] Her self-suppression is palpable. The lifelessness in question, her story implies, extends beyond her mere tone of voice, reaching to her very condition. It indicates an end to the future with Bijon in which she expected to find joy. She knows that she has rejected Bijon's "invitation" to a beautiful life and, instead, allowed her family to "drag her into the grindstone of narrowness and stupor."[14] Nirupama, meaning "the incomparable woman," lives up to her name; she sacrifices her personal happiness and puts the needs of her family first.

If Nirupama is horrified by the lack of compassion in another refugee family, Neeta, in Shaktipada Rajguru's *Meghe Dhaka Tara* (*The Cloud-Capped Star*), lives with it. Like Nirupama, Neeta too prioritizes the needs of her family over herself, but for her the consequences are devastating. Neeta's family has been displaced from Pirgunj, in East Pakistan, to the outskirts of Calcutta. Generous Neeta uses her stipend and her small income to indulge the many demands of her siblings — her unemployed older brother Shankar, her pampered younger siblings Geeta and Montu, while also covering the living expenses of her inamorato, Sanat. The family's dependence on her grows when she becomes breadwinner after her father Madhab's retirement and injury. Silent in the face of her father's passivity as well as her mother's machinations to separate her from Sanat, Neeta works a clerical job by day and tutors students in the evening, struggling to give her family a better life. Exhausted and living in unwholesome conditions, Neeta eventually contracts tuberculosis. Her old-

er brother, Shankar, now an established singer, takes her to a sanatorium in the hills, where she dies.

Both "*Maachh*" and *Meghe Dhaka Tara* are premised on the belief that once married, a daughter's income will no longer be available to her natal family. Thus for both Nirupama and Neeta, there is no compatibility between romance and the prospect of personal fulfillment through embarking upon a life and family of their own, on the one hand, and their desire to financially support their families, on the other. The difference between them is that whereas Nirupama opts to support her parents over a life with Bijon, Neeta has no choice: Her most personal decision, i.e., her romance with Sanat, is hijacked by her mother. Neeta and her mother, Kadambini, represent, so to speak, the spiritual and material aspects of the refugees' predicament: Neeta fights to preserve dignity, and her mother to survive. While "*Maachh*" briefly raises the specter of a brute struggle for survival in the young boy's efforts to swallow whole a fish, *Meghe Dhaka Tara* develops it with greater depth and pathos. And it is accomplished primarily through the figure of the mother, Kadambini. Although there are (rare) shades of maternal tenderness in Kadambini, her motherly instincts have been blunted by the poverty suffered in the wake of the family's relocation and dispossession. She is unashamedly grasping, and, with low cunning, deals a death blow to Neeta's relationship with Sanat. Fully aware of Neeta and Sanat's burgeoning attraction, she ponders, "Neeta is essential to this household. She can't be let go. She earns a living. As for looks, she's much too plain. If, on the other hand, Geeta can be hitched to an eligible man like Sanat, Kadambini will be relieved of a huge burden."[15] These sentiments are reinforced in a conversation with her husband when he raises the subject of Neeta's marriage, to which Kadambini vehemently protests, "And us? What will we do after that, suck on our thumbs? . . . Have you considered what'll happen to this household if you marry Neeta off?"[16] Like the child Bulu in "*Maachh*" clutching Nirupama's saree to stop her from leaving with Bijon, Kadambini, in order to calm her own very real fear of starvation, latches on to Neeta securing her salary for the exclusive use of the family by thwarting her romance with Sanat. In this sense, we might say that both *Meghe Dhaka Tara* and "*Maachh*" are haunted not only by the refugee crisis brought on by Partition, but also by that other man-made trauma of the period, the devastating Bengal famine of 1943, which resulted in over three million deaths. At all events, to survive in these stories even mothers, perhaps especially mothers, must resort to the most calculated acts of self-preservation. Kadambini maneuvers pretty Geeta's successful seduction of Sanat, thereby unburdening herself of the daughter who contributes nothing to the household (by way of chores or expenses), while keeping the proverbial golden goose in hand.

The non-maternal (if nonetheless dutiful) mother present both in this novel and in "*Maachh*," marks a significant shift from the stereotype of

the nurturing mother celebrated in much of Bengali artistic productions.[17] In both narratives, the mothers are equated with monsters: "*rakshasi*,"[18] meaning ogress, is used in "*Maachh*" to describe the mother as she throttles her malnourished son, whereas in *Meghe Dhaka Tara*, Neeta overhearing her mother scheming to marry Geeta off to Sanat imagines her as a "*doitya*"[19] or demon. In a startling reversal mothers have turned inhuman, demoniac. Of course, in Kadambini's defense, her utilitarian calculus is not for self-preservation alone. Like the mother in "*Maachh*," she too acts on behalf of her family. She too sacrifices the happiness of a single child so that she, her husband, and all the children may eat. But in *Meghe Dhaka Tara* the image of the callous mother is repeatedly invoked. For instance, on Geeta's wedding day when guests have gathered at the home and the morning ceremonies are in progress, her father Madhab sits apart listening to the din, he notes that "rising above [the tumult] are the wails of children and the sound of their mothers' merciless thrashing."[20] This seemingly extraneous detail serves as a reminder of Kadambini's betrayal of Neeta. The novel suggests that economic indigence has also prompted an immaterial poverty and that circumstances have conspired to atrophy Kadambini's conscience: "In the abundance of their Pirgunj home, she was the *grihalakshmi*.[21] Today, the difficult struggle for survival has cast its dark shadows all over her. She has become increasingly ruthless in order to survive."[22] The same is reinforced in Neeta's imagination of her mother as a cornered cat baring its fangs and claws. (Generally speaking, in this novel as in "*Maachh*," animal imagery proliferates as so many metaphors for brutalization.) In other words, prevailing social and economic conditions have structurally undermined the older family form, "emancipating" women into wage labor in the process, but all to a horrifically dystopian effect.

More than mere change is involved in the novel's depiction of the upendings and inversions of Kadambini and Neeta's roles. The unmarried daughter Neeta is the provider for the family; the giver of life, but not to new life, rather by arranging for the publication of her father's book, she renews his will to live; and finally, she takes over the role of a nurturer, supporting and encouraging Shanker to build a career as a musician. In short, Neeta is the self-sacrificing parent that never had a family of her own. The vitiating of the mother-child bond and the dispersal of Kadambini's other children (Shankar, Geeta, and Montu) serves as a metaphor for the rupturing of human relationships through eruptions of violence surrounding the Partition, and the refugees' "parting" from an uncaring mother(land). The pitiless mother/motherland is the antithesis of the bountiful *Bangamata* (Mother Bengal) of nationalist writings. The duality of the simultaneously caring and chastising Mother is captured in one of Rabindranath Tagore's songs. While the first stanza of "*Aji bangladesher hridoy hote kokhon aponi/ Tumi ei aporup rupe bahir hole janani*!*/ Ogo Ma tomay dekhe dekhe ankhi na phire*!"[23] ("You emerged from

the heart of Bengal in boundless splendor, Mother, I cannot take my eyes off you!") appears to offer unequivocal praise of Mother Bengal, subsequent stanzas make clear that her splendor is built on a series of contrasts. (The second stanza, for instance, opens with, "*Daan hate tor khargo jwale, baan haat kare shankaharon,/Dui nayone sneher hansi, lalatnetra agunboron*" meaning "In your right hand is a blazing sword, while your left hand dispels our fears/A loving smile plays in both your eyes, while the third eye is aflame.") In *Meghe Dhaka Tara*, Neeta and Kadambini together depict complementary aspects of the *Bangamata*: her generosity and her harshness. Partition's destabilizing effects are further indicated by the incapacity of the *pater familias* and original breadwinner, Neeta's crippled father, to marry off his daughter, i.e., to establish her within the traditional family form through marriage.

Neeta, Rajguru's novel repeatedly suggests, is a dynamic young woman, with lofty aspirations. Her compassion and her profound sense of responsibility towards those around her serve to betray her, so that in the end, the only pleasure she has left is her masochistic enjoyment of her own suffering. Thus, she stoically consoles herself on the loss of Sanat with the third-person reflection, "For the well-being of her family, she has given her salary, her labor, what if she has to sacrifice some more for her sister! The ultimate sacrifice."[24] Such reflections in which Neeta seems to come to terms with her destiny ring ironic and hollow. The rhetoric of self-sacrifice implies free will, yet the "will" exercised here is not her own. Rather, her happiness has simply been sacrificed. Instead of being freed from dependence by wage labor, Neeta is only free to labor and to consecrate her wages to those dependent upon her. Throughout the novel she remains uncomplaining of the injustices and betrayals by those around her. Though cognizant of Kadambini's subterfuges to separate her from Sanat, Neeta refrains from protesting her mother's interference, or Geeta's seduction of Sanat, or even Sanat's change of heart. Neeta is not shorn of agency, instead, she relinquishes it. In passively suffering the consequences of others' actions, Neeta sacrifices the very individuality that wages might have helped to sustain. For this reason, her self-effacing filial love, her exemplary generosity, her gentle tolerance, and her death are laden with pathos but fall short of tragic dignity. Her self-imprisoning attachment to her family is a form of traumatic bonding, where despite the abuse she suffers, she empathizes with them, identifies with them, and, of course, financially supports them. It is because of her ability to bring home an income that her mother will not spare her. In the context of pervasive unemployment, Neeta's entrance into the labor market is tantamount to enslavement to the needs of everyone she loves. But although she is the breadwinner, she is "denied its gendered privileges."[25]

Freedom for Neeta comes in the shape of her terminal disease. Her body's expiration alone ends its further exploitation. In this sense, the

freedom from labor, the free time that labor promises, is accessible to her only through death. Though fairly widespread in Bengal at the time, her tuberculosis also operates as a metaphor in the following two ways: (i) it intensifies the feeling of Neeta's entrapment—there is no air left for her to breathe, suffocating her to death (paralleling the image of the mother choking her son in "*Maachh*"); and (ii) it indicates a broader social rot by which all norms of ethical conduct and decency have wasted away and the compassionate and unselfish perish.

Neeta is an "angel-woman" since "it is the surrender of her self—of her personal comfort, her personal desires, or both—that is the beautiful angel-woman's key act, while it is precisely this sacrifice which dooms her both to death and to heaven. For to be selfless is not only to be noble, it is to be dead."[26] Speaking of the "angel-woman," it is worth noting that Ritwik Ghatak's film *Meghe Dhaka Tara* (1960), through music and images, draws upon the symbology of the Mother Goddess, in its presentation of Neeta.[27]

But what if Neeta or Nirupama, or, more generally speaking, a single woman with an income, chose to live independently? That possibility is explored through the story of Sutara in Jyotirmoyee Devi's *Epar Ganga Opar Ganga*.

SUTARA AND A ROOM OF HER OWN

On the changes prompted by displaced women's participation in the labor market Gargi Chakravartty writes, "The economic responsibility of the family had so far been with the male members; it was always assumed that sons were to be the bread-earners of the family. Now daughters began to shoulder the burden, facilitating a major breakthrough in the attitudes of a patriarchal society."[28] Wage labor outside the home offered women some release from traditional gender roles, expanding their access to participation in society while curbing patriarchal vigilance over them. Crucially, it allowed some women a degree of economic independence. However, as my reading of "*Maachh*" and *Meghe Dhaka Tara* suggests, while the participation of women in the labor market and their presence in public defied conventional gender roles and contributed to some reorganization of the family, Chakravartty's rhetoric of a "major breakthrough" in patriarchal practices is challenged by these literary representations of the period. To take one small instance, the fact of Nirupama and Neeta's professional employment does not fundamentally alter their responsibilities within the home: Both replace their brothers as supporters of their families, but upon return from work, they are still expected to perform their share of "woman's work," i.e., domestic chores. In her study of the consequences of Partition and migration on women

and the family, historian of the Bengal Partition Joya Chatterji is cautiously optimistic:

> Displacement, of course, was not automatically the harbinger of progress, still less of the emancipation or "empowerment" of refugee women in some simple or linear progression. Working women tended to have little control over the wages they earned. Despite the growing contribution their salaries made to the family's domestic economy, their control over their own lives was by no means securely established just because they had become wage-earners. Yet some refugee women did begin to achieve a measure of freedom and opportunity by joining the paid workforce or by gaining an education. These developments caused significant shifts in the social mores of caste Hindus. "Decent" women, traditionally tucked away in the *antahpur*, now went out and about in the big world, bringing irreversible changes in Hindu middle-class notions of propriety and respectability.[29]

In this passage, Chatterji underlines the important link between the salaried worker's limited emancipation and her lack of control over her wages. There were exceptions, of course, particularly in the cases of single working women who lived apart from the family. Chatterji speaks of a Partition-facilitated social phenomenon of a rising "number of men and women, mainly from humble backgrounds, who lived as single persons outside any family structure whatsoever."[30] A literary complement to Chatterji's claim is suggested in Sutara Datta in Jyotirmoyee Devi's novel *Epar Ganga Opar Ganga*.

When Hindus in her East Bengal village are attacked during the Noakhali riots of 1946, the adolescent Sutara Datta is separated from her parents and older sister. A Muslim neighbor, Tamizuddin, finds her unconscious and brings her to his residence where his family takes care of her. Despite Tamizuddin's communications, Sutara's brothers—Sanat, Subodh, and Sudhir—living in Calcutta, show little inclination to bring her over. Their unwillingness is based on a suspicion of her having been violated in the attack and her long stay with the Muslim family. Still on Sutara's insistence Tamizuddin delivers her to her brothers and extended family in Calcutta, in the home of Sanat's in-laws. The elderly women in the Hindu household disapprove of her "contaminating" presence, and in a move to keep Sutara away from the family, her brothers send her to a boarding school and, later, to college dormitories. She completes her education and is employed as a professor of history in a women's college in Delhi. She finds accommodations in a hostel for working women.

Insofar as Bengali literary writings are concerned, *Epar Ganga Opar Ganga* offers an uncommon glimpse into the life of an unmarried woman, from the middle classes, living outside the family fold. The novel celebrates the resilience of the women in the hostel while at the same time acknowledging their solitude, "At the corners of the garden a few eucalyptus trees stood straight and tall, apart and lonely. . . . Like the women

residents of the hostel. Solitary trees lacking shrubbery, fruits and flowers, branches and twigs. Storms would bend but couldn't break them."[31] The community of women in the hostel suggests an alternative to the traditional family form. In contrast to the repeated trauma brought upon Sutara by her surviving family who offer no sanctuary, nor show the slightest concern for her well-being, the hostel is a haven of support. Here Sutara feels comfortable sharing her past. Here she is not rebuffed by her listeners but met with friendship; and, despite the knowledge of her prolonged stay in a Muslim home, she is invited to attend Hindu ceremonies and taken on pilgrimages. In other words, she is absorbed without prejudice into a new form of community. In addition, living outside the family fold she escapes patriarchal control over her sexuality and mobility. Her unrestricted freedom is clear in her travels with her colleagues to the mountains, and in her ability to make decisions on the offers of marriage she receives (from Tamizuddin's family, and from Pramode, her sister-in-law Bibha's brother). While the novel is strident in its criticism of the traditional family form, the prospect of Sutara's reinsertion into middle-class domestic life through the promise of marriage cuts short the exploration of the life of an economically self-sufficient single woman.

Sutara's musings about her living quarters in the hostel, with a nod to Virginia Woolf (with whose writings Jyotirmoyee Devi was deeply familiar), raises the issue of women's independence, particularly, economic empowerment, and intensifies the novel's feminist content: "[I]t was a room of her own, her place acquired with her earnings. . . . For now, her brothers wouldn't have to provide for her. They wouldn't even have to spare her a thought. Has she become independent? Are women ever independent?"[32] Sutara's understanding of her autonomy and personal well-being is grounded in the economics of ownership—her ownership of her room, her private space made possible by her salary. Used recurrently in the first sentence of the passage above is the word "*nijer*" which, in the present context, translates to "her own"; so that a more literal translation would be "[I]t was a room of *her own*, *her own* place earned with *her own* earnings" (italics mine). After being repeatedly moved around at the will of her brothers and the extended family—from her village to Calcutta and, then, from the home of Sanat's in-laws to the boarding school, and college dormitories—her room offers a sense of stability. It is a haven for which she is not indebted to anyone. Within that rented space, Sutara is free.

The novel underscores the significance of Sutara's autonomy, reiterating it in the final chapter when she ponders how her marriage to Pramode might impact her life, "For the last four-five years she has supported herself. She is independent. Respected in her field of work."[33] The question raised at the end of the previous passage—"Are women ever independent?"—is tentatively answered here: Sutara is an independent woman. Financial independence serves as her escape route from a pos-

sible future in a women's home or a government-sponsored Permanent Liability Camp for displaced persons. Most importantly, her autonomy gives her a "voice": It is a metaphor for her loss of social agency that between Sutara's restoration to her family in Calcutta and her finding employment at Delhi she rarely speaks: She is simply the object of the compassionate or repulsed gaze of the extended family. But the silent, frightened, passive adolescent of the first half of the novel is replaced in the second by a bolder and livelier woman who is no longer ashamed to share her story. In addition, Sutara's wages and the distance she puts between herself and her family by relocating to Delhi, enable her to live as she wants—going on pilgrimages, meeting with her Muslim friends from Noakhali, and so on.

The chief distinction between Nirupama and Neeta, on the one hand, and Sutara, on the other, is that Sutara resists victimhood. While Neeta practically embraces it and Nirupama is a martyr by choice, Sutara transcends her victimhood and thwarts being defined by her circumstances alone. Neeta's sacrifice of her individualism ends in death, Nirupama's in "lifeless"-ness, only Sutara's response is life-affirming. This is not to say that Sutara's story is one of simple triumph over circumstances. Her self-actualization comes at great personal cost—the murder of her father, the abductions of her mother and older sister, the assault on her; this is followed by the trauma over her marginalization by surviving family members, and repeated shaming by the extended family. Above all, she is lonely. She is free to make her way in the world, but Sutara is not free from haunting memories and shattering grief. Her freedom is predicated on loss and trauma.

Ultimately, all three narratives examined in this chapter concur, although in different ways, that the family is a site of repression, and that the emergence of the free autonomous women is possible only where the family is kept at a distance. In "*Maachh*" and *Meghe Dhaka Tara*, the obligation to the indigent family places a burden on the individual. Nirupama's analogy of the grindstone, in contemplating life with her family, is equally evocative of the pounding Neeta takes daily. The choices before the young women are hard: Either to be dutiful to the family and surrender the possibility of personal fulfillment, or to be genuinely free but stripped of the family, and shunned.

Taken together, "*Maachh*," *Meghe Dhaka Tara*, and *Epar Ganga Opar Ganga* all indicate an inherent tension between women's affective and familial bonds that wage labor alone did not allow them to successfully negotiate. Rather, in post-Partition Bengal, women had not only to gain skills and enter the workforce, but they also had to discard their closest bonds. In this sense they had to repeat the uprooting they suffered as refugees, only this time consciously and as individuals. This was, and remains, a most perilous and painful passage.

NOTES

1. Gargi Chakravartty, *Coming Out of Partition: Refugee Women of Bengal* (New Delhi: Bluejay Books, 2005), 86–87.

2. Initially titled *Itihashe Stree Parva*, this novel was first published in the autumnal issue of the journal *Prabashi* in 1966; it was published in book form under its present name in 1968. See Jyotirmoyee Devi, *Epar Ganga Opar Ganga* (Calcutta: Rupa and Company, 1968). The novel has been translated into English as *The River Churning* by Enakshi Chatterjee and published by Kali for Women, 1995. However, I have used my translations in this essay.

3. Hena Chaudhuri, "Women Become Breadwinners," in Jashodhara Bagchi and Subhoranjan Dasgupta eds., with Subhashri Ghosh, *The Trauma and the Triumph: Gender and Partition in Eastern India* vol. 2 (Calcutta: Stree: 2009), 85–86.

4. Dibyendu Palit, "*Maachh*," in *Raktamonir Haaré: Deshbhag-Swadhinatar Galpo Sankalan* (*In a Necklace of Garnets: Collection of Stories on Partition and Independence*) vol. 1, edited by Debes Roy (Calcutta: Sahitya Akademi, 2005; first published 1999), 215–25. All page numbers refer to this text. All translations from the text are mine. 221.

5. Ibid., 223.

6. Ibid., 222.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. Given that butchers were predominantly Muslims, and the story is set in Bihar where there was a tidal wave of anti-Muslim violence in retaliation for the attacks on Hindus in Noakhali and Tippera in 1946, the Butchers' Quarters locality deserted by its original inhabitants is a reminder of Partition's violence.

10. Ibid., 224.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid., 219.

13. Ibid., 225.

14. Ibid., 222.

15. Shaktipada Rajguru, *Meghe Dhaka Tara* (*Cloud-Capped Star*) (Calcutta: Dey's Publishing, 2001), 32. This novel was first published by Calcutta: Granthapitha, 1962. All page numbers used in this essay refer to the 2001 edition published by Dey's Publishing. All translations from the text are mine.

16. Ibid., 53.

17. Ramprasad Sen's *Shyama Sangeet*, or songs dedicated to the goddess Kali, Rabindranath Tagore's poetry and songs, Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay's short story "*Bindur Chhele*" ("Bindu's Son"), paintings by Jamini Roy, and more recent productions such as the Bengali *jatra* (folk theater) entitled *Ma Tumi Debi* ("Mother, You are a Goddess") present images of the nurturing, loving mother.

18. Dibyendu Palit, "*Maachh*," in *Raktamonir Haaré: Deshbhag-Swadhinatar Galpo Sankalan* (*In a Necklace of Garnets: Collection of Stories on Partition and Independence*), vol. 1, edited by Debes Roy (Calcutta: Sahitya Akademi, 2005), 224.

19. Rajguru, *Meghe Dhaka Tara* (*Cloud-Capped Star)* (Calcutta: Dey's Publishing, 2001), 35.

20. Ibid., 63.

21. *Grihalakshmi*: housewife who brings prosperity and happiness to the home.

22. Ibid., 69.

23. Rabindranath Tagore, "*Aji Bangladesher Hridoy hote kokhon aponi*," in *Geetabitan* (*Swadesh* section) (Calcutta: Viswabharati, 1995, first published 1931), 255–56.

24. Rajguru, *Meghe Dhaka Tara (Cloud-Capped Star)* (Calcutta: Dey's Publishing, 2001), 51.

25. Jashodhara Bagchi and Subhoranjan Dasgupta, eds., *The Trauma and the Triumph: Gender and Partition in Eastern India*, vol. 1 (Calcutta: Stree: 2003), 5.

26. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 25.
27. Ritwik Kumar Ghatak, "*Parichaloker Katha*" ("Director's Words"), in *Meghe Dhaka Tara* (*Meghe Dhaka Tara: A Film Script by Ritwik Kumar Ghatak*) (Calcutta: Ritwik Memorial Trust, Dey's Publishing, 1999). Translation mine. N.P.
28. Gargi Chakravartty, *Coming out of Partition: Refugee Women of Bengal* (New Delhi: Bluejay Books, 2005), 87.
29. Joya Chatterji, *The Spoils of Partition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 153–54.
30. Ibid., 152.
31. Jyotirmoyee Devi, *Epar Ganga Opar Ganga* (Calcutta: Rupa and Company, 1968), 145. All page numbers refer to this text. All translations from this novel are mine.
32. Ibid., 71.
33. Ibid., 145.

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SEVEN

Refugees as *Homo Sacers*

Partition and the National Imaginary in The Hungry Tide

Amrita Ghosh

After the 1971 war of Independence for Bangladesh, the refugees from the Eastern border between India and Bangladesh were particularly marginalized within the field of Partition studies. There was a huge "disinterest in the refugee problematique"[1] after the 1971 war and the Eastern border was especially neglected in the larger politics of Partition, which automatically came to be represented by the iconic Western side.[2] Academically, too, historians note a massive gap and silence over the refugees who were almost "invisible" in historical accounts.[3] The "refugee problem" becomes largely framed into two issues—first, as Rahman and Schendel explain, there has been a dominant focus on the migration of refugees from erstwhile East Pakistan into Eastern India (not vice versa), and second, records on refugees are all directed towards the migration into Calcutta and its camps. More importantly, these writings reveal the "state policies towards newcomers and in terms of the effects that refugees had on policies in Calcutta and the rest of West Bengal"[4]; the focus was also on refugees who were from the educated Bengali upper and middle class. Thus, statist policies ignored certain refugees from the national consciousness whose voices or deracination were not rendered worthy of archival importance.

This essay focuses on the mass displacement of Dalit refugees in the aftermath of Partition from the Eastern border through an investigation of Amitav Ghosh's novel *The Hungry Tide.* My investigation of Ghosh's

novel primarily focuses on the Morichjhapi siege of 1979 when many subaltern refugees were killed and evicted by the state in the island of Morichjhapi, Sundarbans. Here, I explore the dynamics between the state and the marginalized people where the Dalits are negated from the national imaginary. I argue that Ghosh not only creates a subaltern voice by letting the Dalit refugees "speak" about the silenced incident, but I also analyze Sundarbans as a "heterotopia" (in Foucault's terms) in the hinterlands of the border, which the statist ideology cannot incorporate within the seamless imaginings of the post-Partition nation-state. As the text shows, the heterotopic borderlands become dynamic spaces that reconfigure defined national territories, and the subaltern refugees become a threat to the "pure" national construct by subverting the neatly defined boundaries of caste and religion.

My essay also has a double focus on Sundarbans, both as a heterotopia and a "camp-like" space where the refugee subject, in Giorgio Agamben's words, becomes the "*homo sacer*—" human beings stripped to their bare naked life which permits state killing of such "banned," "taboo" subjects."[5] Here Agamben's notion of the *bare life* becomes crucial to show how the state curbs potential possibilities within the deviant heterotopic space of Sunderbans by exerting its *biopower* and killing the Dalit refugees by impunity. Thus, the existence of a heterotopia, as delineated in Ghosh's text, exemplifies the role of sovereignty and its effects in the post-partitioned nation. I divide the rest of the essay into two sections. In the first, I provide a brief background and social history of the refugee "problem" in the Eastern side and the construct of the term "refugee" that negates class and caste difference. The essay also uncovers the silenced history of "Morichjhapi massacres" which forms a crucial subtext in Ghosh's novel *The Hungry Tide*, as discussed in the second section.

THE EASTERN BORDER, REFUGEES, AND MORICHJHAPI

The Western divide of Partition was primarily determined by religion. For the Punjab border the classification of refugees was broadly defined on a religious basis, as Hindus or Muslims, with a weak focus on the Sikh community. However, the Eastern side was more complicated with class and caste being more significant determinants. Partition of the Eastern side was also unique because of the "fuzzy" identity of Bengalis from both Hindu and Muslim communities.[6] Tai Yong Tan and Gyanesh Kudaisya's extensive work on the Partition explains that the overall Hindu-Muslim divide was "subsumed under the larger panoply of a Bengali cultural and linguistic identity."[7] Both Hindu and Muslim Bengalis shared similar socio-cultural traditions, customs, and "Food habits and entertainment patterns were also characterized by a high degree of simi-

larity."[8] Therefore, dividing Bengal along religious and communal lines was more problematic than the Punjab division.

Rahman and Schendel further explain that a large number of people crossed the borders of Bangladesh and dispersed to West Bengal, greater Assam, Tripura and parts of Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, and Andaman islands. Within this group of refugees, a huge section of the Bengali population crossed over into West Bengal, "who never became beneficiaries of government 'rehabilitation programmes.'"[9] These people were not from the *bhodrolok*[10] class and consisted of the *nimnoborno* and *nimnoborgo*[11] classes.[12] After the initial Partition of India in 1947, there was a large-scale migration of refugees from East Pakistan into West Bengal who were from Hindu upper and middle classes. Most of these refugees could buy properties and "already had contacts in Calcutta, through educational and kinship links, and could look forward to pursuing professions and trades in their new surroundings."[13] Here, I do not wish to downplay the deracination, displacement, and trauma that people underwent post 1947 and once again in 1971, but I am interested in understanding the term "refugees" and how the government aided or was remiss in providing resettlement programs for displaced people. Particularly, the word "refugee" becomes a catchall, homogenized term that obliterates and delocalizes difference. I am especially interested in investigating the predicaments of those who never saw aid trickling down to them because of their class and caste. According to Schendel and Rahman only a small part of the larger eastern migration has been documented, which also Partition historiography has erased from cultural memory.[14]

This essay focuses on a certain class of refugees who threaten the "bildung" of the nation through an investigation of Ghosh's novel *The Hungry Tide.* Before delving into Ghosh's work, it is important to trace a brief history of the Morichjhapi massacre of 1979 and the reason for refugee migration to the eastern archipelago of Sundarbans. This next section is significant because it not only charts the political backdrop from the 1947 Partition and the 1971 war of Bangladesh that resulted in more refugees in West Bengal, but it also shows the spatial significance of Sundarbans.

Sundarbans, literally, as the Bengali term suggests, means "Beautiful Forests." The Sundarbans is a large archipelago and the world's largest tidal halophytic mangrove forest situated in a vast stretch between India and Bangladesh. This space is a unique ecosystem that harbors some of the world's most endangered flora and fauna, including the endangered Royal Bengal Tiger. The islands are constantly affected by high tides and offer some of the most hostile living spaces in the world. The inhabited areas of Sundarbans have a predominant Islamic influence from the early Sufi saints who were believed to have introduced agriculture in the region around 1200 AD. Through them the region saw a steady spread of Islam. The Partition affected Sundarbans in an interesting way because

the deltaic islands were divided into three main districts, namely, Twenty-Four Parganas, Jessore, and Bakurgunj. Twenty-Four Parganas forms a part of the state of West Bengal in India, and Jessore and Bakargunj are in Bangladesh. Thus, Sundarbans forms this in-between liminal space, very close to the Indian and Bangladeshi borders.

The Bangladeshi refugees felt that their only natural option was to resettle in West Bengal, India.[15] As Kudaisya and Tan explain, "Having faced persecution and intolerance in East Bengal, they believed it was their legitimate claim to seek rehabilitation within West Bengal, which they now felt was their natural habitat."[16] The state accepted refugees who were from Hindu upper and middle classes for whom finding rehabilitation and vocational resources was not difficult. From the 1950s, the West Bengal government faced a different problem with refugees who

> either belonged to the lower urban strata or came from the East Bengal countryside. This change in the character of the refugees aggravated the problem of the authorities, not just in terms of the sheer numbers who now made claims upon the government's resources, but also in the resourcefulness which they displayed in rebuilding their own lives.[17]

The government set up a new project titled "Dandakaranya" because they did not want lower-caste people to become "squatters" in the land.[18] The Dandakaranya site chosen for the refugees were areas in Madhya Pradesh and Orissa. The main problems for these sites of resettlement were lack of resources, including drinking water, irrigation, arid rocky soil, and lack of vegetation that impacted the refugees' agricultural practices. Thus, the Dandakaranya refugees were an alienated group whose humanity was in question for the state.

In 1978, the Leftist government decided to send these refugees to a small village in the Sundarban islands, named Morichjhapi. The state's only condition was that the refugees should not expect any aid for their settlement in Sundarbans. It is, however, debated as to whether the state was aware of the Morichjhapi settlements or if there was indeed an invitation to the Dandakaranya refugees to establish settlement in Sundarbans. However, Annu Jalais agrees that the Communist Party promised settlement in the Sundarbans to refugees should they come to power.[19] Despite the disagreement, the expectation was apparent—without state help these "sub-human" refugees could never survive the dangerous forestlands of Sundarbans.

In the northern island of Morichjhapi, Sundarbans, the marginalized refugees gradually constructed a township of their own.[20] Within seven to eight months, the unviable space was transformed as the refugees slowly migrated. This remarkable exemplification of survival and cooperative spirit by the Dalit refugees surprised the state, which found it difficult to believe that illiterate, rural people set up such a transforma-

tion of a tiny island without any government aid.[21] The refugees felt that the government's interest in them would mean the state would finally allow refugees to return to West Bengal or establish permanent settlement in Sundarbans.[22] Ironically, the state thought that the Morichjhapi story would attract even more refugees from across the Bangladesh border to come and settle in Morichjhapi. In early 1979 the police started killing people in Morichjhapi and the state was successful in driving away the refugees from this island in Sundarbans, in order to protect the ecosystem and the tiger reserves. The Morichjhapi massacres become my entry point to explore Ghosh's novel in its larger focus on state policies that uphold "saving forests and tigers" more than protecting people.

THE HUNGRY TIDE: IMAGININGS OF A HETEROTOPIC SUBALTERN SPACE

Ghosh's novel presents an intertwined twin plot within a fragmented narrative; part of the plot focuses on an Indian-American cetalogist, Piya Roy, who visits the Sundarbans from Seattle to research the rare riverine dolphins found in the rivers of Sundarbans. This narrative is then merged with the larger Morichjhapi massacre of the late seventies. Morichjhapi lurks behind in the diary written by Nirmal Bose interweaving with the present story of Nirmal's nephew, Kanai Dutt helping Piya's scientific research in Sundarbans. The meeting of Kanai and Piya becomes the culmination of past and present and produces a space to uncover the story of the subaltern killings, a history that has been silenced for most of the Bengali elites of old and new generations.[23] It is also significant that the diary represents Morichjhapi fictionally for the first time in English.[24]

Initially, Sundarbans is represented as a space of "radical alterity" for the elite figures in the novel. With the exception of the subalterns such as Kusum, Fokir, Horen, and the locals who assist Piya in her research, all upper-caste characters, including the radical Nirmal, view Sundarbans as an othered space. This area filled with forests, *chors*, and riverines presents itself as a hostile space for the elite imagination. The very first time Nirmal and Nilima enter Sundarbans they are struck by the unfamiliarity of the place—"What little they knew of rural life was derived from the villages of the plains: the realities of the tide country were of a strangeness beyond reckoning."[25] Nilima and Nirmal find Sundarbans as an alien place with rivers teeming with crocodiles and estuarine sharks and learn to live with the daily news of death from attacks by tigers, snakes, and crocodiles. David Theo Goldberg in *The Racial State* argues that the homogeneous order of the state constantly attempts to control the threat of heterogeneity by relegating the latter to the state/space of nature.[26] Goldberg adopts the Hobbesian notion of "the state of nature" in which Hobbes explains that the goal of the modern state is to "seek

stability . . . in the face of instabilities."[27] According to Goldberg, the "state of nature" is in a war-like state where difference and "otherness" predominates; whereas the modern state is a settled order where heterogeneity is subsumed and controlled. The "modern state is homogenously fashioned" against all the savagery of nature.[28] In this light, urban characters of the novel misread nature initially as a state of difference and war.

Elsewhere, when Piya begins her excursions to search for the river dolphins with Fokir as her guide, she also views the nature and the place as a space of otherness. As Ghosh narrates,

> Staring at it now she was struck by the way the greenery worked to confound the eye. It was not just a barrier, like a screen or a wall: it seemed to trick the human gaze in the manner of a cleverly drawn optical illusion. There was such a profusion of shapes, forms, hues and textures that even things that were in plain view seemed to disappear.[29]

Piya's encounter with the Sundarban forests is strikingly reminiscent of Marlowe's "oppressive wonder" as he views the deep jungles of Congo in *Heart of Darkness*.[30] Like Marlowe's "colossal jungle so green," and his description of the "great wall of vegetation,"[31] Piya too initially views Sundarban as a "heart of darkness" which disorients her "human gaze" by its sprawling greenery. These instances of otherness are important to discern a radically othered discourse of nature and elements of Sundarbans that serve as an epistemological terrain for the elite upper classes. For Nirmal, Pia, Nilima, and Kanai, Sundarbans is initially an alien space evoking awe.

It is also noteworthy to mention the politics in the naming of the chain of archipelago islands as "Sundarbans." Nirmal, along with Fokir, refer to Sundarbans as *bhatir desh* or the "tide country." For the local population too Sundarbans is *bhatir desh*. Kusum, as recorded in Nirmal's diary, remarks, "*we are tide country people*"[32] and claims that river and tides run in their blood which also emphasizes the perfect symbiosis that the subalterns have with the space—the space becomes an identification of self for them. The distinction behind naming the forest "Sundarbans" as opposed to the subaltern naming of *bhatir desh* reveals a "worlding of the world" (to use Gayatri Spivak's term for explaining epistemological hegemony) of Sundarbans, an official reminder of conserving beautiful forests and nature. This kind of "naming" negates the human element against the locally referred term that denotes "desh"—a land/space inhabited by people. In fact, this taxonomy also helps the larger cause of putting the forests on the world map since the reason why Sundarbans is so popular worldwide is because it is the home of the Royal Bengal Tiger. With that, it also elaborates on some of the politics of controlling forest spaces as "reserved" areas. Much of the forested areas of Sundarbans are under

government control. These are called "reserved" forest areas. "Reserved" forests are controlled spaces where "wild" life is enjoyed from a distance. These spaces bear comparison to other controlled visual spaces such as museums and zoos. Opposed to that is the threat of the "wild" forest in the hegemonic imaginations. Hence, the naming of this radically "different" space as "beautiful forests" affirms the state's controlling of the wilderness, a source of potential threat but a means to selling exotica on a global scale.

In this contest between human survival and conservation of forests and animals, the Morichjhapi incident embodies how the upper classes silence any subaltern voice. For instance, the Morichjhapi massacre as described by Nilima represents the official statement against the refugees. When Nilima broaches the Morichjhapi case to Kanai for the first time, she explains to her nephew that the refugees had grabbed some of the forest islands for habitation. Through Nilima we get a glimpse of the Bengali elite response towards the Morichjhapi incident. For Nilima, a liberal, educated upper-class woman, the forests are "occupied" by the refugees, which thrusts a sense of illegality in the narrative. Elsewhere in the novel, when Kanai urges Nilima to elaborate on what happened in Morichjhapi, Nilima reiterates the statist discourse that Morichjhapi was a part of the Sundarbans tiger conservation project. Nirmal's diary later reveals that she had refused to provide treatment to the dying refugees saying, "*Those people are squatters; that land doesn't belong to them. . . . What will become of the forest, the environment? (*Nirmal's diary).[33] At this point, Kanai is also representative of the Bengali *Bhadralok* class as he wonders why his aunt could not bar him from supporting the refugees. His cold summation of the Morichjhapi killings is reiterative of the hegemonic discourse that the land belonged to the government and people died because of their occupation of the land.

In one of the few studies available on the Morichjhapi massacre, Ross Mallick explains that the official narrative stood on the grounds that the Morichjhapi island was under a forest reserve act in Sundarbans[34] and that "unauthorized occupation of Morichjhapi which is a part of the Sundarbans Government Reserve Forest Act" disturbs the "forest wealth and create[s] ecological imbalance."[35] Yet, it was a well-known fact that since 1975 the government had cleared away mangrove forests to replant a government-allowed "program of coconut and tamarisk plantation to increase state revenue."[36] Thus, the state had already tampered with the natural habitat and transformed the forests, for the protection of which they were barring refugees from settling down there.

Significantly, the depiction of Sundarbans in the novel as a space of extreme otherness charts the ultimate shift in the characters' visions and the possibility of newer identities. Ghosh traces the emergence of Sundarbans, as a heterotopia that topographically resides at the borders of the nation and also figuratively becomes a subversive space, a contested

"counter site" in Foucault's words.[37] In this context, the topography of the eastern borderland is worthy of attention. Largely, borders presuppose land divisions. However, the peculiar feature of the eastern borderlands is that it is predominantly riverine. *Chors* and islands pose a specific problem of demarcation—a heterotopia in a sense, where the boundaries continuously shift.[38] Such areas can never be stable markers of space and hence mark the anxiety of the *landed, rooted* order of the state. Hence, Sundarbans facilitates the crossing of multiple boundaries in Ghosh's text. According to Foucault, heterotopias are "othered" spaces against normative spaces within the society. Thus, heterotopias are mostly found at the margins of society. In the case of *The Hungry Tide*, the setting of the novel in Sundarbans opens up this heterotopic site that presents devious possibilities where the boundaries between land and sea, subaltern and elite, territorial borders and distinctions between human and non-human are questioned.

Ghosh begins the novel by tracing the uniqueness of Sundarbans as a liminal space:

> it is almost impossible to believe that here, interposed between sea and the plains of Bengal, lies an immense archipelago of islands. . . . The river's channels are spread across the land like a fine-mesh net, creating a terrain where the boundaries between land and water are always mutating, always unpredictable.[39]

Ghosh's description highlights the land's liminality not only in its topographic location between India and Bangladesh, but as the extract suggests, Sundarbans also forms this unique space where land undergoes restructuring daily. Borders are erased and reconstructed with everyday tides and the markers between sea and land, land and water are in a continuous liminal zone in this land. So close to mainland India, yet Sundarbans enact a heterotopia where the inhabitants' hybridized castes and religions go against the mainland's strict essentialisms of caste and religion. Here "it was impossible to tell who was who, and what inhabitant's castes and religious beliefs were."[40] In fact, in Sundarbans both Hindu and Muslim inhabitants merge in a liminality which gives rise to a subversive third space through the figure of the forest goddess *Bon Bibi*.[41]

In the chapter titled "The Glory of Bon Bibi," Ghosh traces the history of the tiger goddess that the Sundarban natives worship to protect them from the Royal Bengal Tiger. Kanai, the "outsider" from Delhi is surprised to find out from Kusum, one of the female subalterns, that the genesis of the tiger goddess is not from Ganga.[42] Through the popular folk theater of Sundarbans, Kanai learns the Islamic genesis of Bon Bibi: that the scene was set in Medina, Islam's holiest place.[43] Ghosh emphasizes a unique syncretism between Hindus and Muslims who worship a goddess borne out of an Islamic tradition, and yet, as in the usual Hindu ritual, the figure of Bon Bibi also allows idol worship. Later in the novel,

Nirmal watches Horen, a resident of Sundarbans, and Kusum worship Bon Bibi in the jungle and is struck by the liminality of the ceremony. As he states, "*I'd thought I was going to a Hindu puja. Imagine my astonishment on hearing Arabic invocations!*"[44] Later he also observes that the Bengali used in the invocation is a confluence in Arabic, Persian, and Bengali languages that underscores the hybrid ritual. Bon Bibi's worship positions Sundarban as a heterotopia where a goddess symbolizing syncretism between both religions defies the normative productions of space.

Ghosh uncovers the subaltern political agency of Dalit refugees through Nirmal's diary that dates back to May 15, 1979, the time of the Morichjhapi massacre. Nirmal's diary reveals that he had first heard of "*refugees' boldness*" in settling in Morichjhapi from the other teachers of the Lusibari area in Sundarbans. With the help of one of the locals, Horen Noskor, Nirmal reaches Morichjhapi and, looking at the island, Nirmal is shocked to discover an intricate order and an organized township built on whatever is available to the refugees. It is a striking moment in the novel that reveals that the so-called lower-class pariahs can produce such organized living that defies their status as objects. Through Nirmal, Ghosh retrieves subaltern cooperative agency in the refugees' construction of a township in Morichjhapi. Nirmal later admits, "*What I saw was quite different from the picture in my mind's eye.*"[45] For Nirmal who had always dreamed of a revolution, the sight of a transformed Morichjhapi is a source of a great excitement. Also particularly noteworthy is Nirmal's change in vision which becomes a "true" moment of "watching." Hans Jonas in an essay titled "The Nobility of Sight" traces the etymology of "watching" to the word *theoria*, meaning to watch or gaze. But he notes that the watching at the level of sight is distinct from truly "watching" a scene. He, thus, separates the seeing of the image and how the imagination handles it later.[46] In this sense, Nirmal's imagination is transformed by this "*theoretical* truth."[47] This act of watching also records the reconstruction of his knowledge about these people as creators with agency as opposed to sub-humans who are burdens to the state.

The text, henceforth, presents the emergence of a Dalit mobilizing, constructing a vision of a subaltern space. For Nirmal it is a new vision of watching those without power create something new in the harshest of spaces. This radical reorientation in the modality of vision also represents a claim towards the production of a subaltern space by the Dalits. Terri Tomsky also rightly points out that the use of Nirmal's diary as a retriever of silenced histories "critique[s] the failures of institutionalized academia to account for such atrocities" and also urges "ethical action in the failure of local, metropolitan and international organizations."[48] Against the state's political pressures that issued eviction orders, the Dalit refugees present radical social and political imaginaries. One of the most poignant moments in the text is the refugees' resistance against state attack on Morichjhapi. The Dalit refugees in their collective resistance to

the state eviction chant—"*Amra kara? Bastuhara; Morichjhapi charbona! (Who are we? We are the dispossessed. We will not leave Morichjhapi).*"[49] This Dalit refugee protest against the state is a significant moment of recognition for both the state and the Dalits. For the latter, it is a culmination of collective consciousness and their counter resistance to the state indicating their claim towards this space. It is also a moment that Nirmal recognizes as planting the seeds for a possible "*Dalit nation.*" Ghosh gives direct prominence to the gendered subaltern voice through Kusum, who tells Nirmal of the plight of being reduced to a sub-human or non-human status by the state in its continued glorification of the forest and tiger conservation project. Nirmal records her plea in his diary. Although killed by the state, Kusum's testimony reveals they are not muted subjects against the sovereign power. Nirmal significantly reminds us that Kusum is his muse and that he is not just retrieving Kusum's subaltern voice through his diary; rather she herself becomes a site of resistance claiming to be heard.

Ultimately, the statist order is threatened with a "Dalit nation" and it transforms the powerless refugees into what Giorgio Agamben describes as the *homo sacer*. Agamben analyzes the relationship between people and state power in *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* and states that the figure of *homo sacer* possesses sub-human status. The refugees of Morichjhapi in their resistance against the state to claim a territorially bounded space and a human status are similar to the figure of *homines sacri.* The state strips them of their voice and political agency and reduces them to the naked bare life that may be killed and thus ousted from the nation-state. In this sense, it is a reduction of a "human" to a sub-human state. The production of the *homo sacer* also reveals the "beastilization of man" that permits state killing.[50] But Agamben's concept goes beyond this, in that the *production* of *homines sacri* represents the originary activity of sovereign power. Thus, "the sovereign is the one with respect to whom all men are potentially *homines sacri*, and *homo sacer* is the one with respect to whom all men act as sovereigns."[51] The notion of the *homo sacer* is not only about the production of killable bodies, but also the reduction of subjects into forms of sheer nonvalue. That is why *homines sacri* can be killed but not sacrificed. Here, it is significant to note that the act of sacrificing implies value—the sacrificed subject is a valued object. The *homines sacri*, on the other hand, are produced by the state as non-values. Reduction into nonvalue and the production of killable bodies occur simultaneously in the case of a *homo sacer*.

Therefore, the figure of the refugee as the *homo sacer* "represent[s] such a disquieting element in the order of the modern nation-state [and] put[s] the originary fiction of modern sovereignty in crisis."[52] Kusum's testimony as to who these people are who "love animals" more than human beings highlights the predicament of the refugees who are objectified as the barest form of disposable life that can be killed by the state

with impunity. Agamben's analysis is focused on the concentration camp, as a space which is beyond ordinary law and is in a continuous state of exception. In his words, "*The camp is the space that is opened when the state of exception begins to become the rule.*" Analyzing Morichjhapi in this light, it becomes akin to a camp that can imprison any refugees to protect the "security of the state."[53] Nirmal's diary highlights this *state of exception* in Sundarbans by noting the state's declaration of Section 144 of Indian law. By imposing this law, the state barred people for assembling in Morichjhapi in 1979. The "siege" of Morichjhapi, is hence reminiscent of a camp-like state where the state usurps all forms of "liberty, freedoms of expression and of assembly."[54] Through the figure of the *homo sacer*, the state distinguishes between the forms of life it will protect and the "others" that can be killed in order to maintain national sovereignty.

In an article titled "Out of Place?" John Thieme observes, "Historically, transient peoples have tended to be perceived as an ontological threat."[55] As suggested earlier, in the context of Morichjhapi and the *nimnoborno* refugees, it is certainly class and caste but also the fear of "transient" people who threaten the "sedentarist epistemologies"[56] of a nation's social order. The "lower class" refugees shunting around the nation's "stable" space from West Bengal to the Dandakaranya camp and then into Sunderbans threatens the national stability. Even when the news of the Morichjhapi siege trickles into the urban media through the young man who escapes to Calcutta, the state refuses to end the siege.[57] Nirmal's diary also notes that despite a growing public furor and a High Court ruling that the blocking of the settlers was not legal, the siege and killings continued in Morichjhapi.

Ultimately, Ghosh's text shows dynamic possibilities in which monolithic identities reemerge in newer ways. Here, the imaginings of a subaltern space also lead to a *third space* devoid of distinctions between subalterns and elites. Kanai who is initially constructed as the "othered" elite, later realizes the predicament of the refugees. When Piya is horrified with a tiger's burning to death orchestrated by the villagers, Kanai for the first time shows a moment of recognition. As he states:

> If there were killings on that scale anywhere else on earth it would be called a genocide, and yet here it goes on almost unremarked: these killings are never reported, never written about in the papers. And the reason is just that these people are too poor to matter.[58]

For the first time, Kanai, the modern Bengali elite from Delhi, far removed from understanding the political and social alienation of the people of Sundarbans, identifies with them and recognizes their daily attempts to attain "human" status against the state apparatus. He shifts from his upper-class positionality, where he finds people like Piya and himself complicit in the valorization of nature and fauna at the cost of people. He reminds Piya that her concern to protect the unique river

dolphins is coupled with her disregard of people. Interestingly, this section of the novel about the Royal Bengal Tiger also reveals that the non-human, the animal here is laden with a value, an exotic signifier for the national and Western audience, whereas the refugees are reduced to a non-value whose "bestiality" becomes a reason for them to be killed. The exotic wildlife highlight Sundarbans for what *value* they bring, but the sovereign power denies life to the subaltern refugees, who are reduced to the barest form of existence. It may be argued that the tide's washing away of Nirmal's diary is perhaps an indication that the subaltern voice uncovered through the Morichjhapi incident is silenced forever, that after all, the "subaltern still cannot speak." Yet, the diary's washing away in the tide is perhaps also fitting because it marks the washing away of Kanai's elitism and the emergence of a newer consciousness so that Kanai himself may "speak" about the silenced Morichjhapi case.

Ghosh's text presents a scenario where characters cease to attain their essentialized subjectivities, trapped in their class, caste, and religious origins. Instead, the liminal space of Sundarbans gives rise to hybrid identities whose class, caste, language, and religion are uniquely blurred. For instance, as suggested earlier, Nirmal is surprised by the fusion of languages in the scriptural book titled "Miracles of Bon Bibi or the Narrative of Her Glory." He realizes that the tide country is shaped by various languages: Bengali, English, Arabic, Hindi, and Arakanese.[59] For Nirmal, Sundarbans may have once been radically alien space, but his vision is gradually altered. His initial exclamation that Sunderbans is an empty space in primordial time shifts to admitting that this wasn't true. In fact, Nirmal finds his own identity in question in Morichjhapi when he hears the refugees chanting in unison declaring they will not leave Morichjhapi. Nirmal, the idealist professor, may have harbored secret ideas of a subaltern revolution, but it is here for the first time that he shares a moment of shared humanity with the "dispossessed" of Morichjhapi and questions, "Who was I? Where did I belong? . . . In India or across the border?"[60] He later joins the refugees to voice the same chant "Morichjhapi chharbona" ("we will not leave Morichjhapi") with them—a moment that truly signifies that Nirmal has "heard" the subalterns. Most importantly, it is also a moment when Nirmal ceases to produce a romanticized subaltern subject and becomes one of "them" in defiance of the state police as the aporia from "they" to "we" is erased. In a shocked moment of recognition, Nirmal questions, "Who indeed are we," which stresses this transformation from "they" to "we."

Even Piya, the American scientist, ultimately refers to Sundarbans as her home, and Ghosh also presents a space where Piya and Fokir find an unspoken bond that is beyond language, class, and caste. It may be true that Fokir's death in the end in the tide may be read as a reminder that the subaltern and the upper-class American woman can never meet; yet, the ending of the novel with the foregrounding of Moyna (Fokir's wife)

and Piya's friendship, with the establishment of a Fokir Memorial Trust to include locals in scientific research, reflects Piya's identification with the subalterns and her urge to find a "home" in the tide country.

One may contend that in analyzing Sundarbans as a heterotopic "subaltern space" I fall into the similar trap of essentializing the subaltern. Yet, my focus has been two-fold in this argument—first, I explore the liminal space of Sundarbans as a heterotopia that enables a subaltern space where the refugees demonstrate their political agency. Second, this deviant heterotopia also opens up a crucial third space which has the very potential to erase the "subaltern," by emerging a blurring of identities to negate any notion of class, caste, religion, and origins. As Spivak reminds us, it is important not to "keep the subaltern in the space of difference" by "museumizing subalternity."[61] That is precisely what Ghosh's text produces— a possibility of a dynamic space against the national status-quo of contested spaces. *The Hungry Tide* allows for rewriting the national imaginary in the post-Partition historiography by retrieving a silenced subaltern history of displaced people.

NOTES

1. Willem Van Schendel and Md. Mahbubar Rahman, "'I Am Not a Refugee': Rethinking Partition Migration," *Modern Asian Studies*, 37, 3 (2003): 555.
2. Shelley Feldman, "The Silence of East Bengal in the Story of Partition," *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, 1, 2. (1999): 168.
3. Rahman and Schendel observe that there is no entry on refugees in the three-volume *History of Bangladesh* published in Dhaka, Bangladesh, or *The Journey to Pakistan* published in Pakistan. For details on the "refugee problematique," see Md. Mahbubar Rahman and Willem Van Schendel, "'I Am Not a Refugee': Rethinking Partition Migration" *Modern Asian Studies*, 37, 3 (2003): 551–84.
4. Ibid., 555.
5. Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press 1995), 79.
6. Gyanesh Kudaisya and Yong Tai Tan, *The Aftermath of Partition in South Asia* (London: Routledge 2000), 141.
7. Ibid.,141
8. Ibid., 143
9. Ibid., 556–57.
10. The Bengali term *bhodrolok* in literal translation means "proper men." The word connotes a specific class of people, generally forming the elite bourgeoisie upper and middle classes of West Bengal.
11. The word *nimnoborno* means lower sect and Dalit people. In pre-Independence and postcolonial India, these people suffered the worst discrimination and hardship and are perhaps the most marginalized group in the subcontinent.
12. I am indebted to my grandfather, Ranjit K. Roychoudhary, who explained to me the history of Bengali refugees and their class affiliations in post-independent India. According to him, not all displaced people were "refugees,"—a term that particularly meant dispossessed and marginalized people post-Partition. After a forced migration from East Bengal after the Partition (Jessore district in Bangladesh), he found new settlement and a home in West Bengal (Calcutta) but did not find any discrimination or problems like that those of the *nimnoborno* people.

13. Gyanesh Kudaisya and Yong Tai Tan, *The Aftermath of Partition in South Asia* (London: Routledge 2000), 147.
14. Md. Mahbubar Rahman and Willem Van Schendel, "'I Am Not a Refugee': Rethinking Partition Migration," *Modern Asian Studies*, 37, 3 (2003): 576.
15. Gyanesh Kudaisya and Yong Tai Tan, *The Aftermath of Partition in South Asia* (London: Routledge 2000), 146.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid., 147.
18. "Squatters" and land-grabbers were the terms used by the state to describe refugees who settled in vast unused lands in and around Calcutta. The squatters were also from the Namashudra group, a backward class and lower caste that later formed the "Untouchables." Kudaisya and Tan trace the state's crisis and lack of concern for these people because of their caste. The West Bengal elites and the government felt these people were a huge burden on the state's resources and capital and would become obstacles for the future of the postcolonial nation. (*The Aftermath of Partition in South Asia,* 150).
19. Annu Jalais, *Forest of Tigers: People, Politics and Environment in the Sundarbans* (New Delhi: Routledge 2010), 165.
20. Morichjhapi is an island on the southern edge of Sundarbans.
21. *Humanity Attacked: Morichjhapi Genocide*, Documentary, Dir. Tushar Bhattacharya. Rights Alert India Production, 2009.
22. Annu Jalais, *Forest of Tigers: People, Politics and Environment in the Sundarbans* (New Delhi: Routledge 2010), 167.
23. Several interviews of people in West Bengal that I had conducted, reveal that very few people know what Morichjhapi refers to. Mostly, Morichjhapi triggers no meaning and the event has been erased from cultural memory.
24. There is only one other Bengali novel *Purbo-Paschim* (in translation *East-West*) by Bengali writer Sunil Ganguly, which has a chapter representing the Morichjhapi incident. Fictionally, there are no other depictions of this incident anywhere and academically too, there are only a handful of works on the Morichjhapi massacres.
25. Amitav Ghosh, *The Hungry Tide* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2006), 66.
26. David Theo Goldberg, *The Racial Slate* (Malden: Blackwell Publishers 2002), 274.
27. Ibid., 39
28. Ibid., 274
29. Amitav Ghosh, *The Hungry Tide* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2006), 125.
30. Joseph Conrad, *The Heart of Darkness* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company 1988), 17.
31. Ibid., 16, 32.
32. Amitav Ghosh, *The Hungry Tide* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2006), 137.
33. Ibid., 177
34. Ross Mallick, "Refugee Resettlement in Forest Reserves: West Bengal Policy Reversal and the Marichjhapi Massacre," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 58, 1 (1999): 104–25.
35. Mallick quoted in Annu Jalais, *Forest of Tigers: People, Politics and Environment in the Sundarbans* (New Delhi: Routledge 2010), 167.
36. Ibid.
37. Michel Foucault explains the heterotopia as deviant spaces where subjects' "behavior is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed." "Of Other Spaces, Heterotopias," *The Visual Culture Reader*, ed. Nicholas Mirzoeff (New York: Routledge, 2002), 229–36.
38. The word *chor* in Bengali means a tiny island which is affected by the ebb and flow of tides and is often submerged by water and at other times, land is visible. Such

chors make it highly problematic to ascertain the presence of state and national borders in the Sundarban region.

39. Amitav Ghosh, *The Hungry Tide* (New York:Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2006), 6.
40. Ibid., 66.
41. Bon Bibi in translation literally means "Lady of the Forest."
42. In Hindu mythology, it is believed that Ganga (the river that borders Sunderbans) is the genesis of many gods and goddesses.
43. Amitav Ghosh, *The Hungry Tide* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2006), 85.
44. Ibid., 204.
45. Ibid., 141
46. Hans Jonas, "The Nobility of Sight," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 14, 4 (1954): 507.
47. Ibid., 515.
48. Terri Tomsky, "Amitav Ghosh's Anxious Witnessing and the Ethics of Action in *The Hungry Tide*," *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, 44, 1 (2009): 58.
49. Amitav Ghosh, *The Hungry Tide* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2006), 211. Translation of Bengali text is mine.
50. Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1995), 3.
51. Ibid., 84.
52. Ibid., 131.
53. Ibid., 166–67.
54. Ibid., 168.
55. John Thieme, "'Out of Place': The Poetics of Space in Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* and Michael Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghosh*," *Commonwealth*, 31, 2 (2009): 35.
56. Ibid., 35.
57. Amitav Ghosh, *The Hungry Tide* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2006), 215.
58. Ibid., 248.
59. Ibid., 205.
60. Ibid., 211.
61. Leon De Kock, "Interview with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak: New Nation Writers Conference in South Africa," *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature*, 23, 3 (1992): 46.

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Part III

Borders and Borderlands

EIGHT

Property, Violence, and Displacement

Partition in Sindh

Nandita Bhavnani

This chapter seeks to dwell on three aspects of Partition that are yet to receive the full extent of scholarly attention that they deserve: Sindh's experience of Partition; the relatively low level of violence in Sindh at a time when several parts of the northern subcontinent were immersed in brutal violence; and the role of landed property as a major motive for subsequent communal violence against minorities, with the intention of displacing them.

THE RELATIVE ABSENCE OF PARTITION VIOLENCE BETWEEN SINDHI HINDUS AND SINDHI MUSLIMS

Since 1997, with the burgeoning of Partition studies, and parallel interests in popular culture and media, the Partition of India has become synonymous with obscene levels of violence which left at least fifteen million people displaced and one million killed during the upheaval of 1946–48. Yet Sindh remained relatively peaceful till some months after Partition. The announcement of Partition on 3 June 1947 engendered a climate of anxiety, suspicion, fear, and panic among Sindhi Hindus, a minority of approximately 27 percent who feared communal violence and discrimination in the new state of Pakistan. Yet, until December 1947, there was only one major outbreak of violence in Sindh. In early September 1947, Sikhs migrating to India were attacked and killed on a train outside the central Sindh town of Nawabshah; between fifteen and twenty Sikhs

were killed and about seventeen were injured. Apart from this incident, there were only a few stray cases of looting and murder, motivated by theft as well as by communal passions.

Although this essay deals with physical violence, it is, nevertheless, important to keep in mind that violence need not always be physical. Intimidation, coercion, and communal discrimination are also traumatizing forms of violence. As Meghna Guhathakurta observes:

> Violence is not always to be measured by outward acts of murder, looting or abduction. . . . Violence typifies a state where a sense of fear is generated and perpetrated in such a way as to make it systemic, pervasive, and inevitable. . . . In the many communal riots which both preceded and followed the Partition, it was the fear of being persecuted, dispossessed, not belonging, rather than actual incidents of violence, that caused many to flee. . . . Fear is less derived from actual acts of violence than it is from perceptions of violence.[1]

Similarly, in Sindh, there were a growing number of instances of communal discrimination and intimidation in the months shortly before and after August 1947, especially in the hinterland. There were instances where Hindu agricultural lands were forcibly taken over by Sindhi Muslims. In some of these cases, the Hindu owners had already migrated to India, in other cases they were still living there. There were other instances where Hindu landowners found that their Muslim sharecroppers refused to hand over their share of crops to them. Cows were stolen while Hindu shops and homes were burgled. In some cities in Sindh, *muhajirs*, Muslim refugees from India, forcibly occupied Hindu homes and shops, evicting the owners.

While Sindh did experience a heightened degree of communal tension during the months immediately before and after Partition, it witnessed remarkably little communal violence as compared to the rest of northern India. This absence of large-scale communal violence—between Sindhi Hindus and Sindhi Muslims—was extraordinary, considering the communal hostility that had engulfed the subcontinent at the time; it was unusual enough for politicians and community leaders of that era to pay accolades to it from time to time.

At a popular level, Sindhis on both sides of the border today attribute this absence of violence to the "inherently peaceable Sufi-flavoured culture" of pre-Partition Sindh. Yet, while Sindh possessed a strong culture of religious tolerance, it also possessed a history of communal friction and even communal violence. This chapter seeks to explore possible reasons for the relative absence of Partition violence in Sindh, by delving briefly into the history of communal relations in the region, against the backdrop of the socio-economic and political framework of pre-Partition Sindhi society.

Pre-Partition Sindhi Society

Before the British conquest of Sindh in 1843, Sindhi society had a relatively clear structure and hierarchy. The rural-urban divide and the class divide seem to have more or less coincided with the communal divide. The Baluch chieftains occupied the higher rungs of the social pyramid, with the Baluchi Talpur rulers at the very top. Predominantly an urban community, the Hindus were generally middle-class traders and moneylenders, with a sub-minority of Amils, who were administrators and accountants to the Talpurs. A smaller number of Hindus catered to the commercial needs of the Sindhi hinterland where they supplied provisions and lent money to both landowners or waderos, and peasants or *haaris*. The bulk of the population, the *haaris* were, however, severely dominated by both Muslim landowners and Hindu moneylenders and government officials.

Sufism in Sindh had, over the centuries, evolved from the intermingling of gentler, more tolerant versions of Hinduism, Sikhism, and Islam. This engendered a deep belief in the oneness of God—*wahdat al-wujud* or *advaita*—which was the basis for the worship of this one God in multiple forms, whether guru, pir, or deity. It was in this climate of religious tolerance that Hindus could be followers of Sufi pirs or Sikh gurus, and Muslims could visit Hindu shrines. This environment also encouraged much cultural borrowing between Hindus and Muslims, and, through its core belief in humanism, fostered communal harmony.

Thus we can see that in pre-colonial Sindh, Hindus, and Muslims shared an ambivalent and checkered relationship. On the one hand, there was a hierarchy of domination between the ruling Muslims, the Hindu middle class, and the Muslim peasantry, marked by distrust and exploitation. On the other hand, there was a political and commercial symbiosis between the two communities, against a backdrop of a high degree of religious heterodoxy and cultural sharing.

Impact of Colonial Rule

Colonial rule had a tremendous impact on Sindh, in terms of altering the power equation between Hindus and Muslims. Earlier, under the Talpurs, Hindus were generally not permitted to own land, but now under the British, they could do so. Moreover, the misguided revenue policy of the British impoverished many Muslim landowners. This, combined with the extravagant lifestyles of many of these landowners, and the exorbitant rates of interest charged by Hindu moneylenders, resulted in a significant quantum of land being transferred from Muslims to Hindus over the decades. By the turn of the century—after just fifty years of British rule—Hindus owned, or controlled through mortgage, more than

42 percent of the arable land in Sindh.[2] Considering that Hindus were not even a quarter of the population, this was a significant development.

British rule proved beneficial to the Hindus in other ways as well. Merchants from Hyderabad set up a flourishing trade network, imprinted on the far-flung outposts of the British Empire and its trading partners, from Japan to Panama. The merchants of Shikarpur, who had earlier had a significant presence in the Central Asian economy, now shifted their attentions to other cities in British India, such as Mumbai and Chennai. Former Hindu bureaucrats in the Talpur government now learned English, and adopted western schooling and western clothes. With the majority of schools, teachers, and students being Hindu, this community dominated education in Sindh. This further gave them a disproportionately large share in the bureaucracy and courts of justice by the turn of the century. By 1917, Hindus occupied between 56 percent to 77 percent of senior government posts, while Muslims occupied only between 8 percent to 22 percent, despite the fact that they were a majority in Sindh.[3] Given their dominance in trade, education, and the bureaucracy, not to mention the increase in their land ownership, the Hindus' star was clearly on the ascendant during the colonial era.

On the other hand, Muslims in Sindh, as elsewhere in the subcontinent, were not as quick to take to western education. Moreover, many among the Muslim elite, coming from a landowning background, did not attach much importance to education, while most of the peasantry could not afford it. Moreover, the Muslim education system of *maktabs* or schools, and *madrasas* or colleges, had withered in the absence of royal patronage. Although the Sind Madrasatul Islam (a premier school for the sons of the Sindhi Muslim elite, modeled on the lines of what is now Aligarh Muslim University) was set up in Karachi in 1885, the Muslims' weak presence in education effectively meant a similarly weak presence in the colonial government, an important source of power.

Although the British still patronized the large landowners among the Sindhi Muslim elite, the latter perceived themselves as having lost prestige, with the cessation of Muslim rule and the loss of their land to Hindu moneylenders. Moreover, in 1847, Sindh had been made part of the Bombay Presidency, which meant that now Sindhi Muslims were a religious minority. This shift in power dynamics—with the once-restrained Hindus now exercising considerable power, and Muslims, who had ruled the province for centuries, now in a minority and on the backfoot—had a major impact on communal relations in Sindh. Sindhi Hindus began to openly express their disdain for Sindhi Muslims, whom they looked down upon as illiterate and uncultured. On the other hand, Sindhi Muslim resentment of the Hindus grew: resentment for their taking over lands from Muslim landowners; for charging exorbitant rates of interest as moneylenders; for their domination of schools, courts, and government offices; and for their open snobbery.

Under Muslim rule, when Hindus were subjected to any act of oppression, their protest remained limited to closing their shops or complaining to the rulers. Now under British rule, with friction growing between the two communities, Sindh began to witness communal violence for the first time. Although communal riots were infrequent, they occurred across the province, from 1872 onwards,[4] triggered typically by conversions, the playing of music in temples, and Muharram processions. Further, voluntary conversions to Islam by Hindus only added to these communal tensions, especially on the part of the Hindus.

The Separation of Sindh

These tensions were only heightened from the 1920s onwards, by the demise of the Khilafat movement, the introduction of separate electorates, and the communalization of politics across the subcontinent. Given this backdrop, as well as the distance of Sindh from the rest of Bombay Presidency and the differences between the two regions, Sindhi Muslims began to campaign for autonomy and the separation of Sindh from Bombay Presidency. Although a section of Sindhi Hindus had initially supported this movement, they soon realized that separation would render them a religious minority once again and therefore opposed it tooth and nail. This controversy greatly exacerbated Hindu-Muslim tensions in Sindh.

Once Sindh achieved autonomy in 1937, the Sindhi Muslim political elite, earlier united by the campaign for separation, now witnessed a high degree of factionalization and in-fighting, in their race for local power. Around this time, the Muslim League was seeking to rebuild itself across India, after its poor performance in the 1937 elections. Seeking a means to garner support for itself in Sindh, the Muslim League zeroed in on the Masjid Manzilgah. This was a pair of ancient buildings in Sukkur, fallen into disuse, and in government possession. The local Muslims sought possession of them, claiming that one of the buildings was an ancient mosque. However, the local Hindus vehemently opposed this, since the Manzilgah buildings stood directly opposite the Hindu temple-island of Sadhbelo, and the Hindus feared that the Muslims' use of the Manzilgah mosque would interfere with their access to Sadhbelo. The Sindh Muslim League's campaign for the restoration of Manzilgah to the Muslims of Sukkur escalated into a communal controversy, polarizing Sindh. Efforts by the Muslim League to forcibly occupy Manzilgahin in October 1939 led not only to *lathi* charges by the police, but also to severe riots between Hindus and Muslims in Sukkur and its environs in mid-November 1939.

This was the most significant communal riot that Sindh had witnessed in living memory. One hundred and fifty-one Hindus and fourteen Muslims were killed, while most of the property that was destroyed belonged to Hindus. The severity of this conflagration also left widespread regret

in its wake, on the part of several Hindu and Muslim hardliners, who now acknowledged their folly in stirring up communal passions.

Yet, the Manzilgah affair served its original purpose exceedingly well, in terms of firmly establishing the Muslim League in Sindh in the early 1940s.[5] This was augmented by G. M. Syed's[6] efforts to increase the number of Muslim League branches across Sindhs, and to boost enrollment. In the provincial elections of December 1946, the Muslim League achieved a landslide victory, winning 82.1 percent of the Sindhi Muslim rural vote and 98.8 percent of the Sindhi Muslim urban vote.[7]

On the other hand, the Sindhi Hindu political stance had also hardened in the 1940s. The controversy over the separation of Sindh, the instability of provincial politics after attaining autonomy, and the Manzilgah riots had all served to raise communal temperatures. Hindu insecurity was further augmented by the violence perpetrated by the Hurs in the 1930s and 1940s, and the resulting martial law rule in Sindh in 1942–43. Thus Sindh became fertile ground for the proselytizing activities of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), which began making serious inroads into Sindh during this period, setting up *shakhas* and wooing recruits. Thus we can see that in the 1940s, against the backdrop of the All-India Muslim League's campaign for Pakistan, the hardened stance of the RSS under M. S. Golwalkar, and the rise in communal friction across India during this period, Sindh's religious communities also became increasingly polarized in the run-up to Partition.

Sindh in 1947

In order to understand the relative absence of communal violence between Sindhi Hindus and Sindhi Muslims at the time of Partition, it would be worthwhile to look at the main players on the Sindhi political stage at this time.

Sindhi Muslims

In 1947, Sindhi Muslims very much looked forward to the Muslim-majority state of Pakistan and the return of Muslim rule to Sindh. Furthermore, the advent of Pakistan also implied an increased significance for Sindh, as it would be an important constituent of West Pakistan, especially with Karachi—Jinnah's birthplace—as the first capital of the new country.

With the return of Muslim rule, Sindhi Muslims anticipated that they would be free from the exorbitant interest rates of Hindu moneylenders and the arrogance of Hindu bureaucrats. For example, Nuruddin Sarki, the Sindhi writer and advocate, recalls that:

> We used to read, in newspapers and magazines, that the English had enslaved us, that we should become free, that Islam is the proper

> [path], that there is equality and justice in Islam. . . . . We thought that [Pakistan] would benefit us Muslims if we attained freedom. I also remember that, at this point, in our minds, the stereotypical Hindu was not the average man on the street, but a capitalist. You see, in Sindh, especially in the cities, the merchants and other traders were Hindu. In Shikarpur's Dhak Bazaar, there were about 200–300 shopkeepers, but there were barely two or three Muslim shops. In Sindh, this led to class conflicts, to class disparity. The difference between the rich and the poor was obvious to us, the distinction between rich Hindu merchants and poor Muslim peasants from the lower classes. Therefore, we believed, if we secured freedom, Muslims would attain equality and happiness.[8]

It was expected that Muslims, and not Hindus, would dominate education, the bureaucracy and trade. Indeed, legislative measures to address these spheres had already begun to be enacted in the early months of 1947.

Initially, it was not widely expected, among both Hindus and Muslims, that Sindhi Hindus would migrate to India. Hindus had lived as a minority in Sindh under Muslim rule for centuries. Some Sindhi Muslims, though, did expect Hindus to migrate *en masse* and further expected to inherit their substantial landed properties. Other Sindhi Muslims not only did not expect Hindus to migrate, but instead looked forward to a reversal of roles and their future domination of the Hindus. For example, Mohammed Ayub Khuhro, future Premier of Sindh, had allegedly said in a speech in his 1946 election campaign: "I am looking forward to the day when the Hindus of Sind will be so impoverished or economically weakened that their women, even like poor Muslim women now, will be constrained to carry on their heads the midday food to their husbands, brothers and sons toiling in the fields and market places."[9]

Moreover, the entire province was to become part of Pakistan. Sindh was not partitioned like Punjab and Bengal, and therefore there were no disputes at the local level over which country a particular village or area should go to. Indeed, many Sindhi Hindus recall protection given to them by Sindhi Muslim friends and neighbors, who were saddened to see them depart subsequently.

Sindhi Muslim Working Class

Given the tremendous feudal power wielded by the Sindhi Muslim elite, and the miniscule size of the Muslim middle class—comprising mostly urban Memon and Khoja businessmen—it is not surprising that there was an absence of grassroots social reform movements or legislation—much less any agricultural revolt—in pre-1947 Sindh. The British, too, were reluctant to disturb a power structure which suited their regime. In 1901,the Deccan Agriculturists Relief Act had been extended to Sindh which exempted *haaris* from prosecution if they failed to pay their

agricultural loans, but this hardly addressed the fundamental evils of the system.[10]

The feudal system, therefore, just about provided the *haaris* with subsistence, and this, combined with their vicious cycle of debts made them little more than servants of the local wadero, who could oust them for any trifling reason. Most *haaris* and often the local small landholders and artisans, too, lived in a combination of dread and awe of both the wadero and the local Hindus, either the local moneylender to whom they were likely indebted, or the bureaucrats in the local administration, who also wielded considerable power. As a senior government officer noted: "Fear reigns supreme in the life of the *haari*."[11] Too repressed and entrenched in the status quo, the bulk of the Sindhi Muslims were yet to expect any rights for themselves, either from the Sindhi Muslim elite or from Sindhi Hindus. It is possible that this climate of fear and awe prevented the initiation of outright physical violence against Hindus on the part of *haaris*, although there were some instances of non-cooperation and harassment on their part towards Hindus.

Sindh Government

In 1947, the newly formed Muslim League government in Sindh won by a thumping majority and had no need of support from the Hindu members of the Sindh Legislative Assembly. Moreover, the lessons of Manzilgah were still fresh in public memory. It is quite likely that, due to these factors, there was also no motivation on the part of the Sindhi Muslim elite to instigate communal violence as before.

On the contrary, acutely aware of the communal conflagration raging across the northern subcontinent, the Sindh Government was determined to maintain peace in the province at all costs. In this regard, the example of Delhi served as a stark warning. Severe anti-Muslim violence had broken out in Delhi in early September 1947, in which Hindu and Sikh refugees, newly arrived from West Punjab and the North West Frontier Province[12] played a significant role. This brutal violence against minorities in the capital of a supposedly secular India reflected badly on the Congress government. In the light of this violence in Delhi, both Jinnah, now Governor-General of Pakistan, and Khuhro, now Premier of Sindh, were determined that similar violence should not break out in Karachi, then the capital of Pakistan, and sully its name.

Ghulam Hussein Hidayatullah, the then Governor of the province, Khuhro, and other senior leaders toured the province on several occasions addressing peace conferences and requesting the public to stay calm and refrain from violence. Khuhro's government was quick to impose curfew when there was any hint of communal trouble. It also banned the carrying of weapons by the public and the collection of stones and acids, and doubled the strength of armed escorts on trains. The Sindh

Public Safety Ordinance, meant to control communal trouble, was promulgated on 21 September 1947 and enforced on 4 October. The Sindh government was also extremely strict with Muhajirs on the issue of their forcible occupation of Hindu houses. Muhajirs caught in the act of forcible occupation were stopped, sometimes arrested, and even flogged. The Sindh Government's firm actions played a significant role in deterring and preventing violence.

Sindhi Hindus

Partition-related violence or instances of aggression directed against Hindus, both in Sindh and in other parts of the subcontinent, the forcible occupation of Hindu property by incoming Muhajirs, and various measures taken by the Sindh government perceived to be anti-Hindu: all these served to foment considerable fear and resentment among a section of Sindhi Hindus who were appalled to find their sense of socioeconomic superiority undermined by the Muslims' unquestioned dominance in Pakistan. This only contributed to a hardening of these Hindus' communal stance.

As mentioned earlier, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) had begun making inroads into the Hindu community in Sindh in the 1940s. On the eve of Partition, it had adopted a more militant stance, setting up local militias, staffed by young men indoctrinated into their hardline ideology, ostensibly under the rubric of self-defense.[13] Some members of the RSS had been making bombs in a house belonging to a wealthy Sindhi Hindu, Raibahadur Totaram Hingorani, in Shikarpur Colony in Karachi. (Hingorani had himself migrated to India with his family and left his house in the safekeeping of his neighbor.) On 9 September 1947, a bomb exploded near Karachi's Lea Market, in which five Muslims were injured, but there was no loss of life. On the following day, while some RSS workers were in the process of making bombs at the Hingorani home, a bomb exploded, killing two of the workers. The Sindh government immediately cracked down on the RSS, arresting several of its workers and banning the organization. It later came to light that the RSS was engaged in espionage and bomb-making and also hoarded arms and ammunition at secret locations.

Thus we can see that the Sindhi Muslim elite felt secure in their expected dominance of Sindh. Further, the bulk of the Sindhi peasantry was too repressed to resort to violence against the Hindus, who had dominated several important spheres of power in the province and who were therefore perceived as socially powerful. Despite some instances of intimidation and harassment of Hindus, there was no major outbreak of violence perpetrated by Sindhi Muslims against Sindhi Hindus. Yet, ironically, it was among a right-wing section of the Sindhi Hindus—a minority that was progressively growing proportionately smaller and less pow-

erful with the influx of large numbers of Muhajirs into Sindh—that resentment and communal animosity metamorphosed into violence which was, however, nipped in the bud.

PROPERTY AS A MOTIVE FOR PARTITION VIOLENCE

However, there was still one more player on the stage of Sindh in 1947. Large numbers of *muhajirs* had started coming to Sindh, and especially to Karachi, as early as the winter of 1946–47. These first refugees had mostly come from Bihar, after the communal violence that erupted in Bengal and Bihar after Direct Action Day in 1946. In July 1947, the Sindh government expected about 23,000 *muhajirs* to come to Sindh. Yet, by mid-September 1947, about 500 *muhajirs* were entering Karachi alone every day. By the end of the year, there were already 300,000 *muhajirs* in Karachi, while other *muhajirs* had been sent to other cities and towns in Sindh.

The Sindh government, which had initially given a warm welcome to *muhajirs*, now found itself overwhelmed by a host of challenges. On the one hand, Sindh's economy had been hard hit by the migration of the Hindu business community. Although most Sindhi Hindus migrated from Pakistan only in 1948, a significant number of the Hindu elite had begun to migrate in 1947 itself, taking their capital with them. Hindu government officials had also begun to migrate, and government offices, courts, and banks found their operations severely curtailed. Coupled with these developments was the tremendous expense that the Sindh government now had to shoulder, that is of building a new capital from scratch, and also resettling lakhs of *muhajirs*. Like other provincial governments across South Asia, the Sindh government found that it too could not adequately cope with the resettlement of Partition refugees.

Numerous *muhajirs* had experienced violence perpetrated by Hindus and Sikhs in India. Not only had they been uprooted or left their homes, but they had also undergone difficult and dangerous journeys to come to Pakistan. Many *muhajirs* had imagined Pakistan as an idealized country where Muslims would automatically receive housing, jobs, and respect. Instead these *muhajirs* found themselves in overcrowded refugee camps, with appalling living conditions. They experienced a high degree of suspiciousness from local Hindus, in addition to waning sympathy and increasing strictness on the part of the Sindh government, not to mention growing instances of conflict with Sindhi Muslims.

Moreover, the cities that they were first sent to—Karachi and Hyderabad—were cities dominated by Sindhi Hindus. Often, in *muhajir* perception, Hindus had no reckoning in Pakistan, the proclaimed homeland for the Muslims of South Asia; they were also seen as fifth-columnists, with greater loyalty to India. To quote Vazira Zamindar, "By questioning their degree of belonging and rendering [the Hindus] suspicious, an equation

emerged in muhajir opinion whereby Hindus were believed to be leaving (sooner or later) and so their houses were there for the taking."[14]

Partition Violence

Muhajirs not only belonged to different ethnicities but also came from varied backgrounds and classes. While some *muhajirs* were government employees, and therefore entitled to government accommodation, others were upper class or middle class and could afford to buy or rent a house. However there were large numbers of destitute *muhajirs* who did not have these means or facilities and were dependent on refugee camps and the largesse of the Sindh government. The Sindh government on the other hand was not only making various attempts to curtail Hindu migration (in an attempt to prop up Sindh's economy) but was also simultaneously being strict with destitute *muhajirs* over the issue of forcible occupation of Hindu property. Increasingly, a section of destitute *muhajirs* began to realize that if the Hindus migrated *en masse* to India, their problems of finding accommodation in Pakistan would be solved.

This section of *muhajirs* looked down on Sindhi Muslims for not being aggressive enough with Sindhi Hindus. They felt that, given the relatively peaceful relationship between Hindus and Muslims in Sindh, Sindhi Hindus would not migrate unless they were terrorized into doing so. Sobho Gianchandani, the veteran communist leader, tells us that he had heard that some hardliner *muhajirs* in the Mauledina Musafirkhana in Karachi had decided to "create a disturbance so that the Hindus would emigrate and leave their houses behind. Because they thought that the 'shameless Sindhi Muslims' were not ready to slaughter the Hindus!"[15]

There was an outbreak of anti-Hindu violence in Hyderabad in mid-December 1947, partly incited by news of anti-Muslim violence in Ajmer. This was followed by a more significant pogrom in Karachi in early January 1948. It is widely acknowledged that these bouts of violence were perpetrated mostly by destitute *muhajirs*, in the hope of terrorizing Sindhi Hindus into emigrating, thus leaving their properties behind. It was these pogroms that created a high degree of panic and fear among Hindus across Sindh, triggering an exodus. It was estimated that between twelve to fourteen lakhs of Hindus left Sindh by 1949, and a scant 1,50,000 chose to stay behind.

Property

Landed property played an extremely significant role in the unfolding of events during Partition. This happened in three ways. First, in many parts of the subcontinent—Sindh, Punjab, Bengal, UP, to name a few examples—local communities were jealous of wealthy minorities, who owned large tracts of land, and in many cases, this gave rise to violence

against these minorities.[16] In many cases, minority-community zamindars were harassed by the locals into migrating, as also happened in Sindh. Some were absentee landlords; others, subjected to intimidation from Sindhi Muslim landowners and *haaris*, migrated from the hinterland to cities in Sindh; still others migrated to India. In the opinion of Shail Mayaram, the brutal anti-Meo violence in the princely states of Alwar and Bharatpur was driven—at least partly—by greed for Meo property. She observes that, for the Hindu Jats who dominated these states, "violence held the promise of swift possession of land."[17]

Second, property was also the prime motivation behind the communal violence started by refugees who had crossed from one dominion to another and wanted accommodation for themselves. Refugees across the subcontinent forcibly occupied houses belonging to the local minority community, in their desperation for housing.

The brutal anti-Muslim violence in Delhi in early September 1947 was largely brought about by refugees from West Punjab. According to Tai Yong Tan and Gyanesh Kudaisya, about 44,000 Muslim houses were either abandoned or forcibly evacuated during this violence.[18] Similarly, in Dhaka, Hindus owned the lion's share—85 percent according to one estimate—of property in the city. But by the end of 1950, between 85 to 90 percent of their property had been abandoned due to fear of violence or requisitioned by the government, or forcibly occupied by incoming non-Bengali Muslim refugees.[19] Again, in Dharampur (near Simla), Hindu and Sikh refugees from Pakistan had outnumbered the local Muslim population of the town by late August 1947. Unable to find accommodation, and with winter approaching, the refugees threatened to massacre the local Muslims, thus ensuring that the latter were evacuated to Pakistan, leaving their property behind for the refugees to occupy.[20]

In this respect, Sindhi Hindus also behaved like other Partition refugees. After migrating to India, they forcibly occupied property belonging to Muslims in places like Rajkot, Batwa, and Deolali, not to mention Mumbai. Sindhi Hindus played a significant role in the riots in Godhra in March 1948, which, in combination with a freak fire that engulfed a wide part of the city, resulted in the emigration of numerous Muslims of that city to Pakistan and also resulted in Sindhi refugees occupying about 3,500 Muslim properties.[21] (Godhra continues to have a history of communal friction—and violence—between the local Ghanchi Muslims and the Sindhi Hindus since then.)

This competition for property turned into a three-way contest between the local majority, incoming refugees, and the local minority in several places, such as Ajmer, Delhi, and Gurgaon. In some cases, this tussle became further complicated by the entry of the local government into the fray.

South Asia was still recovering from World War II, and both the Indian and Pakistani governments were also trying to come to terms with

independence. As mentioned earlier, unlike the Indian government, the Pakistani government was obliged to set up its administrative machinery from scratch. Both the Indian and Pakistani governments found it extremely difficult to accommodate and rehabilitate large numbers of destitute and traumatized refugees, not to mention government servants and ministers. They also resorted to requisitioning property in Karachi, Delhi, and Dhaka—often large mansions belonging to the minority community, who were presumed to be "intending evacuees," regardless of whether they actually intended to migrate or not. This was effectively forcible occupation of minority property by the government, for its own vested interests.

There were other instances where the local government worked hand in glove with the local majority or the incoming refugees to deprive local minorities of their property. Master Tara Singh, the Sikh leader, actively urged the Indian government to arrange for the evacuation of Muslims in UP and Delhi, in order to use the property that they would leave behind to accommodate Hindu and Sikh refugees in India.[22] After the Delhi riots of September 1947, many Muslims found it impossible to return to their houses. The Indian government declared the forcible occupation of Muslim property as illegal but also declared that "no [non-Muslim] refugee would be evicted for illegal occupation without being provided with alternative accommodation,"[23] implying that the government would allow refugees to continue in their occupation of the property indefinitely.

However, Hindus and Sikhs had left behind considerable more property in Pakistan than Muslims had in India. Keenly aware of the value and importance of this evacuee property, India and Pakistan held a series of inter-dominion meetings in order to hammer out agreements regarding transfer of property and compensation. This gave rise to an entire industry for evacuee property. Claims offices and assessment agencies were established and often staffed by refugees themselves, evacuee property was cataloged, claims by incoming refugees were registered and assessed, and compensation distributed. The long drawn-out process of settling evacuee property claims lasted till about 1971 in India.

Sindhi-Muhajir Conflict over Evacuee Property

In Sindh, the allotment of evacuee property became a source of much conflict between *muhajirs* and Sindhi Muslims. Hindus owned considerable urban property in Sindh, apart from their extensive agricultural landholdings. According to one source, Sindhi Hindus owned over 28,000 properties in Karachi alone.[24] There were many instances where property belonging to Hindus was usurped after their departure by local Muslims. However, in both India and Pakistan, evacuee property was not only used primarily by the state for the resettlement of incoming refugees, but also perceived as a fundamental solution for the problem of

refugee resettlement. In Sindh, too, the bulk of Hindu property was distributed among *muhajirs*.

This created friction in unforeseen ways. Sindhi Muslims who had taken over Hindu property on the basis of forged or inadequate documentation now found themselves evicted. Given that they had expected to inherit Sindhi Hindu property after the latter migrated to India, they found this allotment of property to *muhajirs* particularly galling. Thus the allotment of Hindu property became a major bone of contention between Sindhi Muslims and *muhajirs*. There were deeper fissures as well: different Muhajir claimants would also fight among themselves, sometimes going to court, over allotment of the same property, while some Sindhi Muslim waderos colluded to prevent the allotment of land to Sindhi *haaris* (in an attempt to maintain the feudal status quo), receiving allotments of land as reward.[25] In response, the *haaris* started a movement, the Allottee Tehreek, to protest against these injustices and to obtain property allotments for themselves. This movement, however, did not achieve any significant success and was quashed by the onset of martial law in Pakistan in 1958. Ultimately, out of 1,350,000 acres of land left behind by Sindhi Hindus, 800,000 acres were allotted to *muhajirs*.

CONCLUSION

The absence of any significant Partition violence between Sindhi Hindus and Sindhi Muslims can be attributed to a combination of various factors.The Sindh Muslim League felt politically secure enough to not feel the need to whip up communal passions. The regrettable violence of Masjid Manzilgah was still very much alive in public memory, and moreover, the Sindh government was determined on maintaining Sindh's reputation as a "peaceful province." It is also likely that a section of the Sindhi Muslim populace expected to take over Sindhi Hindu property in any case and so did not feel the need to resort to violence to acquire it. Ironically enough, it was a group of right-wing Sindhi Hindus—members of the RSS—who proved their inclination to, and capacity for, communal violence. And ultimately, it was a section of *muhajirs* who brought large-scale violence to Sindh, to coerce Hindus into migrating and leaving their property behind for the former to occupy.

It is generally believed that Partition violence was driven mostly by communal hatred and/or revenge for other, earlier riots. Yet, as we have seen above, there were a significant number of cases where Partition violence was also motivated by material ambitions, especially a cutthroat competition for property, in many parts of the subcontinent. (It is worthwhile to note that apart from immoveable property, looting of moveable goods from minority communities also acted as a significant motive for

Partition violence, such as that inflicted on caravans of refugees crossing from one dominion to the other on foot.)

Communal violence to gain minority-owned property was perpetrated by both the local majority as well as incoming refugees. This proved to be a vicious circle as this violence created a new set of displaced refugees and successive waves of displacement.

It is impossible to estimate how many Partition refugees were created by local majorities and incoming refugees seeking to take over minority property. Yet, this phenomenon was clearly widespread across the northern subcontinent—from Karachi to Delhi to Dhaka, from Mumbai to Godhra to Dharampur—and sometimes in cities which were relatively free of violence until the arrival of refugees. This gives us cause to ponder that, if it had been possible for local governments in both dominions to properly accommodate and successfully rehabilitate the earliest batches of refugees, perhaps the numbers of Partition casualties and refugees would not have been as astronomically high as they ultimately were.

After the emigration of local minorities, this tussle over property often degenerated into a contest between the local majority and the incoming refugees and, on occasion, with the local government as well. As elsewhere, this contest prevailed in Sindh as well, between Sindhi Muslims and *muhajirs*, who also clashed over other issues. The Sindhi-*muhajir* conflict has only mushroomed over the decades and has contributed greatly to creating the polarized and violence-ridden Sindh of today.

The sections entitled "Pre-Partition Sindhi Society" and "Property as a Motive for Partition Violence" are based on my book, The Making of Exile: Sindhi Hindus and the Partition of India *(New Delhi: Westland Tranquebar, 2014).*

NOTES

1. Meghna Guhathakurta, "Families, Displacement," in *Divided Countries, Separated Cities: The Modern Legacy of Partition*, ed. Ghislaine Glasson Deschaumes and Rada Ivekovic (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003), 96–97.
2. E. H. Aitken, *Gazetteer of the Province of Sind* (Karachi: Government of India, 1907), 338.
3. Sarah Ansari, *Sufi Saints and State Power: The Pirs of Sind, 1843–1947* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 109, note 29.
4. David Cheesman, *Landlord Power and Rural Indebtedness in Colonial Sind, 1886-1901* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1997), 185.
5. This instance would prove to be an uncanny precedent for the Bharatiya Janata Party, and its mobilization of the Babri Masjid issue in order to establish itself on the Indian political landscape in the 1980s.
6. G. M. Syed, possibly the most popular and significant grassroots leader in Sindh in the twentieth century, is considered to be the father of the Jiye Sindh movement for autonomy for Sindh.
7. Suhail Zaheer Lari, *An Illustrated History of Sindh* (Karachi: Heritage Foundation, 2002), 260.

8. Nuruddin Sarki, "Anpoori Atamkatha," in *Aadarshi Insaan Nooruddin Sarki*, ed. Sattar Pirzada (Karachi: Sindhi Adabi Academy, 2007), 40–41. My translation.

9. As recalled by several Sindhi Hindus of that era and as quoted in G. D. Khosla, *Stern Reckoning: A Survey of the Events Leading Up to and Following the Partition of India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989), 244.

10. Set up in 1930, the Sind Hari Committee had also not achieved any radical socioeconomic transformation in rural Sindh by the time of Partition.

11. M. Masud, as quoted in David Cheesman, *Landlord Power and Rural Indebtedness in Colonial Sind, 1865–1901* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1997), 72.

12. Present-day Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

13. In the summer of 1947, the Sindh Congress had also sent a group of about one hundred Sindhi Hindu teenage boys to Rajasthan for military training for the same purpose.

14. Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali Zamindar, *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia: Refugees, Boundaries, Histories* (New Delhi: Viking, 2007), 64.

15. Sobho Gianchandani, "Karachi-a Vaaro Qatl-e-Aam," in *Tarikh ja Visarial Warq* (Hyderabad, Sindh: Sindhi Sahit Ghar, 1992), 37. My translation.

16. This theme has also been alluded to in Partition literature, for instance, in Rakesh Mohan's well-known short story, "Malbe ka Malik." See Rakesh Mohan, "Malbe ka Malik," in *Hindi Kahani Sangrah*, ed. Bhisham Sahni (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1994), 34–43.

17. Shail Mayaram, *Resisting Regimes*: *Myth, Memory, and the Shaping of a Muslim Identity* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), 174.

18. Tai Yong Tan and Gyanesh Kudaisya, *The Aftermath of Partition in South Asia* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 199.

19. Ibid., 168–69.

20. Khushdeva Singh, "Love Is Stronger Than Hate,"in *India Partitioned: The Other Face of Freedom, Vol. II*, ed. Mushirul Hasan (New Delhi: Roli Books, 1997), 87–112.

21. See Zainab Banu, "Two Sides of a Coin: A Comparative Study of the Riots at Godhra and Udaipur," in *Communal Riots in Post Independence India*, ed. Asghar Ali Engineer (Hyderabad: Sangam Books, 1984), 232–33, and Asghar Ali Engineer, "Case Studies of Five Major Riots," in *Communal Riots in Post Independence India*, 248–49.

22. Ganda Singh, "A Diary of Partition Days," in *India Partitioned: The Other Face of Freedom*, ed. Mushirul Hasan (New Delhi, Roli Books, 1997), 55–56.

23. Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali Zamindar, *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia: Refugees, Boundaries, Histories* (New Delhi: Viking, 2007), 29.

24. See K. R. Sipe, "Karachi's Refugee Crisis: The Political, Economic and Social Consequences of Partition-Related Migration," unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Duke University, 1976, quoted in Ian Talbot and Gurharpal Singh, *The Partition of India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 120.

25. S. Sathananthan, "Sindhi Nationalism and Islamic Revolution in Pakistan,"*International Studies*, 37, 3 (2000): 233.

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NINE

The Long Shadow of 1947

Partition, Violence, and Displacement in Jammu & Kashmir

Ilyas Chattha

In 1947 South Asia witnessed one of the largest displacements of people in the twentieth century with the Partition of the subcontinent. The legacies of Partition have cast a long shadow on the people's lives in South Asia. At this point, the refugee movements also began in Jammu & Kashmir as the shadow of Partition fell over the territory. This essay aims to move beyond high politics of "unfinished business" of the Kashmir conflict to uncover the human aspect of the British exit from the subcontinent. It argues that India's partition in 1947, which is critical to understanding the Kashmir conflict, needs to be understood in the broader context of the nation-building process for both India and Pakistan, and for the persistence of suspicion and mistrust between the two nations. It reflects specifically on the circumstances that led to the experience of mass violence and forced migration that Muslims in the Jammu area faced between September and November 1947. It draws on original sources to explain the scope, motivation, and purpose of the localized acts of violence and ethnic cleansing that was part of the immediate waves of violence in the months leading up to India's partition in August 1947. The essay underscores how communal violence led to the production of refugee populations, which have played a central role in defining the ongoing crisis in Jammu & Kashmir (hereafter referred to simply as J & K) as well as in the state-formation processes in both India and Pakistan.

Jammu's experience of the Partition reveals that imperial collapse not only led to the production of violence and the breakup of populations, but the dark legacies of 1947 continue to resonate today in the fractured lives of individuals and communities and the ongoing conflict over contested sites in India and Pakistan. Partition was the most critical event in the subcontinent's modern history, an event marked by the largest migrations in the twentieth century. Some one million people—Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims—are estimated to have been killed in the Partition-related violence.[1] Partition's legacy is now seen as far more complex and far-reaching than historians had previously recognized. As political scientist Gurharpal Singh has argued, the "unintended consequences of the Partition's mass political violence" still continue to haunt nation- and state-building in both India and Pakistan.[2] The lingering consequences of the 1947 Partition—signaled by Vazira Zamindar's idea of the "Long Partition"—represent a serious threat to the nation-building processes in the region and have given rise to aggressive and narrow-minded nationalist ideologies in both India and Pakistan. Zamindar sees Partition as a long process "of dividing, categorizing, and regulating people, places, and institutions for bounding two distinct nations." The events of 1947 represent only the beginning of serial mass displacements caused not only by physical civic and state violence, but also by a bureaucratic form of state violence.[3]

Indeed, the historiography of India's partition has moved from a discussion of high politics to an analysis of its human dimension in relation to one locality or another.[4] More recently, Partition historians have begun to question the relationship between the state and violence.[5] Despite the growing concerns evoked by the "new history" of the people's experiences of the Partition, the 1947 experience of populations in J & K has largely been overlooked because of the tendency of historians to concentrate on violence in Punjab and Bengal and on the long-term legacies of Partition with respect to the causes of "the unfinished business" of Partition in the Kashmir conflict.[6] A study of Jammu's experience of violence in 1947, attempted in this essay, is long overdue, as it continues to inform the politics of the region and shape the lives of people in palpable ways. Yet, there is remarkably little written about the forced migration and mass violence of the Partition in the case of Jammu. And this despite the fact the people of this erstwhile princely state experienced mass violence and displacement not just in 1947, but also throughout the course of the post-colonial period as India and Pakistan fought over the control of region.[7]

In India, RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak/Seva Sangh) and others have in recent years been complaining about the tragic and forced departure since 1990 of Hindu Pandits from the Kashmir Valley,[8] but they have been silent for decades on the complicity of the state in the violence and production of refugee populations in the formerly princely state of Jam-

mu since 1947. Although Kashmiri Pandits are victims of the post-1988 violence in the Valley, like their Muslim compatriots in Jammu faced mass violence in 1947. However, much of the mass violence in Jammu was not broadly reported despite the fact this was not only more extensive and worse than in the Valley in the 1990s, but it was linked to political objectives with the singular objective of clearing out the Muslim population from the areas. As Alexander Evans rightly points out, "earlier migrations lie forgotten. In 1947, large numbers of Muslims left Jammu region for Pakistan, significantly altering the demographics of J & K as a whole."[9] The Jammu violence still haunts the region and individuals who lived through the brutality in 1947. Therefore, it is much more significant now to explore the Partition-era violence in J & K and its long-term imprints, and the repeated cycles of violence and disorder. While it has often been argued that the Kashmir conflicts are deeply embedded in the state formation in both India and Pakistan in the construction of the post-1947 nationalist ideal and state policies,[10] it has also been suggested that the memories of suffering from these conflicts have become an important obstacle to improving India-Pakistan relations.[11]

This analysis reflects on the circumstances which led to the mass killings and the forced migration of J & K's minorities in the area at Partition of the subcontinent. It highlights the level of organization and chief characteristics of violence and draws attention to agents and victims of the violence that arose in the Jammu region in 1947. In particular, the analysis will focus on the relationship of the state to the development of violence and the production and expulsion of refugees. Ian Copland worked extensively on princely states and recognized that there was considerable violence in the Punjabi princely states in 1947, some of which was instigated by the rulers themselves.[12] The events in Jammu are parallel to what happened in the Punjab. As this account of Jammu unfolds, it will relate Partition-related violence that swept through the Punjab's towns and cities from March 1947 onwards to the subsequent development of Jammu violence in September–November that year. This resulted in mass violence and forced migration.

As the shadow of Partition fell over J & K, over one million Muslims were uprooted and an estimated 250,000–300,000 were massacred in Jammu province alone between September and November 1947.[13] While the violence had elements of spontaneity in response to the Partition violence that took place elsewhere in India, there were clear signs of "ethnic cleansing" elements too. Jammu's experience of violence is worthy of detailed consideration not only because it sheds light on wider theories of collective violence, but it represents an important contribution to a humanistic study of "Long Partition" and its dark legacies.

Before proceeding to examine the state's role in patronizing violence against Jammu's Muslim population and the applicability of the concept

of "ethnic cleasing" in any detail, it is important to discuss briefly the background of the violence and mass migration.

BACKGROUND OF THE J & K VIOLENCE

The territory of J & K has been the source of tension and conflict between India and Pakistan ever since the British decolonization of the subcontinent in 1947. The J & K region is today divided between India and Pakistan. This partition came about in 1947–1948 as both countries fought over the control of this territory at the northern end of the subcontinent. At least two wars have been fought between India and Pakistan over the future of Kashmir. The tragedy of Partition created the worst possible starting point. Within months of the Partition of the subcontinent in 1947, the conflict arose out of exceptional circumstances. J & K was one of the largest princely states ruled by Hindu Dogra, Maharaja Hari Singh, with a largely Muslim population. Apparently, the Maharaja united with India, without consulting with his own constituents and also ignoring Pakistan's claim based on religion, cultural affinity, geographical setting, and commercial importance. Thus within weeks of the British pull-out, the violence sparked a mass migration.[14] As a matter of fact, a rounded understating of the violence requires an analysis of the events in both J & K in September–November 1947 and of the first outbreak in March that saw the Rawalpindi Division massacres of Hindus and Sikhs in the British-administered Punjab province.

"A large flock" of the Hindus and Sikhs from Rawalpindi, within a week of the killings, started migrating to neighboring J & K.[15] The embittered Sikh and Hindu refugees' tales of violence raised animosities wherever they settled. In Jammu city alone, by mid-September, they numbered 65,000. Their arrival threatened Jammu's stability and brought the communal tension to a "breaking point." They planned revenge and served as an occasion to launch a reign of terror on Jammu's Muslim population. Violence sparked an exodus, and a large number of Kashmiri Muslim families from J & K started pouring into the border districts of Punjab, namely, Rawalpindi, Jhelum, Gujrat, and Sialkot. The refugees related harrowing tales of massacres by the state Dogra troopers. Images of such violence in Kashmir inflamed some Punjabi Muslims and, in particular, stirred up the movement of Pathan tribes in the North-West Frontier Areas.

THE MASSACRES IN "AZAD" KASHMIR

Whitehead has explored the causes and mechanics of the tribal invasion in 1947 and argues the mobilizing of the *lashkar* (raiders) that entered Kashmir, and the nature of its actions there, were shaped by Partition—

not simply by the desire to forestall Kashmir's accession to India, but by religious or communal grievance about a Hindu prince ruling a largely Muslim populace, and a desire for vengeance against the Sikh communities in Muzaffarabad and Baramulla in response to anti-Muslim pogroms in East Punjab.[16] By October 1947, a large number of Pathan "tribesmen" declared a "jihad" against the Hindu Dogra rule. These Muslim raiders who numbered about 20,000 crossed the border and smuggled arms into Kashmir. They, along with the Muslim army deserters from the state forces and retired army men, came to help the Muslims of Poonch. There were also rumors of the Pakistan Army's assisting the "Provisional Government" of North-West Frontier Province in such raids.[17] Their actions grew into a full-scale revolt against the Hindu Dogra rule and culminated in the form of a "liberation" of an area in western Jammu and Kashmir and proclaimed the independent "Azad" Kashmir on 24 October 1947. Two days later, on 26 October, the Maharaja fled from Srinagar to Jammu as the threat of "liberation" armed activists poised to capture the city. In the backdrop of the revolt, the raiders besieged the towns of Kotli and Poonch for half a month, killing hundreds of Hindus and Sikhs ruthlessly and looting their properties.[18]

The raiders specifically targeted the non-Muslim state officials in order to drive them out of the areas. Krishna Mehta provides a rambling account of her days in and around Muzaffarabad, where her husband was a member of the Kashmir civil service, at the time of the tribes' raids in the Kashmir province. She writes about how her husband was escorted by the tribesmen, who "drew their guns at him and shouted, You *kafir* [infidel], go on your knees and prostrate before us, we represent Pakistan. He stood motionless. Tell us if you are a Hindu or a Musalman? they demanded. When he said he was a Hindu, they all fired at him one after the other."[19] In less than two months, a large stream of Hindus and Sikhs was forced to migrate to the "other" part of Kashmir. While the violence was dying down in Punjab at times, it was only beginning in J & K, which eventually unfolded into a full-scale war between India and Pakistan that led to the partition of the princely state.

THE JAMMU MASSACRES AND STATE COMPLICITY

In the Jammu province just as in neighboring western Kashmir, there was official complicity in the "ethnic cleansing" of religious minorities. In this case the Muslims were the victims, as Hindus and Sikhs were in the towns of Mirpur, Bimber, Kotli, Poonch, and Muzaffarabad. It was believed that Hindu and Sikh refugees pouring in from Azad Kashmir and West Punjab were responsible for the violence in Jammu in which Muslims became the primary target. As already noted, in April 1947 the first trickle of refugees had already arrived in Jammu following the March

1947 violence in the West Punjab areas of Rawalpindi. The daily flood peaked in late 1947 when an estimated 160,000 Hindus and Sikhs migrated from the western districts of Pakistan.[20]

Jammu's Muslims were to pay a heavy price in September–November 1947 for the organized killings and forced migration of Hindus and Sikhs in West Punjab earlier that year. The fearful stories by the refugees of murder and looting at the hands of the Muslims in Punjab and Azad Kashmir intensified the violence against Muslims in Jammu. Many disgruntled Dogra refugees backed by their relatives from Jammu started a general clearing of the Muslim population. Some Sikh deserters of the Sialkot Unit, who migrated to Jammu and also had taken away with themselves rifles and ammunition, now utilized them.[21] The violent attacks on the Muslims were not just prompted by revenge, but formed part of ethnic cleansing. The political motivation of the violence comes out clearly in the report of the *Daily Telegraph* on 12 January 1948:

> Yet another element in the situation is provided by Sikh refugees from the West Punjab who have seized Muslim lands in Jammu. . . . [T]hey originated the massacres there last October [1947] to clear for themselves new Sikh territory to compensate for their losses in Pakistan and to provide part of the nucleus of a future Sikhistan.[22]

As elsewhere in 1947, the violence in J & K was locked into an all-India pattern, as killings of one community in one part of the country were justified as retribution for violence in another part. As a matter of fact, the Jammu Muslims suffered intensely from their proximity to the Punjab, and above all by the actions of the Dogra Hindu Maharajah Hari Singh of J & K. The firsthand accounts of violence in Jammu show that the Hindu Dogra state troops were at the forefront of attacks on Muslims. G. K. Reddy, a Hindu editor of the Srinagar English weekly *Kashmir Times*, published the following observation in the daily *Nawa-i-Waqt*:

> The mad orgy of Dogra violence against unarmed Muslims should put any self-respecting human being to shame. I saw armed bands of ruffians and soldiers shooting down and hacking to pieces helpless Muslim refuges heading towards Pakistan. My pain and agony was heightened by what I saw at the village of Rajpura where the state officials and military officers were directing a huge armed mob against a Muslim refugee convoy and got it hacked to pieces. I saw en route state officials freely distributing arms and ammunition among the Dogra. I saw the armed mob with the complicity of Dogra troops was killing the Muslims ruthlessly. The state officials were openly giving out weapons to the mob.[23]

There were also reports that the Maharaja of Patiala princely state was not only supplying weapons to the forces of Maharaja Hari Singh, but that a Sikh Brigade of the Punjab troops was also operating in J & K.[24] The available source material reveals the Dogra troopers and Sikh Bri-

gade carried out regular attacks on the border areas to expel the sectors of Muslim population. For example, one raid on 28 November 1947 ejected the entire population of Muslims from a place called Dulat Chak.[25] The state authorities intended to ease a Hindu majority in the Jammu region by driving out the Muslims. Members of the Rastriya Sewak Sangh (RSS) also actively took part in the ethnic cleansing of the Muslims in Jammu. In one case, on 18 November 1947, a Special Correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* in Srinagar reported: "It is reliably learned that members of the Rashtriya Sewak Sangh, a militant Hindu organisation, are killing Moslems and destroying their property."[26]

In November 1947, the prime minister of Pakistan, Liaquat Ali Khan, expressed his concerns over the situation in Jammu in an interview to Reuters:

> After the massacre of Moslems in East Punjab and the Punjab states the forces of annihilation turned to Jammu and Kashmir. . . . Towards the end of September the Indian National Army and the RSS shifted their headquarters from Amritsar to Jammu . . . they were provided modern weapons by the state authorities. They set about the formal business in Jammu and Pooch of repeating the horrible drama they had enacted in East Punjab.[27]

By late October 1947, tensions in the city of Jammu had become dangerously high. In the first week of November 1947, Pakistan dispatched many buses to Jammu to transport the refugees into Sialkot, after the closure of Sialkot-Jammu railway line. The Muslims started concentrating in a camp from isolated pockets to the large enclaves within the Jammu Police Lines. A convoy of twenty-four buses left Jammu on 6 November. When the convoy arrived at Jammu-Sialkot road, Dogra troopers, activists of Rastriya Sewak Sangh, and many armed Sikhs attacked the caravan and killed most of the passengers and abducted their women. The fortunate ones managed to escape to reach Sialkot, or returned to the Jammu Police Lines Camp. A survivor of the convoy provides below a graphic eyewitness account of what happened to some members of the convoy:

> The attacks had been planned and assailants had been divided into six or seven groups. . . . Those who had surrounded us were armed with rifles, spears, swords and birches. Those who snatched away ornaments, money, beddings and other property, consisted mostly of Achhuts (Untouchables), a third group was taking possession of women and in overall charge were officers who issued orders. . . . (The assailants) were so trained which left no doubt that they had been trained over a considerable period of time. The victims were then removed to the butchery in a group of six persons each. I put off my shoes and ran away and though fired at, was able to save my life but my old parents, brothers, sons and daughters who had boarded the trucks with myself, I have not heard of them since.[28]

According to a statement of another well-educated Muslim refugee who had escaped from Jammu to Sialkot, "Thirty lorries carrying Muslim evacuees out of Kashmir State were attacked by Dogra troops at Satwari in Jammu. Most of the male members were massacred, while the women were abducted." He concluded that the official proclaimed there that "there was no place for Muslims in Kashmir State and that they should all clear out."[29] A couple of years later, the 1949 United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) issued a report of the sub-committee on western Kashmir which stated that "Many of the Muslim refugees have lively recollections of the Jammu massacres of November 1947."[30] The firsthand accounts of those who lived through the violence in Jammu in 1947 collected from Sialkot provide clear evidence of the complicity of the state troopers and authorities in the ethnic cleansing of Jammu's Muslims.[31]

The available evidence reveals that the Hindu Dogra state authorities' aim was to change the demographic composition of the region by expelling the Muslim population. They sought to carve out a non-Muslim majority area in Jammu province. The depopulation of the Muslim population in the Jammu region is evidenced clearly in the 1961 Census of India (there was no 1951 census of J & K due to continuing disturbances). In Jammu province, for example, about 123 villages were "completely depopulated," while the decrease in the number of Muslims in Jammu district alone was over 100,000. Here Muslims numbered 158,630 and comprised 37 percent of the total population of 428,719 in the year 1941, and in the year 1961, they numbered only 51,690 and comprised only 10 percent of the total population of 516,932. Kathua district "lost" almost 50 percent of its Muslim population.[32] The majority of Muslims had to escape from violence. Indeed Jammu province had become a Hindu majority province. The killings and dispersal of the Muslims from Jammu were a clear example of the ethnic cleansing of a locality. Out of a total of one million who tried to migrate, more than "237,000 Muslims were systematically exterminated by all the forces of the Dogra State, headed by the Maharaja in person and aided by Hindus and Sikhs."[33]

It is possible here to suggest the 1947 Jammu violence could be conceptualized in broader accounts of ethnic cleansing.[34] Indeed it points to the fact that the violence in Jammu had a political purpose and meaning. Like other large-scale episodes of mass violence in the twentieth century, the 1947 Jammu violence in terms of making claims for territory displays evidence of the full force of administrative complicity and participation. There is growing awareness of the use of the concept "ethnic cleansing" with respect to the 1947 Partition violence; the use of the term genocide, nevertheless, remains both controversial and sensitive.[35] Until recently, the story of Jammu Muslims' killings and emptying them out of the region was either overshadowed by the communal killings in neighboring Punjab around the same time or incorporated with the Kashmir wars

between Pakistan and India. Indeed violence in the Punjab in 1947, and more recently in the Valley in 1990s, had a parallel with Jammu in terms of a cycle of revenge killings and assaults on the minorities to driving them out of the region and occupying their properties. Nevertheless, the Jammu violence overwhelmingly operated at the state level. State officials and the army contributed significantly to the violence, not because of revenge but because they acted upon the state ruler's intent to drive out the Muslims to create a Hindu majority in the Jammu region. Similar chilling conclusions emerged from Copland's analysis of the state-led violence in the Sikh Punjabi princely states in 1947.[36] The Jammu experience of violence reveals that episodes of sustained violence required the state's complicity and involvement.

To conclude, a focus on the Partition in relation to J & K reminds us that violence and displacement have not only characterized the lives of people of the formerly princely state since 1947, but also have shaped state formation in India and Pakistan. The available evidence suggests the communal violence that occurred in the areas against the backdrop of the Partition of India and its aftermath, including a possible ethnic cleansing of Jammu's Muslims in September–November 1947. The erstwhile princely state ruler abetted attacks on the Muslims with the singular objective of clearing them out from the areas.

Although most of the massacres that took place in Jammu were used instrumentally and had clear political ends, worryingly they were attended by more unsettling developments that were to endure as dark legacies. For Pakistan, the mass violence and its accompanied forced migration of Hindus and Sikhs from Azad Kashmir was only partially successful, as it failed to deliver the state to the country. However, the organised ethnic cleansing of non-Muslim minorities in both Punjab and Azad Kashmir led to a retaliatory response from the force of the Hindu ruler of the princely state (and by the Indian state), which not only led the partition of J & K, but unleashed ethnic cleansing of the Muslim population on a more systematic scale in Jammu province.

The ongoing nature of the violence and production of refugee populations that began in 1947 continued during wars between India and Pakistan in 1947, 1949, 1965, the uprising in 1989–1990, and the undeclared "Kargil War" of 1999, frequent border skirmishes, and a continuing insurgency in the region. These security situations have produced displacements of about 350,000 Kashmiris.[37] Since 1990, some 160,000 Kashmiri Pandits have left the Valley and about 35,000 Muslim refugees from Indian Kashmir have crossed into Azad Kashmir.[38] These displacements have not only impacted notions of identity, but also have given rise to humanitarian matters. "Memories of violence," writes Urvashi Butalia, "clearly do not go away easily."[39] Kashmiri refugees have shaped the organization of violence in the region, as in many ways the ideology to free and unify J & K is built on the memory of displacement and violence.

Many individuals still bear the physical and psychological scars of the Long Partition. Many others still wait not only for the adjudication of their national status but also their right to permanent ownership of the properties they were allotted from 1947 onwards.[40] Indeed, for Kashmiris the end of colonial rule upon the Partition of the subcontinent was a long process rather than an event confined to 1947.

The catalog of grievances would serve the goals of the state on both sides of the border to manipulate the sufferings and collective memory. While the hybrid idea of being a Kashmiri (Hindu or Muslim or Sikh) has particularly been challenged and left in tatters by communal divides since the early 1990s, in terms of human rights both Kashmiri Pandits and Muslims have been victims of militancy and state-directed violence. Yet, unlike the majority of the subcontinent's other distinctive culture and language heritage (ethno-nationalism), the migration of Kashmiris (Hindu, Muslim, or Sikh) to India and/or Pakistan means that there exists a constituency of support for Kashmiri nationalist sentiment outside Kashmir. The presence of the displaced Kashmiri population also acts as a reminder to India and Pakistan of the overall situation of national dislocation arising from the unfinished business of Partition. The worldwide diasporic Kashmiri community also plays its part in keeping attention focused on the Kashmiri nationalist rhetoric. The unifying experience of forced displacement, suffering, and injustice remains the dominant factor that not only unifies Kashmiris across the borders, but also heightens their consciousness of being Kashmiri.

NOTES

1. Estimates of the killings arising from the partition violence have varied considerably, from 200,000 to three million. For a discussion on this, see Gyanendra Pandey, *Remembering Partition*: *Violence, Nationalism and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

2. Gurharpal Singh, "Violence and State Formation in Pakistan," in *State and Nation-building in Pakistan: Beyond Islam and Security*, ed. Roger Long, Yunas Samad, Gurharpal Singh, and Ian Talbot (New York: Routledge, 2015), 203.

3. Vazira Fazila-Yaccobali Zamindar, *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2008), 226.

4. Ian Talbot, *Divided Cities: Partition and Its Aftermath in Lahore and Amritsar* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2006); Yasmin Khan, *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan* (London: Yale University Press, 2007); Joya Chatterji, *The Spoils of Partition: Bengal and India 1947–1967* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

5. Ian Copland, "The Master and the Maharajas: The Sikh Princes and the East Punjab Massacres of 1947," *Modern Asian Studies* 36 (2002): 657–704; Shail Mayaram, "Speech, Silence and the Making of Partition Violence in Mewat," *Subaltern Studies* 9 (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996), 126–61.

6. Prem Shankar Jha, *The Origins of a Dispute: Kashmir 1947* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003); Victoria Schofield, *Kashmir in Conflict: India, Pakistan and the Unfinished War* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2000); Ira Pande, *A Tangled Web: Jammu and Kashmir* (New Delhi: HarperCollins, 2011).

7. Sanjay Kak, ed., *Until My Freedom Has Come: The New Intifada in Kashmir* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2011); Arundhati Roy, "Kashmir Azadi," *Outlook*, September 1, 2008; Basharat Peer, *Curfewed Nights: One Kashmiri Journalist's Frontline Account Life, Love and War in His Homeland* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2010). Kwasi Kwarteng, *Ghosts of Empire: Britain's Legacies in the Modern World* (London: Bloomsbury, 2011); Tej Nath Dhar, *Under the Shadow of Militancy: The Diary of an Unknown Kashmiri* (New Delhi: Rupa and Co., 2002); Mirza Waheed, *The Collaborator* (New Delhi: Viking Penguin, 2011); and also see the film by Ajay Raina, *Tell Them the Tree They Had Planted Has Now Grown* (2002), http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1985212/?ref_=nm_flmg_cin_4 (Accessed October 22, 2015).

8. For the migration of Kashmiri Pandits from the Valley, see M. K. Sarkaria, "Powerful Pawns of the Kashmir Conflict: Kashmiri Pandit Migrants," *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, 18, 2 (2009): 197–230; Henny Sender, *The Kashmiri Pandits: A Study of Cultural Choice in North India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); Sumatra Bose, *Kashmir: Roots of Conflict, Paths to Peace* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005); Gh. Rasool Bhat, "The Exodus of Kashmiri Pandits and Its Impacts, 1989–2002," *International Journal of Research in Social Science and Humanities*, 2, 2 (2012): 102–16.

9. Alexander Evans, "A Departure from History: Kashmiri Pandits, 1990–2001," *Contemporary South Asia*, 11, 1 (2002): 33.

10. Ian Talbot and Gurharpal Singh, *The Partition of India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Suvir Kaul, "Indian Empire and the Case of Kashmir," *Economic and Political Weekly*, xlvi, 13 (March 26, 2011).

11. Urvashi Butalia (ed.), *Partition: The Long Shadow* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2015).

12. Ian Copland, "The Integration of the Princely States: A 'Bloodless' Revolution?" *South Asia*, 18 (1995): 42. In 1947, there were over 500 "Native Princely States of India," which comprised about 45 percent of the territory and a quarter of the population of British India. The inhabitants of princely states were "state subjects" who were not technically British colonial subjects.

13. *The Times*, London, in its issue of 10 August 1948, put the death figure at "more than 237,000." Jamwal estimates the number of casualties between 200,000 and 300,000. Anuradha Bhasin Jamwal, "Prejudice in Paradise," *Communalism Combat*, 11, 104 (2004). Khurshid claims that "as many as 200,000 Jammu Muslims lost their lives in 1947 and most of them died around the first week of November" in 1947. Sorayya Khurshid, "My Jammu Memories," in Rehmatullah Rad and Khalid Hasan, eds., *Memory Lane to Jammu* (Lahore: Sange-e-Meel Publications, 2004), 179–80.

14. For additional details of the background to this violence, see my essay Ilyas Chattha, "Escape from Violence: The 1947 Partition of India and the Migration of Kashmiri Muslim Refugees," in *Refugees and the End of Empire Imperial Collapse and Forced Migration in the Twentieth Century*, eds. Panikos Panayi and Pippa Virdee (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 196–218.

15. "Refugees Flock into Kashmir," *The Times*, London, 14 March 1947, 3.

16. A. Whitehead, *A Mission in Kashmir* (New Delhi: Viking, 2007), 123–24.

17. "Kashmir Rebels Attacked by Aircrafts," *The Times*, 31 October 1947, 4.

18. "Reinforcement for State Troops: City Panic," *The Times*, 28 October 1947, 4.

19. Her husband Duni Chand Mehta was posted as deputy commissioner of the western Kashmir district Muzaffarabad in 1947. Krishna Mehta, *Kashmir 1947: A Survivor's Story* (New Delhi: 2005).

20. "Tribal Hazards in the Border Territory," *The Times*, 26 January 1948, 5.

21. The Punjab Police Abstract of Intelligence for the Week Ending August, 1947, 612, NIHCR.

22. *Daily Telegraph*, January 12, 1948

23. *Nawa-i-Waqt*, October 29, 1947, 2.

24. M. Y. Saraf, "The Jammu Massacres," in Rehmatullah Rad and Khalid Hasan, eds., *Memory Lane to Jammu* (Lahore: Sange-e-Meel Publications, 2004), 163.

25. Sialkot District Police Record, Police station (*thana)* Shakargarh, FIR no. 179, 28 November 1947.

26. *Manchester Guardian*, 18 November 1947, 5.

27. *Manchester Guardian*, 5 November 1947, 5.

28. M. Y. Saraf, "The Jammu Massacres," in Rehmatullah Rad and Khalid Hasan, eds., *Memory Lane to Jammu* (Lahore: Sange-e-Meel Publications, 2004), 170–71. Every year November 6th commemorates the Jammu Martyrs Day in order to remember the massacre of Muslims by the forces of Maharaja Hari Singh, Indian army, and Hindu extremists in different parts of Jammu region while they were migrating to Pakistan in 1947.

29. *The Journey to Pakistan: Documentation on Refugees of 1947* (Lahore: 1993), 298–99.

30. Christopher Snedden, *The Untold Story of the People of Azad Kashmir* (London: Hurst, 2012).

31. For the firsthand experiences of the survival of Jammu violence, see a section titled, "Massacres of Jammu's Muslim Population and Arrival of Refugees in Sialkot," in Ilyas Chattha, *Partition and Locality: Violence, Migration, and Development in Gujranwala and Sialkot 1947–1961* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2011), 161–69.

32. *The Census of India*, 1961, V1, in M. H. Kamili, ed., *Census of India* (Delhi: 1967), 42, 157, 359–60.

33. "Elimination of Muslims from Jammu," II, *The Times*, 10 August 1948, 5.

34. Definitions of ethnic cleansing remain ambiguous and assume the role of the state imperative to genocide. For the use and definition of both genocide and ethnic cleansing, see H. R. Huttenbach, "Locating the Holocaust on the Genocide Spectrum: Towards a Methodology of Definition and Categorization," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 3 (1988): 289–303. R. M. Hayden, "Schindler's Fate: Genocide, Ethnic Cleansing, and Population Transfers," *Slavic Review*, 55, 4 (1996): 732–34; M. Mazower, "Violence and the State in the Twentieth Century," *American Historical Review* 107, 4 (October 2002): 1158–78.

35. Paul Brass terms the 1947 partition violence in Punjab as "retributive genocide" and considers "the genocidal massacres" in the Punjab [as] organized and planned, but their "special character is that they were not ordered by a state." Paul Brass, "The Partition of India and Retributive Genocide in the Punjab, 1946–1947: Means, Methods, and Purposes," *Journal of Genocide Research*, 5, 1 (2003): 71–101.

36. Ian Copland, "The Master and the Maharajas: The Sikh Princes and the East Punjab Massacres of 1947," *Modern Asian Studies* 36 (2002): 657–704.

37. Patricia Ellis and Zafar Khan, "Kashmiri Displacement and the Impact on Kashmiriyat," *Contemporary South Asia*, 12, 4 (2003): 528.

38. Alexander Evans, "A Departure from History: Kashmiri Pandits, 1990–2001," *Contemporary South Asia*, 11, 1 (2002): 33.

39. Urvashi Butalia, "Partition's Memory," *Seminar* 497 (2001): 93. Also see her seminal work, *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India* (New Delhi: Penguin, 1998).

40. C. D. Robinson, *Body of Victim, Body of Warrior: Refugee Families and the Making of Kashmiri Jihadists* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013); Ilyas Chattha, "Escape from Violence: The 1947 Partition of India and the Migration of Kashmiri Muslim Refugees," in *Refugees and the End of Empire Imperial Collapse and Forced Migration in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Panikos Panayi and Pippa Virdee (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 196–218.

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TEN

From Frontiers to Borders

Partition and the Production of Marginal Spaces in North East India

Babyrani Yumnam

In Siddhartha Deb's *Point of Return,* as Babu and his parents often battled with conflicting emotions of alienation and love for the very place they called home, he found himself seeking answers to questions that many in North East India,[1] "native" and "foreigner" alike, have lived with for more than six decades:

> "Where do they go?" I had asked my father when I was small. "Aizawl, Kohima, Imphal," my father would reply, naming the state capitals of the Northeast without looking up from his files. At school, in the geography classes, they told us nothing about these places. In the dots and crosses I marked on the map of India during my term exams, I only had to place the big industrial cities and political centers and trading ports of the dusty plains to get full marks for that section of the exam. I would sit in the car and mouth the geography names as they appeared on the windscreen of the trucks going by—"All-India permit for Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal . . ." and I wonder why the names my father mentioned never appeared on the trucks, as if there was something about these destinations that could not be revealed to the world at large.[2]
>
> Why does no one in Delhi know about what is happening here? Why do the killings and lootings not appear in the Calcutta paper that now gets here three days late?[3]

These were questions of identity and belonging, political and economic marginality, and of seldom reported cases of violence that stem from issues far deeper and wide-reaching than either Babu or his father, Dr. Dam, could fathom. Years after moving to New Delhi, he comes back to visit, half-hoping to see some changes in the attitudes, politics, and the turpitude of violence. Having realized that not much had changed except for hurried strides towards modernity and economic development, he acknowledges the futility of history in answering his questions. History,

> dragged so far from the metropolitan centers, from the rustic mainlands, will tell you nothing. In the North East, the way I remember it, history lies defeated, muttering solipsistically from desultory plaques put up to commemorate visiting politicians, the memorial stones fading against the brilliance of the colors in the streets.[4]

Babu's story captures the complexity of North East India's socio-political conditions that are but deeply mired in a past that seem to bear no resonance beyond the region's[5] territorial boundaries. But it is a past that is equally contentious, rooted in specific historical formations and conjunctures that produced and reproduced the kind of social and political milieu within which the North East region (NER) is situated at present. This chapter is a reexamination of those historical processes and events that contributed in naturalizing the region as the loci of geographical, political, and economic marginality. In particular, I direct attention to nineteenth-century colonial interventions in the form of territorial demarcation and administration, and the impact of 1947 Partition on the socio-political landscape of the NER.

In the subsequent sections, I look at how colonial administrative and territorial control necessitated by external and internal circumstances, both political and economic, transformed the NER into a frontier tract that functioned as buffer zone against foreign incursions (from the Burmese and Chinese) and domestic obstructions from hostile "hill tribes."[6] As processes of territorial demarcation began to fix boundaries, pre-colonial connections of trade and cultural exchanges between communities inhabiting contiguous territories in India, Burma,[7] East Pakistan, and southwest China were disrupted. These connections were severed completely when the British transferred power to a newly independent India and the subsequent Partition in 1947 bisected across Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, thereby creating several small territories through this ultimate act of territorialization. I argue that these historical conjunctures introduced the idea of "fixed boundaries" for the first time to this part of the world and transformed the NER from a colonial frontier to a post-colonial border zone through disruptions in a larger connected history that spanned across national space(s) in South and Southeast Asia. I also discuss how the NER could be seen as an imperial construct created as the canvas of British imperialist expansion unfolded in the region and

became firmly established in the post-colonial years, thereby producing a "directional category"[8] that identified the NER as a geographical locus of complex historical formations and long-standing political instability.

This essay reviews North East India's historiography that was transformed through processes of colonial governmentality and post-colonial nation-building. In doing so, I highlight the significance of historical formations and events in shaping the current socio-temporal status of the NER, and the discursive silence in India's nationalist historical geography which, through its primary focus on routes running east-west along the Gangetic basin, is not attentive to the region's peculiarities, thus rendering it as an eastern frontier or border in perpetuity.[9] To that end, this essay offers an alternative perspective about the 1947 Partition—a narrative about and from spaces pushed to the margins as processes of colonial map-making and post-colonial nation-building unfolded. I do not, however, claim to have outlined a comprehensive narrative of the multiple social histories and political encounters that characterize the North East. The sheer diversity of languages and social histories make it impossible for me alone to explicate the nuances and complexities of each community and their history. Nonetheless, it is indeed the intent of this study to draw attention to the need for a discursive field that would bring together these multiple histories for studying the social history of Partition at the very edges of the boundaries it created.

THE FRONTIER: A COLONIAL LEGACY

Northeast India is a culturally diverse region that shares its international boundaries with Burma, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Tibet, and China. It is connected to the rest of India by a narrow strip of land[10] in North Bengal called the "Siliguri corridor" or the "Chicken's neck." Often, this corridor is seen as symbolic of the region's isolation from national political and social consciousness. In early colonial accounts, this exclusion is emphasized in the civilizational difference between the "barbaric hill tribes" and the "advanced Indic civilizations," the two having little or no cultural and racial similarities. These differences would become a contentious point when the transfer of power to independent India was negotiated on the eve of Independence.

Early imperial policies of trade and progress did not have much to do with this hilly northeastern tract, and the British sought to segregate these areas from the rest of India by constructing political boundaries for both commercial and administrative purposes.[11] After the first Anglo-Burmese War of 1825, the British expelled the Burmese from the kingdoms of Manipur and Assam, conquered them and continued to incorporate the kingdoms of Cachar, Muttock (on the Arunachal-Assam border), the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, and the Garo Hills (now in Meghalaya) into

the Assam Province. The second half of the nineteenth century saw the conquest of the Naga and Lushai Hills that later became separate districts of Assam. The vast mountain ranges between these kingdoms came to be accepted as the "frontier tract"[12] that separated Burma from Assam. As the expansion continued, the British realized the accompanying ambiguity about the political boundaries of the newly acquired territorial possessions; there were no obvious physical boundaries except for the Himalayas in the north. Concrete territorial boundaries were difficult to delimit as local populations used physical landmarks like the mountains, hills, rivers, or meadows to mark territories. For the locals, fixed lines or boundaries were confusing and inconvenient as these lines drew sharp divisive lines across cultural and political systems.[13] For example, in one of his letters to Lord Ripon, the Governor General and Viceroy of India, C. S. Elliott, the Chief Commissioner, expressed uncertainty about restraining the "Nagas with their wanderings and trading habits, within an imaginary line which they have always been accustomed to cross."[14] Drawing a "fixed boundary" across the undefined area seemed like an impracticable solution to Alexander Mackenzie too:

> The Northeast Frontier is a term used sometimes to denote the boundary line and sometimes more generally to describe a tract. In the latter sense, it embraces the whole of the hill ranges of North East and south of Assam valley as well as the western slopes of the great mountain system lying between Bengal and independent Burma, with its outlying spurs and ridges. It will be convenient to proceed in regular order, first traversing from west to east the sub-Himalayan ranges north of Brahmaputra, then turning westward along the course of the ranges that found the Assam valley in the south, and finally, exploring the highlands interposed between Cachar and Chittagong and the hills that separate the maritime district of Chittagong from the Empire of Ava.[15]

Despite the cumbersome and equivocal project of mapping and defining the vast broad frontier, the British began to demarcate territories for administrative control, often arbitrarily deploying "scientific techniques" of drawing maps and conducting surveys. European concepts of belonging and territoriality were imported to outline and define the "unscientific frontier"[16] and to control the "confused or hostile border areas."[17] The concept of space and scale began to acquire a new meaning in the Northeastern frontier as cartographic knowledge reinforced imperial power and authority in the mapping of the NER's "geobody."[18] In fact, Nicholas Dirks could not have expressed it better when he stated that "colonial knowledge both enabled conquest and was produced by it."[19] The spread of map literacy and the use of "scientific techniques" such as topographical surveys, demographic information, and anthropological descriptions produced huge volumes of information about colonial India that was instrumental in facilitating territorial expansion and imperial power.

Most of the boundary lines, until this point of time, were drawn with the purpose of protecting territorial possessions from external incursions. The Pemberton Line drawn between Manipur and Burma in 1833 sought to restrain the powerful Burmese army from advancing towards the colonial stronghold in Calcutta. In 1837, another boundary between Assam and Burma was delimited without a treaty, which delineated the North East Frontier Agency or NEFA[20] as the outermost fringe of the empire. These boundaries were however not rigid and were frequently breached as commercial interests often took the colonial rulers over and beyond these imagined lines of control. This reshuffling of administrative boundaries did not go well with the local populations and they resisted against such policies. Nonetheless, this administrative exercise produced a definitional and directional category—the North East—which is still used today, often singularly, to refer to the region and its people. Such a category has been criticized as having a homogenizing tendency that blurred the boundaries of social realities in the region. But for the British, it served the purpose of creating an administrable political unit that protected territorial possessions and advanced commercial pursuits on the eastern fringe of the empire.

TERRITORIAL ENCLAVES—OF COMMERCE AND POLITICS

In their attempts to establish fixed territorial enclaves, the colonial rulers were concerned with not just the interstate boundaries. A number of maps and lines were also drawn within the "broad frontier" to distinguish between directly administered and "protected" areas.[21] The 1873 Inner Line Regulation[22] was one such border control strategy that not only divided physical terrains but also sought to demarcate British jurisdictional limits and identify those who would be treated as British subjects. The Line required all British subjects and foreign residents to acquire a license before entering the frontier tract. It sought to prevent land acquisition by foreign residents, control commercial relations with the tribes, and to restrain the spread of tea gardens outside the colonial fiscal limits.[23] The Line practically divided the hills from the plains, the marshy jungles from the productive, arable lands, and the settled populations from the nomadic hill tribes, thereby producing a spatio-temporal space where the theater of capital played out.

It is to be noted here that Assam and its surrounding "tribal" areas, at least until 1820, had no commercial value for the British. The discovery of tea in the upland plains of Assam in 1821 changed that. Other sources of economic interests included the "discovery" of huge limestone deposits in Pandua in Meghalaya, timber in the Dooars,[24] and rich forest resources in the Khasi hills east of Sylhet.[25] Consequently, lands were cleared and tea gardens mushroomed in the Dooars and Darjeeling.[26] Europeans

were encouraged to set up tea plantations with labor brought in from East Bengal, and communication and transport networks such as tramways were constructed in the Goalpara, Lakhimpur, and Sibsagar districts to transport both labor and timber. The British introduced a flexible migration policy of settling the vast "wastelands" and to make up for the shortage of labor on the tea plantations.[27] Later, such waves of migration that continued well after the Partition and the 1971 Indo-Pakistan War would become the contentious issue that triggered violent anti-immigration protests in Assam and Tripura.[28] Meanwhile the discovery of oil and mineral deposits in Assam prompted the British to control and protect its commercial interests in the region from close foreign presence, i.e., Burma and the Manchu empire's[29] southern region, which is now Tibet.[30] Besides, domestic disturbances in the form of attacks on officials and the tea plantation by hill tribes who resisted colonial land encroachments became an administrative obstacle. Establishing the Inner Line separated and isolated the "headhunting, nomadic tribal groups" who were left to manage their own affairs as long as they paid tributes to the empire or when the need to trade or acquire lands arose. In the process, binary categories of productive and non-productive territories, modern and primitive social worlds, and of "contending worlds of capital and pre-capital" were carved out.[31] Thus the Line not only represented a "territorial exterior of the theatre of capital" but also "a temporal outside of the historical pace of development and progress that represented the transition from the time of 'no law' to the time of law."[32] Additionally, paternalistic economic intervention in the form of land and labor regulations facilitated the gradual integration of the traditional subsistence economy into a larger cash-based capitalist economy.

The Inner Line was however not a fixed, rigidly enforced boundary. Rather it was made flexible and often altered to suit the needs of the British to establish ownership over the "fruit side of the garden wall."[33] Until the late 1920s, it was repeatedly redrawn to accommodate the expanding tea plantations and subsequent revisions of survey maps. If new tea or coal tracts and valuable forest areas were found beyond the existing Line, the Government Gazette extended it to include those areas, in what Kar calls an "expansion of the legal theatre of capital."[34] This resource-dependent flexibility therefore meant that the gradual incorporation of this remote corner of *Zomia* highlands into the larger extractive capitalist order also peripheralized it simultaneously, albeit unevenly. The Inner Line thus produced a marginal space—a frontier within a frontier that led to the seclusion and severing of the cultural, economic, and political ties between the hills and the plains.

Colonial exclusionary politics acquired a sharper expression through the 1935 Government Act which identified certain tribal belts to be "Excluded" and "Partially Excluded" from Indian juridical control and directly administered by the British instead.[35] The creation of these en-

claves stemmed from Verrier Elwin's concern that the culturally and racially different aboriginal tribes "might not be wholly or fairly represented in the once hegemonic ideology of Indian nationalism."[36] In the long run, this protectionist move isolated the hill tracts and fixed their populations to a physical space suited to their "primitive" and "backward" habitats. This contributed in further marginalizing, geographically and politically, the space to which the hill tribes and eventually the rest of NER were assigned. Another implication of the Act was the deepening of a "space-centric identity consciousness" among the local populations in the region, particularly Assam, which became the cornerstone of ethnic assertion and the secessionist demands in the wake of continuing immigration after 1947 and 1971.[37]

Another key mapping exercise that transformed the fluid northeastern frontier into a fixed international boundary was the drawing of the McMahon Line in 1914. In 1905, an expedition led by Francis Younghusband attacked and gained control of Tibet. In 1914, after the Manchu empire collapsed and Tibet declared its Independence, the British negotiated an agreement with Tibet that drew the McMahon Line as the official political boundary. This meant that Tibetan-speaking people on the foothills of the Himalayas came under British India. China refused to accept this Line as the official boundary but there was nothing much it could do against the powerful British. Decades later, the McMahon Line became the disputed border over which the 1962 Indo-China war broke out. To this day, competing Indian and Chinese claims over what is now Arunachal Pradesh stirs up political unrest within both federal and state policy circles.[38]

As cartographic practices advanced imperial interests in this part of "Inner Asian Frontier"[39] or "Asian space,"[40] the northeastern borderland emerged as a static location on fixed coordinates inside firm territorial boundaries. The colonial rulers' idea of a bounded, inland civilization in close proximity to East and Southeast Asia was thus realized. This process of calcifying boundaries led to the emergence of a discourse of geographical, political, and economic marginality that marred post-colonial imaginations of a new nation.

PRODUCTION OF A MARGINAL SPACE

In a delicate but detailed portrayal of the historical formations that swept through the Asian space stretching beyond the NER's physical boundaries into Burma, Amitav Ghosh's *The Glass Palace* brings to life the realities of interconnected lives, spaces, and shared memories of history and culture as experiences of colonization, India's anti-colonial struggle, and World War II transformed the history of the region.[41] Narrating how commoners and the Burmese royal family get caught in the crosshairs of

British invasion and the subsequent implications in the late 1880s, his story interweaves the dynamics of socio-spatial relations across Burma, India, and Malaya. Most importantly, Ghosh draws attention to the fluid cultural and economic exchanges that spanned across national boundaries, imagined and real. These linkages were not merely a fictional recreation of the author's imagination but concrete historical realities that were ruptured when colonial cartographical surgeries transformed the NER from a broad frontier tract to a narrow frontier of rule.

Accounts of the long-established network of economic and cultural links between what is now South, East, and Southeast Asia can be seen in the works of Laichen Sun, David Ludden, S. N. Baruah, Thant Myint-U, and Sanghamitra Misra.[42] People living in these geographically and culturally contiguous areas have used both land and water (sea and inland waterways) routes for movement of goods and people. The sea route was frequently used, operating from Rangoon to Chittagong on the coasts of Bengal and through the inland waterways on the Brahmaputra, Surma, and Barak. The overland routes were more tedious as they spanned across difficult hill terrains and were mostly used by the hill tribes inhabiting the interiors of the region. Some of these routes were the Tangup Pass in Burma's Arakan Hills, Sikkim's Chumbi valley-Tibet road to China, Manipur-Burma road via Kabow valley (now in Burma), and the Kalewa-Tamu route.[43] One of the most important roads was the Patkai-Pangchau Pass that originated from Upper Assam (Ledo), passed through Arunachal and reached Mytkina in the Hukoong Valley in Burma.[44] This route was crucial during World War II when the retreating Allied Forces had to check the Japanese army from advancing further inland into British India. Known as the Stilwell Road, this road connected Yunnan to Upper Assam through the Upper Irrawady and Chindwin regions in Burma, and was considered a part of the southern Old Silk Route.[45]

After the 1826 Anglo-Burmese War and the British conquest of Upper Burma in 1885, these routes were no longer used and cross-border linkages were disconnected. In 1937, the British government formally separated Burma from the rest of India,[46] closing off its frontiers and creating the NER with little or no connections with its old ties in the Bay of Bengal, Tibet, Burma, or Yunnan. When the McMahon Line was established, it closed the Chumbi valley-Tibet road to China. Connections and linkages were finally severed when undivided India was partitioned according to the two-nation theory. In 1947, Calcutta became part of West Bengal while a large part of the remaining countryside dependent on Calcutta's ports and industries was made East Pakistan with Dacca, or Dhaka, as its capital. Chittagong was no longer accessible to the NER, and the major cities of Sylhet and Dacca with which it traded were also cut off. If imperial politics distanced the Northeast from its neighbors in the east, the Partition cut off the remaining ties, not only separating it

from "mainland" India but also producing an isolated, landlocked territorial space that came to be defined as India's border zone on the cusp of South and Southeast Asia.

PARTITION, INDEPENDENCE, AND NATION-BUILDING

In eastern India, the 1947 Partition did not mean a simple territorial bisection of Bengal into Muslim-dominated East Bengal and Hindu-dominated West Bengal; Hindu and Muslim settlements were not easily divisible by a line, imaginary or not. The Bengal Boundary Commission, tasked with deciding the new border between India and Pakistan, faced ambiguities and indecisiveness about the demarcation of territories.[47] Chaired by Cyril Radcliffe, the Commission authorized the Radcliffe Line that carved out a patchwork of four geographically non-contiguous pieces—East Bengal at the center surrounded by Tripura in the east, Cooch Behar on the north, and West Bengal comprising twelve districts on the west surrounded East Bengal or East Pakistan.[48] Willem van Schendel, using a series of maps and figures illustrating how the Partition created the communal dynamics of the eastern border, explains how the Bengal border was not exclusively a Hindu-Muslim divide:

> For almost three-fifths of its length, the border was *not* a Muslim/non-Muslim divide. Only 26 percent of the border separated a Muslim-majority area in East Pakistan from a Hindu-dominated area in India, and an additional 15 percent separated a Muslim-majority area in East Pakistan from a Christian- or Buddhist-majority in India.[49]

In the other sections of the border located along the Garo Hills/Khasi and Jaintia Hills in what is now Meghalaya, the Muslim-dominated areas faced the Christian or Buddhist-dominated areas. This shows that the idea of a Hindu-Muslim divide along the Bengal border only served to reproduce dominant Partition narratives as a narrow regional history of only the Bengalis and marginalized the histories of other communities that were separated by the Radcliffe Line along the border segments of Assam, Tripura, Burma (settled by Hindus but not Bengalis), and the Chittagong Hill Tracts/Assam or Mizoram where neither Islam nor Hinduism had significant importance.

Van Schendel's argument not only exposes the faulty assumption that Hindu-Muslim dichotomy characterizes the Partition's legacy, particularly in eastern India, but also highlights the fissures in the nation-building project that emerged from the margins of dominant nationalist historiography after 1947. In fact, the reality of the Partition was imposed upon a region that had very little political stake, before or during the drawing of the Radcliffe Line. The spatial and temporal configurations that emerged in the immediate aftermath of the postcolonial years remained a gray

area for much of the dominant Partition scholarship. As local residents and refugees struggled to cope with the irreversible social and political reality on both sides of the border and in the borderland beyond, a storm that would challenge independent India's nation-building project was brewing in many parts of the NER.

India's nation-building project remains a contentious issue for North East India. During the colonial period, the "tribal" belts were ruled as part of Assam but indirectly through their local chiefs. These included the Naga Hills to the north of Imphal and Lushai Hills to the south, which had been heavily militarized following the 1942 Japan-Allied Forces War. As the transfer of power was being worked out, the impending Partition was a cause of concern for the ethnic groups and small kingdoms in the region. The Naga National Council formed in 1946 wanted complete independence and urged the colonial authorities to exclude them from the yet-to-be-formed India. Post-Independence, the new Indian government[50] was not willing to negotiate actual independence for the Naga territories; subsequently, the Nagas refused to recognize New Delhi's authority. The Naga secessionist movement that emerged out of this crisis demanded a separate homeland that would include Naga-inhabited territories in Assam, Manipur, and Arunachal Pradesh. By the 1950s the Naga insurgency was already at its peak and till today, it continues to press its demands.

The Merger Agreement[51] became the primary cause of disagreement for most of the princely states pressured to join the Indian Union; it influenced many of the nationalist movements that sprung in the NER post-Independence.[52] These movements also pressed secessionist demands, often arguing that the NER was autonomous before colonization and never a part of the larger Indian polity. In addition, postcolonial political indifference and "neglect" towards people of the region spurred nationalist sentiments to adopt an anti-India stand.[53] During the late 1960s, the upsurge in Naxalite threats in the Bengal corridor along with violent separatist movements in Nagaland, Assam, Mizoram, and Manipur marked a turning point in the Indian government's statecraft. The federal state conferred autonomous statuses and statehoods[54] to provinces like the NEFA as part of a political move to pacify dissenting voices. For example, the state of Nagaland was separated from Assam Province in 1963, Meghalaya and Mizoram in 1971, and Arunachal Pradesh in 1987. Manipur and Tripura became full-fledged states in 1972. However, such political moves did not do much to pacify the fragmented points of resistance which stymied all efforts to maintain India's nation-building project. Instead, the NER became heavily militarized to quell the militant uprisings, thereby becoming locked in a cycle of violent separatism, deepening poverty,[55] and political instability. In addition to the dissenting voices against Indian federalism, the NER is also beset with intergroup conflicts along ethnic lines and competing claims over certain terri-

tories. The National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Isak-Muivah faction), for instance, has been demanding the merging of contiguous territories in Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, and Manipur for the formation of Greater Nagaland. Such demands have been met with violent protests, particularly in Manipur where violent protests and unrest crippled the state for more than two months in 2001.

In Assam, post-Partition immigration set the ground for violent resistance against the Indian government's citizenship laws concerning the East Pakistani immigrants. Population exchange on the eastern side of the border after Partition started much later, continued throughout much of the 1960s and 1970s, and even into the present day. As "illegal" immigration from Bangladesh continued, the homecoming thesis was substituted with infiltration thesis and border control measures were taken up to prevent further immigration. Between 1979 and 1985, the Assam Movement gathered momentum in their efforts to address the contested issue of legalizing "foreigners" through voter registration. The Assam Accord signed after the tumultuous 1983 elections put an end to the Assam movement as the citizenship laws stipulated that anyone entering Assam after 1966 would be deemed illegal.[56] However, with Bangladesh's constant denial of the presence of illegal immigrants in India and the Indian government's reported lack of commitment to prevent further influx of immigrants, violent clashes became frequent especially in the 1980s. Subsequently, insurgent groups such as the United Liberation Front of Assam emerged as an offshoot of these developments.

In the decades that followed, the NER became more of a policy headache for New Delhi as political instability and violence thwarted any attempts towards realizing the "imagined community"[57] of a unified India. Federal initiatives to usher peace through development in the NER have been criticized as "cosmetic federalism"[58] or a "mere glint in the eye"[59] without addressing these multilayered voices of conflict. Resolving these conflicts is, however, easier said than done as colonial and postcolonial state-making practices over a period of more than a century produced some irreversible patterns of political and social turmoil. What emerges from the these discussions is that the creation of the NER as a residual and marginal territorial space is, by no means, an accident.

CONCLUSION

The NER, decades after colonialism, continues to be a contested space where questions of national and ethnic identities, belongingness, and alienation are actively played out. These questions have to be located within the loci of colonial expansion, anticolonial struggles, and postcolonial national historiography experienced by the region and its peoples. Thus, a rethinking of the historical specificities of the region and its relation to

the restructuring of wider processes of state formation and capitalist expansion during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries allows a better understanding of the northeastern borderlands. This chapter has highlighted how the creation of the NER as a denigrated space distant from the Indian political heartland must be anchored in the historical turn of events that produced territorial and political fault lines in the form of national boundaries. In what van Schendel refers to as the transformation from a "notional to a national border,"[60] a social space of marginality and isolation was produced through successive phases of state practices such as colonial intervention, anticolonial struggles, Partition, and postcolonial experiences. This transformation reproduced new definitions of identities and cross-border relations in its wake.

In exploring the historiography of the NER, I have also drawn attention to the discursive silence about the Partition's implications on the very borderlands it created in the east. Dominant Partition narratives are mainly confined to the study of Punjab or Bengal and contain little or no accounts of other areas directly affected by the drawing of boundaries such as Bihar, Assam, Rajasthan, or Sindh.[61] In the East, Bengal-centric perspectives of the impact of the Partition obscure and marginalize the histories of other areas and communities affected by the 1947 crisis. For instance, there is no study on how the Partition created the borders between Meghalaya, Mizoram, Tripura, Cooch Behar, and Assam; how Assam was partitioned; and how creation of East Pakistan also carved out an isolated, landlocked NER. In addition, existing research and historical accounts explored the politics of those processes that led to the crisis but not about what happened thereafter. Perhaps Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*[62] and Amitav Ghosh's *Shadow Lines*[63] come closest to starting a much-needed avenue for analyzing people's life experiences and the far-reaching consequences of the 1947 Partition as they struggled to understand and cope with new developments in the nascent democracies of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh.

Both Ghosh's and Rushdie's works highlight an intersecting terrain of borderland studies and Partition scholarship that has seen little academic attention. This terrain holds an exciting promise of a discursive field that would not only engage with border realities (such as population movements, border disputes and control, and dissenting voices) but would also allow a study of the social history of Partition. This, I believe, would open up the grounds for deciphering the uneven distribution of the pains of Partition,[64] and how borderlands influence and shape post-Partition societies, economies, and centers of state power.

My arguments in this chapter are not an oversimplification or generalization of the complex social realities and diverse set of problems that all communities in the northeastern borderlands face and live with. In fact the diversity of social experiences and narratives is what I am calling attention to—a move beyond partisan positions and engagement with the

borderland in order to tease out the rich social histories of the bordereffect on state formation. Finally, this chapter has highlighted that the complex historical formations in the NER do not fit straightforward political or social binaries; rather it is the intricate interweaving of multiple narratives that holds the answer to the questions of Babu, Dr. Dam, and a million others living in India's northeastern borderlands.

NOTES

1. North East India comprises seven states: Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Tripura; Sikkim became the eighth state in 2002. The term "North East India" is often used as a homogenizing category to refer to the region, its cultures, and people. My usage of the term in the chapter does not conform to this meaning; rather I use it to refer to the geographical category created by colonial accounts and the Partition thereafter.
2. Siddhartha Deb, *Point of Return* (New York: Harper Collins, 2003),196.
3. Ibid., 151.
4. Ibid., 211.
5. For want of a better term, I use the word "region" in the contextual meaning of a physical, geographical space, but this usage is not an attempt to characterize it as a homogeneous space of cultural and physical characteristics. Neither is it to fit into the domain of production of specialized knowledge, i.e., area studies.
6. The term "tribes," or "hill tribes," has been used in the colonial civilizational matrix of the primitive versus civilized. Initially used for administrative purposes, it has come to define tribal populations all over India. For discussions on the concept, see Virginius Xaxa, "Tribes as Indigenous People of India," *Economic and Political Weekly* 34, 51 (December 18–24, 1999): 3589–95, and Andre Beteille, "The Concept of Tribe with Special Reference to India," *European Journal of Sociology* 27, 2 (November 1986): 296–318.
7. I use "Burma" instead of Myanmar to keep in line with the historical references.
8. Sanjoy Barbora, "Under the Invisibility Cloak—Re-imagining the 'Northeast.'" *Biblio* XIII, 5 and 6 (May–June 2008): 15.
9. David Ludden, "Where Is Assam?" *Himal Southasian* 18.3 (2005).
10. It measures just twenty miles on the eastern side and thirteen miles on the west.
11. See Alexander Mackenzie, *The North-East Frontier of India* (Delhi: Mittal Publications, 1979); R. Boileau Pemberton, *Report on The Eastern Frontier Region of British India* (Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press, 1835); J. P. Mills, "The Assam-Burma Frontier," *The Geographical Journal*, 67.4 (1926), 289–99; L. W. Shakespear, *History of Upper Assam, Upper Burmah and North Eastern Frontier* (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1914); and Verrier Elwin, *India's North-East Frontier in the Nineteenth Century* (Madras, India: Oxford University Press 1959) for further details.
12. The concept of "frontiers" was loosely applied to land tracts that lay in the outlying areas of "natural frontiers" like mountains, rivers, or deserts. See Curzon, *Frontiers—The Romanes Lecture* (London: Oxford at the Clarendon Press 1907).
13. Edmund Leach, "The Frontiers of Burma." *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 3 no.1 (1960), 49–68.
14. Correspondence from Elliott to Ripon, June 26, 1881. Cited in Peter Robb, "The Colonial State and Constructions of Indian Identity: An Example of the Northeast frontier in the 1880s," *Modern Asian Studies* 31 (1997): 252–53.
15. Alexander Mackenzie, *The North-East Frontier of India* (Delhi: Mittal Publications, 1979), Ch.1.

16. Curzon used the term "unscientific frontiers" to refer to the undefined geographical markers that used natural topography such as lakes, mountains, and forests as boundaries.

17. Robert L. Solomon, "Boundary Concepts and Practices in Southeast Asia," *World Politics* 23.1 (1970): 5–7.

18. Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press 1993).

19. Nicholas Dirks, Foreword to *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge*, by Bernard Cohen (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 81.

20. The NEFA or present-day Arunachal Pradesh was carved out of "Naga country." This administrative imposition laid the grounds for present-day territorial disputes between the states of Nagaland, Assam, Manipur, and Arunachal Pradesh as the Naga demand for an exclusive homeland is focused on this contentious point.

21. Peter Robb, "The Colonial State and Constructions of Indian Identity: An Example of the Northeast Frontier in the 1880s," *Modern Asian Studies* 31 (1997): 258.

22. The Inner Line is still in operation today in the tribal areas within the states of Manipur, Nagaland, Mizoram, and Arunachal Pradesh. Visitors, both Indians and foreigners, are required to obtain a permit to enter the restricted areas.

23. Alexander Mackenzie, *The North-East Frontier of India* (Delhi: Mittal Publications, 1979), 56.

24. The Dooars were the foothill tracts between Assam and Bhutan which supplied timber for railway expansion in the region.

25. David Ludden, "Presidential Address: Maps in the Mind and Mobility of Asia," *Journal of Asian Studies* 62, 4 (2003): 1057–78.

26. Sanghamitra Misra, *Becoming a Borderland: The Politics of Space and Identity in Colonial Northeastern India* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2011); Jayeeta Sharma, *Empire's Garden: Assam and the Making of India* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011).

27. Particularly Muslims from East Bengal, the Oraons, Santhals, and Mundas from famine-stricken areas of Bihar, and Nepalese cattle-herders were encouraged to settle.

28. Sanjib Baruah (ed.), *Beyond Counter-Insurgency: Breaking the Impasse in Northeast India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2009).

29. Also commonly known as the Qing dynasty.

30. Thant Myint-U, *Where China Meets India* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2011), 226–27.

31. These pre-capital territories included the princely kingdoms of Tripura and Manipur where a British political resident was stationed to maintain suzerainty and check any dissident political activity. The Assam plains were the only part of the Northeast frontier where the British invested in infrastructure and sought large returns. See Bodhistava Kar, "When Was the Postcolonial? A History of Policing Impossible Lines," in Sanjib Baruah (ed.), *Beyond Counter-Insurgency: Breaking the Impasse in Northeast India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2009), 52–60.

32. Ibid.

33. Reference in communication sent from the agent to the Governor-General (of NEFA and Commissioner of Assam) to the Secretary (to the Government of Bengal in the Political Department) titled *Demarcation of British Frontier between Assam and Bhootan* No 114, Dated 17 April 1872. See Bodhisatva Kar, "When Was the Postcolonial? A History of Policing Impossible Lines" for details.

34. Ibid., 72.

35. The Excluded areas were the Balipara Frontier Tract and Sadiya Frontier tract on Assam's northern boundary, the Naga Hills District, Manipur State, and Lushai Hills on the eastern side. The "Partially Excluded Areas" were North Cachar Hills, the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, the Garo Hills, and the Mikir Hills. See Robert Reid, "The Excluded Areas of Assam," *The Geographical Journal* 3.1/2 (Jan–Feb 1944): 18.

36. Ramachandra Guha, "Savaging the Civilized: Verrier Elwin and the Tribal Question in Late Colonial India," Special Issue of *Economic and Political Weekly* 31.35–37 (Sept. 1996): 2385.

37. Sanjib Baruah, "Assam: Confronting a Failed Partition," *Seminar* 591 (Nov 2008).

38. Alistair Lamb, *The McMahon Line: A Study in the Relations between India, China, and Tibet, 1904–1914* (London: Routledge, 1966); Karunakar Gupta, "The McMahon Line 1911–45: The British Legacy," *China Quarterly* 47 (1971): 521–45; Parshotam Mehra, "A Forgotten Chapter in History of the Northeast Frontier: 1914–36," *Journal of Asian Studies* 3, 1 (1972): 299–308; and Arthur H. Steiner, "India Looks to Her Northern Frontiers," *Far Eastern Survey* 28.11 (1959): 167–73.

39. W. Kirk, "The Inner Asian Frontier of India," *Transactions and Papers (Institute of British Geographers),* 31 (1962): 131–68.

40. David Ludden, "Presidential Address: Maps in the Mind and Mobility of Asia," *Journal of Asian Studies,* 62, 4 (2003): 1057–78.

41. Amitav Ghosh, *The Glass Palace* (New York: Random House, 2002).

42. Laichen Sun's *Ming-Southeast Asian Overland Interactions 1368–1644,* PhD dissertation, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan (2000); David Ludden, "Presidential Address: Maps in the Mind and Mobility of Asia; *Journal of Asian Studies* 62, 4 (2003): 1057–78; D. Nath (ed.), *Re-opening of the Stilwell Road: Prospects and Problems.* (New Delhi: Anamika Publishers and Distributors 2004); B. G. Verghese, *India's Northeast Resurgent: Ethnicity, Insurgency, Governance and Development* (New Delhi: Konark, 1996); S. N. Baruah, *Tribes of Indo-Burma Border (A Socio-Cultural History of the Inhabitants of the Patkie Range)* (Columbia, Missouri: South Asia Books,1991); T. Myint-U, *Where India meets China* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 2011); S. Misra, *Becoming a Borderland, Changing Frontiers and Spaces,* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2011); G. E. Gerini's, *Researches on Ptolemy's Geography of Eastern India (Further India and Indo-Malay Archipelago)* (New Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, 1974) on Ptolemy's *Geography of Further India*; and Naorem Sanajaoba's *Manipur: Past and Present, Vol. I.* (New Delhi: Mittal Publications, 1988) also touches upon such linkages. Though the terms/categories used in Ptolemy's work to describe the region, its people, and topography are spelled differently from commonly used terms or categories today, Gerini's interpretations of the book describes the "Further India" territory as inclusive of modern-day North East India.

43. See D. Nath (ed.), *Re-opening of the Stilwell Road: Prospects and Problems.* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2002).

44. It was known as the "Old Opium Track" to the British and was used mainly by the local Shans, Singphos, Nagas, and other hill tribes for small trade, and smuggling of opium too. It was known as the Hukwang/Old Bisa Route among the Assamese and Namrup/Bisa among the Burmese.

45. During the War, thousands of refugees took this road to cross into India from the Burmese side. See Liu Xinru's *Ancient India and Ancient China: Trade and Religious Exchanges, AD 1–600* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); Tan Yun-Shan's *Cultural Interchange between India and China* (Shantiniketan: Sino-Indian Cultural Society, 1995); William Robinson's *Hill Tracts between India and Burma,* (New Delhi: Vivek Publishing Co., 1978); and B. N. Mukherjee's *External Trade of Early North-Eastern India* (Stosius Inc/Advent Books Division, 1992) for documentations of this route. Also see Laichen Sun's *Ming-Southeast Asian Overland Interactions 1368–1644* (Ph.D. Dissertation. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2000). Commonly traded items included Chinese silk, padded jackets, colored cloth, dried fruits, brick, tea, jade, silver, gold, lacquered items, etc., but the volume of trade was not high.

46. Though the formal separation was announced in April 1937, actual withdrawal of the Indian army did not come into effect until early 1941.

47. Willem van Schendel's *The Bengal Borderland Beyond State and Nation in South Asia* (New York: Anthem Press, 2005) discusses the political stalemate that hung over the Boundary Commission's tasks and the consequent arbitrary decisions resulting from it.

48. Ibid., 43.

49. Ibid., 43–54.

50. Under Nehru's Prime Ministership and political advice of Sardar Patel and V. P. Menon, there were many non-transparent moves by the new Indian government which led to further discontent among the Nagas. For a detailed analysis see Sajal Nag, *Contesting Marginality; Ethnicity, Insurgency and Subnationalism in North-East India* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2002).

51. Merger of the Northeastern states into the Indian Dominion followed different timelines between 1947 and 1949.

52. S. Nag, *Contesting Marginality: Ethnicity, Insurgency and Subnationalism in North-East India* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2002); N. Sanajaoba, *Manipur: Past and Present, Vol. I* (New Delhi: Mittal Publications, 1988); Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India* (New Delhi: Macmillan 1983).

53. The anti-India stand is not confined to the political realm, in fact it extends to social and cultural differentiation between the "Indians" or "mainland" vis-à-vis the "North East people" or "tribes."

54. States here refer to the provincial territories within the Indian Union.

55. For a population of 38.5 million (2001 Census data), unemployment rate was 12 percent and an industrial productivity of 2.16 percent of the GDP as compared to the national average of 27 percent. By 2009–10, poverty rates had increased in Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, and Mizoram.

56. See the controversial Illegal Migrants Determination by Tribunals (or IMDT) passed in 1983 and the subsequent amendment to the Assam Accord Act in 1985 in van Schendel's *The Bengal Borderland: Beyond State and Nation in South Asia* (New York: Anthem, 2005), and S. Baruah (ed.), *Beyond Counter-Insurgency: Breaking the Impasse in Northeast India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2009).

57. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 2006).

58. Sanjib Baruah, "Cosmetic Federalism and the Politics of Development in Northeast India," *Development and Change* 34, 5 (Nov. 2003): 915–39.

59. James Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2009).

60. Van Schendel, *The Bengal Borderland*: *Beyond State and Nation in South Asia* (New York: Anthem Press, 2005), 48.

61. On Bihar, see Papiya Ghosh, "Partition's Biharis," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* 17.2 (1997): 21–34, on Assam see S. Baruah, *India Against Itself: Assam and Politics of Nationality*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press and New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999), on Sindh see Sarah Ansari, "The Movement of Indian Muslims to West Pakistan after 1847: Partition Related Migration and Its Consequences for the Pakistani Province of Sind," in Judith Brown and Rosemary Foot (eds.), *Migration the Asian Experience* (Oxford: St. Martin's Press 1994), and on Rajasthan see Ian Copland, "The Further shores of Partition: Ethnic Cleansing in Rajasthan, 1947," *Past and Present* 160 (1998): 203-39.

62. Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* (New York: Penguin, 1980).

63. Amitav Ghosh, *The Shadow Lines: A Novel* (New York: First Mariner Books, 2005).

64. David Ludden, *India and South Asia*: (Oxford: One World, 2002), 226.

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ELEVEN

Looking East

Melodramatic Narrative, Ecotheater, and the "Forgotten Long March" in Jangam

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In his 2004 book, Willem van Schendel writes: "1947 stands between the creation of a separate colonial state of British Burma in 1937 and the collapse of the state of Pakistan (and the emergence of Bangladesh) in 1971." He adds, "In their eagerness to present the Partition of 1947 as a unique event . . . writers have tended to ignore its embeddedness in this longer-term process, thereby marginalizing the relevance of the first (Burma) and the third (Bangladesh) partitions."[1]

I am skeptical whether 1971 is a "partition," although it is definitely related to the violent legacies of 1947. My focus here is on one of the major events that occurred just after the much less studied "first partition": the "forgotten long march,"[2] where an estimated 450,000–500,000 Burmese Indians walked to British India fleeing from the Japanese advance and also from escalating ethnic violence in Burma. The forgotten long march was a culmination of a series of anti-Indian riots that had been raging since the 1930s. Burma was finally incorporated into the British Indian state in 1885 after a prolonged spell of wars between the British and the Burmese. Although contact between the Burmese kingdoms and the Indian subcontinent existed during the precolonial period, a lot of Indians migrated to Burma during the colonial era. The Indian migrants, some of whom went voluntarily and others coercively taken as indentured laborers, were of mixed socio-economic status. While the Chettiar moneylenders from Tamil Nadu were despised by the Burmese

for gaining control of "over 3 million acres of paddy fields in the lowlands of Irrawaddy delta,"[3] a lot of Indian settlers were poor farmers, laborers or petty traders. However, "Indian migrants and settlers were the most visible faces of the colonial domination of Burma."[4] While many Indians stayed behind in Burma after the Japanese attack, the spectacular fall of the colonial state impelled others to flee towards India in panic. An estimated 10,000–50,000 people died during the journey.

After a few refugees managed to escape via air and sea, the rest took three successive overland routes: via the Arakan to Chittagong, via the Chindwin valley into Manipur, and finally, through the hilly passes of the Hukawng valley into Lido in Assam. While the long march was a comparable humanitarian crisis like 1947, very few works have dealt with it. Amitav Ghosh's observation in a 2001 interview that there is a great "silence" about this catastrophe from the Indian side still holds largely true.[5] Consideration of Indian voices will help initiate the "perspectival shift" where "no longer are we looking at devastated humanity through the horrified yet fascinated eyes of the imperial traveler, bureaucrat or novelist . . . we are now inside the minds and bodies of the dying millions who were the subjects of British empire's palliative attention."[6] Furthermore, such shifts will also facilitate an engagement with the experiences that colonized subjects had with the policies of care, or lack of it, of the colonial state, and also with the fraught processes through which former subjects of the colonial empire were gradually produced as citizens of the postcolonies.

Since the publication of Ghosh's *The Glass Palace*, there has been a slow but steady trickle of memoirs in English about this harrowing trek.[7] To my knowledge, the 1982 Sahitya Academi Award–winning Assamese novel *Jangam* (Movement) by the deceased Assamese author Debendranath Acharya is the only sustained fictional treatment of the long march.[8] While *The Glass Palace* focuses largely on the Indian and Burmese bourgeoisie in urban centers like Rangoon, *Jangam* zooms in on the travails of a group of impoverished Indian farmers as they trek through treacherous jungle terrain from the fictional village of Manku near Mandalay through the Hukawng valley. My reading of *Jangam* has two major aims. First, I place *Jangam*'s melodramatic family saga within relatively established narrative paradigms in Partition studies, elaborating both its similarities and differences from "mainland" Indian narratives. I also discuss how the melodramatic codes of the text project an idea of a common "human" essence that leads readers to interpret it as an allegory of a "universal" human condition.

In the second section of the essay, I argue that a far more contingent and precarious idea of the "human" emerges in *Jangam*'s "ecotheater" (my coinage). In other words, the vision of the undifferentiated human advanced by the melodramatic *narrative* is repeatedly undercut by the ambivalent *figurations* of non-human otherness. I will explore *Jangam*'s

representation of this ecotheater where the "human" and its "natural"/ "mechanical" others interact with each other in complex ways, also coming into severe conflict. Adopting an ecocritical approach, I will demonstrate that the environment emerges as a complex, dynamic subject that functions ambivalently as a source of menace for the "human" and also a model for emulation. Central here are the ambivalent significations of the references to machines, insects, and plants. Furthermore, an ecocritical approach illustrates that colonialism, mass displacement, and war results in the "murder, displacement and impoverishment of people, animals, *and* their environments."[9] This emphasis on mutual "impoverishment" is central for my reading of *Jangam*. I contrast this to standard allegorical interpretations of *Jangam* where the "human" and "nature" are opposed to each other. For instance, Sailen Bharali writes that: "The journey conducted with unimaginable physical and mental agony seems to be a symbol for the endless, forward-moving journey of human life."[10] Prafulla Kotoky says: "It is as if . . . (*Jangam*) is a priceless history of humankind that, in every age, conquers thousands of unsurmountable obstacles and emerges victorious over nature."[11] However, close attention to the contingent process of the construction of the "human," I argue, reveals very different figurations of "nature." "Nature" is not shown to exist separate from the "human"; neither is it an entity to be conquered. Instead, the text illustrates that: 1) at an ontological level, forms of nonhuman otherness provide models for survival that the contingent "human" can emulate, and 2) at a materialist level, while phenomena like war impoverish *both* humans and the environment, "nature" itself is never a passive agent. It displays forms of agency that we need to read differently. Partition studies need to pay closer attention to such representations that engage with the fluid interactions between "nature" and the "human." This, I believe, will shift focus from the anthropocentric norm in this field of study.

ALL IN THE FAMILY: MELODRAMATIC CODES IN *JANGAM*

Unlike *The Glass Palace* where a certain version of the good life ends suddenly with terror arriving from the air, catastrophe reaches Manku in slow waves. Manku is populated primarily by poverty-stricken Indian farmers whom the narrator characterizes as "*guhi poruwa*" ("tiny ants"),[12] and former Burmese landowners who are reduced to conditions of penury after mortgaging their property to the Indian Chettiars. In the absence of reliable information about the war, the main source of news in the village is rumor. The circulation of rumors terrifies the villagers. Even though the Indians and Burmese are shown to coexist as a "*poriyal*" (family) with differing degrees of interaction and obligation, the panic-inducing quality of rumor forces the two communities to part ways—the In-

dians of Manku head out for British India with only a few possessions on their backs. From this point onwards, the troubles besetting the family of a Burmese-Indian farmer named Ramgobinda and his companions become one of the central foci of the plot.

The family and the travails that beset it are basic elements of melodramatic narratives. Recent work on South Asian cinematic melodrama suggests that this genre should be considered open-ended where its "wistful . . . longing for utopian change points to a social-critical function."[13] It is important to consider the "play of desire(s)" that melodrama initiates or intervenes in.[14] Ashutosh Vasudevan says that melodrama "invite(s) us at least temporarily to disengage from a relationship to history as something grounded in materially defined socio-political existence." Such forms of temporary disengagement render history "manipulable, as open to the play of desire which is in the active process of constitution."[15]

In *Jangam*, the separation and partial reunification of Ramgobinda's family becomes a metonymic device that facilitates a temporary disengagement from material history and initiates a play of desire seeking to resolve the traumas of separation and mass death. In his study of post-independence Assamese cinema, Anirben Baishya says that:

> the theme of the separated family . . . harks back to a cultural memory of a different kind . . . not to the memory of . . . (1947) . . . but to the traumatic memory of the Second World War. Mandalay in Burma was home to a large Assamese population during that period. When the Japanese invaded Burma . . . a . . . chunk of this population returned to Assam on foot.[16]

Baishya further says that there is at least one film in Assam that talks directly about the march—Phani Sarma's *Dhumuha* (1957)—which is about the family of Biseswar Chowdhury. Chowdhury's youngest child is lost during the journey and is reunited with his biological parents years later when they come to work as servants in his house.

My point is not that *Jangam* was directly influenced by narratives like *Dhumuha*; instead, I want to insert Acharya's novel within a pre-existing melodramatic narrative framework of familial separation/reunification that is common to many partition narratives. A relatively unique spin occurs in *Jangam* to this common narrative. Through the portrayal of the destinies of a particular family we see a pre-existing "national" family being destroyed, and a "universal-human" family coming into being. In the novel, the symbolic panacea for particularistic nationalist sentiment is an undifferentiated vision of the "human" where ethnic and national differences are subsumed. Consider how the text opens—Ramgobinda tells his Burmese compatriots that the Burmese and Indians had lived in Manku like "older and younger brothers" (*kokai-bhai*).[17] His Burmese friends agree. Interestingly, the plague of inter-ethnic divisions is shown as not "native" to Manku, but arrives from elsewhere: from Burmese

nationalists who do not belong to the village. These "external" visitations destroy the idyllic representation of inter-community amity in Manku. The only Burmese nationalist from Manku who is given extended voice—the youthful Nungnao—occupies a peculiar inside-outside position with respect to this representation of "foreignness" destroying an idyllic community. In the earlier sections of the text, his nationalist convictions clash with the humanist outlook of the village elders. In a conversation with the village elders and the petrified Indians, Nungnao accuses the earlier generation of pusillanimity and inaction which has led Burma to its current state.[18] Although Nungnao feels for his Indian "brothers," he is not willing to compromise on the fact that they have to leave.

Nungnao, however, aids the Indians of Manku to flee. For this "transgression," he is murdered by the shadowy band of Burmese nationalists, and his mangled body is thrown in the courtyard of his father, Jayanao. One trajectory of the family narrative comes to a close in chapter 15—the only chapter in the middle that returns to Manku after the expulsion of the Indians. After the death of Nungnao, we come across an exchange between Jayanao and Ba-Mao, a prominent village elder of Manku. Jayanao says that "poison" (*bih*) has entered people's minds and that this *bih* will soon spread across all of Burma. In response Jayanao laments and asks why everyone in the country cannot stay united like elder and younger brothers.[19] This exchange is predicated on the idea that a settled national "family" existed prior to the infiltration of the poison spread by the plague of particularistic nationalism. Jayanao's pathos-filled query as to why people in Burma cannot stay together like "elder" and "younger" brothers in a "family" (*poriyal)* once again gestures to the topoi of the break-up of the idyllic national family.

If the national family is irretrievably broken with the expulsion of the Indians, the narrative engineers the formation of a universal-human family. After their expulsion, Ramgobinda's aged mother dies on the way while Lachhmi, his wife, disappears with their newly born second son when she is taken away by British military officials for emergency medical treatment. Ramgobinda is left behind with his first-born, the seven-year-old Thanu. After Ramgobinda reaches Assam, he searches desperately for Lachhmi and the infant in the relief camps. The trauma of the journey and the despair Ramgobinda feels results in him losing his reason. Miraculously, Lachhmi and the infant son are eventually found in the relief camp after Ramgobinda goes mad. By this time, Lachhmi too has succumbed to madness. There is no scene of recognition—we are unclear about what eventually happens to the couple.

A surrogate family, however, is formed on the way. The group from Manku meets a British pastor named Father Berry. Later, they come across an Anglo-Burmese girl named Ma-Pu (also known by the Christian name Mary) in the deserted town of Unthaw. One of the leaders of the Indian group, a young man named Chinti, develops a romantic at-

tachment for Ma-Pu. In the last chapter, Ma-Pu stays back in the relief camp as a nurse and decides to take care of Ramgobinda's children. Chinti decides to stay with her as well. On the last page, Ma-Pu says that she considers Father Berry to be like her father: a role the pastor accepts.[20] A surrogate "universal" family is formed that is comprised of a British subject, an Anglo-Burmese girl, a young Indian-Burmese peasant, and the children of Ramgobinda. The novel closes with a scene of the infant smiling in his sleep, one that heralded a "new age" replete with "new hope."[21]

If the closure of the text is definitely predicated on the melodramatic codes of familial reunification, further overdeterminations are also evident in the characterizations. Consider, for instance, Ma-Pu's English name: Mary. To push the allegorical resonances with this invocation of universal motherhood further, Ma-Pu/Mary also stays behind in the camp as a nurse to tend to the needy. Father Berry's character, too, is quite "flat"—he exists as the primary mouthpiece for the text's humanist outlook. Come what may, he discharges his human "responsibilities" (*kortobyo*)—for instance, giving people, British or Indian, a decent burial in the forest. I don't use the term "flat" in a pejorative sense here; rather, I suggest that Father Berry and Mary/Ma-Pu's flatness are not in conflict with *Jangam*'s realist elements. Instead, flatness, in this case, "simultaneously renders subordinate characters allegorical and, in its compelling distortions, calls attention to the subordination that underlies allegory."[22] Therefore, I suggest that within the distributional matrix of *Jangam*, "flat" characters like Father Berry and Ma-Pu play important organizational functions, merging realist descriptions with allegorical figurations. As a result of such characterizations, extensive realist descriptions of the setting constantly seem to gesture towards a signifying chain beyond the surface of the text, thus facilitating standard allegorical interpretations of *Jangam* as a "cosmic" drama between the "human" and "nature."

Jangam's triple whammy of realistic *mise-en-scene*, melodrama, and allegory excludes something significant. The question of the colonial state's lack of care for its colonized subjects is sidelined in the text's move to work through the trauma of being ejected from a national family via the compensation formation of an undifferentiated "human" family. Ghosh mentions the presence of "white" and "black" lines maintained during the march in his interviews. Numerous testimonies by Indian survivors and historical documentations attest to the fact that the colonial state's differential policies of care played a major role in the way British and Asian refugees were treated during the march. Even allowing for the fact that acts of kindness occurred among races—a fact many British accounts emphasize—and that the British airdropped food and set up refugee camps in Assam, it seems odd that *Jangam* does not refer at all to the denial of care by the colonial state apparatus to the fleeing Asian refugees.

Similarly, while it is undeniable that the Indians had to face tremendous atrocities at the hands of the Burmese, *Jangam* does not treat Burmese anticolonialism as an autonomous historical entity. Instead, Burmese nationalism is viewed as a dispute within a familial framework conducted by the wayward younger generation who pay no heed to the humanitarian outlook of the older generation. Although the youthful Nungnao's presentation is complex, on a whole the band of shadowy Burmese nationalists is represented as bestial or cruel. I wager that this benign representation of British colonialism and the associated portrayal of Burmese nationalism draws from a longer history of the negative representation of "*Maanor Dex*" (Burma) in Assamese cultural production. The complex versions of relationships between the Assamese and local populations in Burma are portrayed in travelogues like those by Purnakanta Buragohain. The devastating Burmese invasions of Assam between 1817–1826, which sounded the death knell for the nearly 600-year Ahom dynasty, have been memorialized as a traumatic primal scene for the modern Assamese "nationality" in the pioneering early twentieth century historical novelist Rajanikanta Bordoloi's quartet of novels: *Rangili*, *Rohdoi Ligiri*, *Manomati*, and *Nirmal Bhakat*.[23] In Bordoloi's novels, the Burmese are frequently described as "*paxondo/paxobik*" (bestial) and "*nris-rinxho*" (cruel). Lurid descriptions of their cruelty abound. While Bordoloi's novels are double-voiced, enjoining the Assamese "nationality" to remember its "glorious" past, the British colonists are often represented as saviors of the Assamese in novels like *Rohdoi Ligiri* and *Tamreswarir Mandir*. While the depictions of British colonialism vary in later Assamese works, Bordoloi's novels institutionalize an image of the "barbaric" Burmese that reveals its impress in *Jangam*. I argue that *Jangam*'s representations of the cyclical nature of greatness, cruelty and decadence in Burmese history, as evidenced in the initial "Background" (*Patbhumi*) section, and its inability to engage adequately with the historical reasons for the rise of Burmese anticolonialism, including the concomitant representation of Burmese nationalism as a generational struggle and the benign presentation of British colonialism, emerge out of this strand in Assamese cultural production.

While texts like *Jangam* do not offer us "easily decipherable critiques of the colonial enterprise," they may show us that "a writer might have other concerns, or . . . seek to figure colonialism in ways that we have yet to learn how to read."[24] I wager that the counternarrative of the contingent "human" revealed in *Jangam* when read via an ecocritical lens can assist us in thinking about the figuration of the vicissitudes of power in the colonial scene and the situation of a global war in a different way.

ECOTHEATER AND THE CONTINGENT "HUMAN": NEGOTIATING THE *CHAKRABEHU*

We can track the precarious sense of the "human" in *Jangam* through the way in which this category is compared and opposed to various nonhuman figurations of otherness. *Jangam* opens with a "Background" section recounting the monumental histories of the neighboring city of Mandalay and of precolonial Burma before reducing the scale and zooming in on the "tiny" hamlet of Manku. The denizens of Manku are described as forms of the living dead and compared to forms of "animal"/"mechanical" existence in this section. For example, in the first chapter, the Indian farmers are described thus:

> Every morning a procession of cattle, their emaciated frames glittering, would wind their way. . . . Moving alongside them were the herdsmen . . . skeletal, emaciated. . . . The cattle and the herdsmen combined were a group of hungry, quiet souls— . . . their desire and will to survive had ceased a long time ago.[25]

This image of the farmers as forms of the living dead is repeated in a key statement that occurs towards the end of the second chapter—"A group of people compelled to work incessantly for . . . survival—like some wound-up mechanical dolls; tiny ants (*guhi poruwa)* working by force of habit."[26] What is important here are the comparisons to forms of machinism and insects. At this point, the analogies seem quite reductive, as if the farmers of Manku are being viewed as forms that are not-so-human. However, these reductive analogies to non-human forms of "otherness" undergo a curious metamorphosis especially when the farmers cross the "*norokdwar*" (gates of hell) into the necro-world of the Hukawng valley in chapter 19.[27] The reductive metaphors then flip around and are shown as resources for survival.

Ontological figurations of the machine provide

> us with an image of the repetition of the same operations. Regularity issues from the setting in motion of an artificially constructed group of mechanical parts. The repeatability can be understood in terms of how the parts hold together. Mechanical science was based on the decomposability of things, not their indivisibility or individuality.[28]

Three basic factors where the "machine" differs from the "human" are "regularity," "repeatability," and the lack of "indivisibility or individuality." Consider the description of the villagers of Manku in the first chapter. Before the descriptions culminate in "wound-up mechanical dolls," the prose constantly gestures towards images of regularity, repeatability, and lack of individuality— their "desire and will to survive had ceased a long time ago," it was "as if the still environment allied with the lazy flow of the. . . . currents of the Irrawaddy close by, brought the ceaseless

flow of time to a halt."[29] In other words, the mechanical listlessness produced by conditions of penury and precariousness froze the denizens of Manku in moments of the pure present—as if time itself had suspended its flow in this locale. These zombie-like descriptions of the Manku residents reduce their human persons to "a *persona ficta*, an automaton."[30] Therefore, instead of being presented as previously "human" figures who reconfigure their "humanity" by crossing a "*norokdwar*"—a mythic paradigm where the journey across a necro-world marks the break between one epoch of "humanness" and the dawn of another—the denizens of Manku are portrayed as existing in a condition *already* resembling the living dead.

Similar considerations are also extendable to depictions of insects and plant life. Along with the comparison to "mechanical dolls," the other analogy is that of the "*guhi poruwa*." Although ontological figurations differ across cultures, primary reasons for which the "insect" appears as other to the "human" include their radical multiplicity and seeming herd mentality, their vastly different ecological survival strategies, their association with mindlessness and absence of feeling, and their radical autonomy from human will and control.[31] We can also add the relative insignificance of the "size" of the insect vis-à-vis the scale of the "human" to this list. To be sure, insects can also paradoxically appear as images of abjection, of incandescent beauty, or of even of the sublime. However, commensurate with *Jangam*'s tendency to reduce scale, the depiction of the farmers as "*guhi poruwa*" could signify the invisibility of modes of survival that a panoramic narratorial gaze cannot quite grasp at the beginning. These strategies of survival are too "microscopic" to be enunciated clearly—hence, the initial resort to reductive metaphors.

Although the comparison to plants is not directly made in the sentence on "mechanical dolls" above, *Jangam*'s herbiary also takes pride of place in the descriptions of the setting. Like the "machine" and the "insect," various figurations of the "plant" too function as ambivalent metaphors of otherness. Since notions of life are usually endowed with motion: ". . . . the plant's immobility consigned it to an inferior status. . . . at the same time, plants appeared to represent life in excess, since their growth was understood as unlimited by morphology."[32] Like insects, plants can also, among other things, paradoxically signify both an "excess" of "life" and an absolute lack of agency. Considered together, representations of "natural" elements like insects and plants, thus, reveal both the predilection to contest nature and of coming under the domination of nature.

This paradoxical motif of contesting and being-dominated by "natural" categories is clearly enunciated when the other key spatial metaphor in *Jangam*, besides "*norokdwar*"/"*norokpuri*" (kingdom of hell), is mentioned for the first time. This metaphor is that of the "*chakrabehu*." *Chakrabehu* refers to the battle-formation in the *Mahabharata* that Abhimanyu,

the Pandav prince Arjun's son, can pierce through but cannot escape. Abhimanyu learned the way into the *chakrabehu* when he was in his mother's, Subhadra, womb. Unfortunately, he doesn't learn the way out because his mother fell asleep during the latter part of the narration. The impossibly young Abhimanyu smashes his way into the *chakrabehu*. However, he is trapped and isolated inside and killed brutally by the rival Kauravs.

The metaphor of the *chakrabehu* appears at two strategic points in the text. It occurs first during the beginning of the journey. After describing the inhospitable nature of the terrain, the attack on the body by insects, and the alienating quality of the dense foliage, the narrator says: "these winding paths were a unique *chakrabehu* forged by nature to keep humans, who prided themselves on their conquest of nature, from it."[33] Later as they cross the Tawang river and are about to enter the death-world of the Hukawng valley—"They had only negotiated . . . a minute segment of this immense natural *chakrabehu*."[34] Notice that in the first statement, "nature" is presented as an agential subject that keeps the "human" at bay. Forms of non-human subjectivity are shown as actively resisting human incursion. By the time we reach the second reference, the valence of the metaphor has shifted from representations of non-human agency to the phenomenological dimension of experiencing the death-march.

As a spatial metaphor, *chakrabehu* refers to a form of enclosure, but one where an exit is nowhere in sight. It is an expanse of sheer limitlessness as opposed to a delimited spatial metaphor like "*durgo*" (fortress). I bring up "*durgo*" as a point of contrast because this spatial metaphor plays a big role in a recent Assamese novel by Anurag Mahanta titled *Aulingar Zui* (Harvest of Fire).[35] This novel, written by a former member of the separatist militant organization ULFA (United Liberation Front of Assam), is based on stateless Naga villagers entrapped in the no-man's zones lying in-between India and Myanmar. These zones are close to the routes used by the refugees during the long march. The stateless subjects in Mahanta's novel are attacked on both sides by the armies of the two nation-states and also have to obey the diktat of the numerous separatist groups fighting against both countries that have their camps in these zones. The image that captures this sense of enclosure experienced by stateless subjects is that of the "*durgo*" (fortress). As the people of the no-man's zones prepare for another attack by the Myanmarese army, they are advised to move within the parameters of the *durgo*.[36] They are also advised strongly not to venture into Burmese or Indian territory—stepping on these zones would mean instant death. The chances of survival for the people in this *durgo*, especially during times of crisis, depended on how well they knew the dimensions of their open-air prison.

In contrast to the enclosed space of the *durgo*, one gets in and travels a fair distance in a *chakrabehu*. But this distance traversed is a mirage: the

subject experiences that she has traveled only a minute distance even when a lot has been traversed. The end is nowhere in sight—they seem to be entrapped in a cage of limitless greenery of which boundaries are not visible. Earlier in the narrative, this mirage-like quality of the *chakrabehu* is captured through a repetition of the mechanical image—"At a funereal . . . pace, the group continued . . . its journey as if they were machines that had been wound up—no one knew where, how, why."[37] The experience of time's passing and the absence of a destination in this *chakrabehu* is captured by Navaro-Yashin's term: "stunted temporality." In such *chakrabehus*, the experience is that of "being spatially enclosed and temporally in a limbo status for an indefinite period."[38] The subjects here are in a limbo-like zone, which in its seemingly indefinite expanse renders the passage of time mechanical, repetitive, and aimless. One gets in with no inkling of the exit route. The only way to survive is to walk relentlessly like machines that had been wound up.

The polyvalence of the plant, insect, and the mechanical images begin to reveal themselves at the points where the phenomenological dimensions of journeying through the *chakrabehu* are described. At these points, these analogies cease being reductive; instead, they begin to function as resources for survival. For instance, just prior to the statement about the "winding paths" being a "unique *chakrabehu* forged by nature," the narrator writes:

> Clusters of leeches stuck in the long and slender leaves of grass that wrapped themselves around their legs; at the slightest indication, a group of chameleons chased them determinedly and speedily with long strides, their fans raised. What irrepressible will to survive these tiny creatures have—what a magnificent inspiration for survival![39]

In this complex passage, the "plant," the "insect," and the "animal" initially figure as hostile "natural" presences. Keeping up with a continuing series of representations of plants in *Jangam* as "life in excess," the proliferating "long and slender leaves of grass" are an impediment to movement. They also are home to bloodsucking leeches. Finally, there are the chameleons that band together and attack interlopers at the slightest indication. However, notice how these "hostile" figurations also contain its obverse. The group of chameleons could easily be a substitute for the group of refugees who band together to survive. Similarly, the last sentence exposes how "tiny" creatures have an "irrepressible will to survive"—isn't this reference an echo of the "*guhi poruwas*" and their own stubborn will to survive?

The polyvalence of these metaphors reaches its climax when we get to chapter 19. In this chapter, the group reaches Shingbwiyang and begins their harrowing journey across the "the death valley—the gates of hell that is Hukawng."[40] A contemporary account by a British official describes this route—30,000 refugees were supposed to have gone through

it—as a "track of red, sticky clay (that) ran through miles of dark, green tunnel." As the monsoon increased in strength, the surface deteriorated "until people sank into it to thigh depth, and strong men might make seven miles in the day."[41] Leech bites, dysentery, and malaria increased the suffering of the refugees. People just laid down and died. Corpses lay everywhere, and "there were no jackals and vultures to pick them clean."[42]

As the characters walk through the Hukawng in the stultifying heat of the monsoon season, they encounter numerous "grinning" corpses, skeletons, and decaying, bug-infested cadavers of dead refugees, and most poignantly, commingled remains of a mother and an infant frozen in the act of sucking her breast. All other forms of animal life seem to have "abjured" (*porityag*) this pathway, save for scores of beautiful butterflies that cover the bodies in a sea of color.[43] These butterflies are mentioned in historical accounts of the march as well as in survivor testimonies. Bayly and Harper write that the "butterflies in Assam that year were the most beautiful on record" adding to the sense of the "macabre as they flitted among corpses."[44] A Goanese survivor recounts her brother's experiences: "One day he saw hundreds of beautiful butterflies in a certain spot. He looked around expecting to see a lot of flowers in this area but what he saw horrified him. The butterflies were covering a bloated corpse and they must have been feasting off the juices that oozed from the decaying body."[45] Mbembe's Bataillean formulation of death as simultaneously "the putrefaction of life" (the decaying corpses) and also the "most luxurious form of life" (the beautiful butterflies) is germane for an analysis of such sequences.[46] Painting such terrifying images of death and decrepitude, *Jangam*'s narrator says that these butterflies had exclusive "sovereignty" (*xamrajyo*) in this realm of death.[47] They were unafraid of the travelers—used only to dead bodies, living ones were ignored by them.

Besides this horrifying encounter with the luxurious and proliferating power of death, the survivors also see jewels and valuables strewn about. But neither the humans nor the butterflies even come close to these jewels—it is as if every "worldly" object has lost its value in this necro-world. These objects "mock" the travelers with their sheer meaninglessness. The refugees travel silently, mechanically onwards. At this point, the narrator says: "This was just a grotesque carnival of movement, to stop meant certain death and meaningless silence. . . . There was no conversation or contemplation on the faces of these people—they were like some wound-up mechanical dolls that progressed forward at their own pace."[48] To stop means to die, to be "swallowed (*grax*) by nature."[49] The only resource of survival in this necro-world is to proceed slowly like "wound-up" mechanical dolls. Thus, the animal and mechanical metaphors that signify a separation from the "human" for the residents of

Manku earlier twist around and become descriptors for a stubborn will to survive in this *chakrabehu*, this terrifying "green tunnel" of death.

The struggle between humans and the environment is only one part of the story. *Jangam*'s ontological explorations can also be pushed in a materialist direction. The other important aspect of *Jangam* is the degradation of the environment, and also its reconfiguration as a response to this deterioration. A note of critique of the anthropocentric desire to dominate the "nature" is already evident in the statement about the futility of the "pride" experienced by humans. As the travelers move ahead, the will-to-dominate shows its deleterious face in the numerous scenes of the devastation of lived and natural environments. The abandoned and devastated town of Unthaw is compared to a "*pretpuri*" (ghost town)[50] whose only inhabitants are emaciated stray dogs who eat their own kind to satiate their hunger. While the "horrifying" scene of the pack of dogs cannibalizing its own kind becomes another moment where forms of non-human otherness expose the "unquenchable desire . . . to survive,"[51] it also points to the degradation of conditions of life during wartime that impact both humans and animals.

The refugees witness numerous scenes of such degradation during their journey. Once again, chapter 19 is the culmination of this trajectory. Recall that standard allegorical interpretations of the text are predicated on a sharp division between the "human" and the "natural"—it is as if human beings are pitchforked into a virtually untouched natural environment during their journey. Closer attention to the text reveals that such a separation of spheres is untenable. Here's an example from the butterfly segment:

> An uncountable number of corpses lay prone in various positions in the spaces between the pathway and the edges of the hills ringing it. . . . Almost all the corpses were swollen, and scores of brightly-colored butterflies illuminated them further, covering them like a shroud. There was no other sign of life in those virtually unsurmountable hills. . . . In fact, birds too were absent.[52]

Rather than adopting a purely humanist approach that emphasizes the separation between "humans" and "nature" or an opposing anthropogenic one that focuses on the way humans reshape nature (this approach would focus on the reference to *jhum*—a form of swidden cultivation), it would be fruitful here to adopt a "post-humanist" approach that emphasizes the symbiosis of the human and the non-human.[53] First, the refugees are not traveling through untouched "nature"—although the passage emphasizes that there are "no signs" of human habitation, this region already has the prior imprint of the "human." Second, this passage gestures to the fact that living beings, including birds, probably avoid this region because of prior human activity (swidden cultivation) and the relative lack of food, and not any mystical reason like the sudden prolife-

ration of corpses. Third, the profusion of the butterflies also helps us understand the position of "any given organism in relation to the shifting networks of objects and other organisms that define it."[54] In other words, although the profusion of butterflies definitely contributes to the sense of the macabre, could it also not be viewed as an agential response of the non-human environment to this terrible situation created by displacement and mass death? Would the butterflies have proliferated otherwise, horrible as it may sound, if they hadn't been battened on the "juices" oozing out from the dead bodies? Is the rotting presence of innumerable human corpses not a reconfiguration of the "network of objects and other organisms" in this ecosystem? In passages like these, we see a complex portrayal of both the degradation of lived and natural environments *and* the response of non-human agents to such cataclysmic changes. Although reading texts like *Jangam* in an allegorical fashion is relatively common, closer attention to the shifting relationships between the fluid boundaries of the "human" and "nature" can present more nuanced readings of survival and the reconfiguration of environments during and after catastrophic events. Such efforts that interrogate anthropocentrism can open up new modes of inquiry in Partition studies writ large.

NOTES

1. Willem van Schendel, *The Bengal Borderlands: Beyond State and Nation in South Asia* (London: Anthem 2004), 27.

2. Hugh Tinker, "A Forgotten Long March: the Indian Exodus from Burma, 1942," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 6, 1 (March 1975): 1–15.

3. Anand Pandian, *Ayya's Accounts: a Ledger of Hope in Modern India* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press 2014), 182.

4. Ibid., 182.

5. Amitav Ghosh, "Coming under Burmese Fire was Surreal." *Outlook Magazine* (India), July 7, 2000. www.outlookindia.com/article/coming-under-burmese-fire-was-surreal/209696. Accessed January 26, 2016.

6. Upamanyu P. Chatterjee, *Natural Disasters and Victorian Empire: Famines, Fevers and the Literary Cultures of South Asia* (London: Palgrave Macmillan 2013), 199–200.

7. See Yvonne Ezdani (ed.), *Songs of the Survivors* (Panjim: Goa 1556, 2007) and Bilal Raschid, *The Invisible Patriot: Reminiscences of Burma's Freedom Movement* (Bethseda: Createspace Independent Publishing, 2015). Ghosh collects memoirs by survivors on his blog. There are memoirs in other Indian languages—in Assamese, see Purnakanta Buragohain, *Patkair Xipare Na Basar (*Dhemaji: Purbanchal Tai Xahitya Xabha, 1993).

8. Debendranath Acharya, *Jangam*, 1982 Reprint (Guwahati: Axom Prokaxon Porixod, 2008). Acharya (1937–1981) is a renowned historical novelist in Assamese. Like many other Assamese novels, *Jangam* was serialized in a magazine named *Prokax*. It was posthumously published in 1982.

9. Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin, *Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment* (London, New York: Routledge, 2010), 136–37.

10. Sailen Bharali, "Axomiya Oitihaxik Uponyax," in *Exo Bosoror Axomiya Uponyax*, 30–39. Ed. Nagen Thakur (Guwahati: Jyoti Prokaxon 2000), 39. All translations from Assamese are mine.

11. Prafulla Kotoky, "Aagkotha," *Debendranath Acharya Rosona Xomogro,* vii–x. Ed. Mahasweta Acharya (Guwahati: Jyoti Prokaxon 2011), viii.
12. Debendranath Acharya, *Jangam* (Guwahati: Axom Prokaxon Porixod, 2008), 7.
13. Bhaskar Sarkar, *Mourning the Nation: Indian Cinema in the Wake of Partition* (Durham: Duke University Press 2009), 68.
14. Ravi Vasudevan, "Another History Rises to the Surface: 'Hey Ram'—Melodrama in the Age of Digital Simulation," *Economic and Political Weekly*, 37.28 (2002): 2918.
15. Ibid., 2918.
16. Anirban Baishya, "Imagining Assamese Cinema: Genres, Themes and Regional Identity," (Diss. Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, 2013), 59–60.
17. Debendranath Acharya, *Jangam* (Guwahati: Axom Prokaxon Porixod, 2008), 26.
18. Ibid., 31–36.
19. Ibid., 120.
20. Ibid., 187.
21. Ibid., 187.
22. Alex Woloch, *The One vs. the Many: Minor Characters and the Space of the Protagonist in the Novel* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press), 20.
23. The British controlled Assam from 1826 after their victory in the first Anglo-Burmese war.
24. Shital Pravinchandra, "Not Just Prose: *The Calcutta Chromosome,* the South Asian Short Story and the Limitations of Postcolonial Studies," *Interventions* 16, 3 (2014): 435.
25. Debendranath Acharya, *Jangam* (Guwahati: Axom Prokaxon Porixod, 2008), 6–7.
26. Ibid., 7.
27. Ibid., 166.
28. Donna Jones, *The Racial Discourses of Life Philosophy: Negritude, Vitalism and Modernity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 28–29.
29. Debendranath Acharya, *Jangam* (Guwahati: Axom Prokaxon Porixod, 2008), 7.
30. Donna Jones, *The Racial Discourses of Life Philosophy: Negritude, Vitalism and Modernity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 36.
31. Eric Brown, "Reading the Insect," *Insect Poetics*. Ed. Eric C. Brown (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), xi.
32. Meeker and Szabari, "From the Century of the Pods to the Century of the Plants: Plant Horror, Politics and Vegetal Ontology," *Discourse,* 34, 1 (Winter 2012): 34.
33. Debendranath Acharya *Jangam* (Guwahati: Axom Prokaxon Porixod, 2008), 68.
34. Ibid., 162
35. Anurag Mahanta, *Aulingar Jui* (Sivasagar: Basu Prokaxon), 2007.
36. Ibid., 168.
37. Debendranath Acharya, *Jangam* (Guwahati: Axom Prokaxon Porixod, 2008), 140.
38. Yael Navaro-Yashin, "Life Is Dead Here: Sensing the Political in No-Man's Land," *Anthropological Theory* 3 (2003): 7.
39. Debendranath Acharya, *Jangam* (Guwahati: Axom Prokaxon Porixod, 2008), 65.
40. Ibid., 166.
41. Dysart Whitworth, "The Evacuation of Refugees and the Chinese Fifth Army from the Hukawng Valley into Assam, Summer 1942." *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society* 30, 3 (1943): 316.
42. Ibid., 320.
43. Debendranath Acharya, *Jangam* (Guwahati: Axom Prokaxon Porixod, 2008), 170.
44. Christopher Bayly and Tim Harper, *Forgotten Armies: The Fall of British Asia, 1941–1945* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 2004), 183.
45. Yvonne Vaz Ezdani, ed., *Songs of the Survivors* (Panjim: Goa 1556, 2007), 74.
46. Achille Mbembe, "Necropolitics," trans. Libby Meintjes, *Public Culture* 15, 1 (2003): 15.
47. Debendranath Acharya, *Jangam* (Guwahati: Axom Prokaxon Porixod, 2008), 70.
48. Ibid., 170–71.
49. Ibid., 172.
50. Ibid., 103.

51. Ibid., 107.
52. Ibid., 170.
53. Adrian Franklin, "A Choreography of Fire: A Posthumanist Account of Australians and Eucalypts," *The Mangle in Practice: Science, Society and Becoming*, in ed. Andrew Pickering and Keith Pickering (Durham: Duke University Press), 2009.
54. Ibid., 25–26.

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Part IV

From Pakistan to Bangladesh

TWELVE

The Never-Ending Partition

Pakistan's Self-Identification Dilemma

Amber Fatima Riaz

Decolonization of British India resulted in both the Independence of India from British colonial rule and the creation of East and West Pakistan—now Bangladesh and Pakistan—in August 1947, which resulted in a massive exchange of populations across borders between countries predicated on difference of religious and cultural identities. The exchange of populations and the resulting violence has been well-documented by historians, and significant attention has been paid in academic discourses to the impact of that violence and displacement on multiple identities. On the eve of the seventieth anniversary of Independence, what is needed is a sustained analysis of the narrative that led to the creation of Pakistan as a nation for British India's Muslims, which ultimately resulted in a nation (Pakistan) constantly struggling with its own conceptualization of legitimate nationhood. Drawing on works by Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali Zamindar, Ayesha Jalal, Ashutosh Varshney, and Yasmin Khan (among others), this chapter examines Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah's conceptualization of a united Pakistan (the nation) to interrogate why (and how) the secularist—but Muslim—nation-state envisioned by the country's founder could not gain currency after General Ayub Khan's reign, and after General Zia-ul-Haq's Islamization of the country's laws and systems. Using the Muslim League's narrative (the idea that Muslims were a nation separate and distinct from Hindus, called the two-nation theory) as its starting point, the essay traces the different ways Pakistan's governing elite tried to unify what appeared to

be disparate interests and identities in the first two decades of Pakistan's existence, by presenting a brief overview of Governor General Ghulam Muhammad's implementation of One Unit for West Pakistan (first announced in 1955) and General Ayub Khan's military rule, which ushered in Pakistan's first major investment in infrastructure and industrialization. I then move on to examine the "new" (Wahhabi-influenced) narrative proposed, then imposed, by General Zia-ul-Haq in the 1980s which redefined Pakistan as an Islamic country.[1] I contend that policies like the One Unit, as well as Zia's Islamization have been symptomatic of the state's struggle to find a monolithic national identity that needs to be at once cohesive and distinctive but that has resulted in continued fragmentation of the national identity due to regional and international pressures on the center. Thus, whereas Muhammad Ali Jinnah (The Quaid) understood that India's Muslims were a diverse group, but feared the same diversity (for its potential to create rifts rather than unify), the ruling elite of post-Independence Pakistan refused to even acknowledge that diversity, enforcing a state-defined idea of "National Unity" that has, since Independence, resulted in a fragmented, regionalized Pakistani identity that continues to place tremendous pressure on the center.

Popular accounts of the Pakistani State, in fact, continue to see it as a state ready to implode based on economic, political, and social strife, contributing to a narrative that sees South Asian Muslim identity as unified pre-Partition only to become fragmented in the decades following Independence. It is far more productive, however, to acknowledge the weaknesses of Jinnah's two-nation theory itself, in order to contextualize the regionalisms currently dominating the Pakistani political and cultural imagination.

Jinnah's two-nation theory imagined[2] a nation of Muslims unified by a shared sense of cultural identity among India's Muslims, but failed to account for regionalism and loyalty to blood and soil (as my discussion of Faisal Devji's text will show), a failure that seems to be illustrated by the increasing fragmentation of Pakistani identity. The 2013 Federal Elections' results, for example, show a voter trend that favors ethnic and regional identity: PTI's Imran Khan, who identifies himself as an ethnic Pathan, won all the seats for KPK (Khayber Pakhtoon Khwa) province, while the Punjabi leader of PML(N) Nawaz Sharif won majority in the Punjab which led to his Prime Ministership. Are these results indicative of a fragmented national identity, or a symptom of a new kind of regionalism not accounted for in Jinnah's vision for a Muslim "utopia"? Is a national, unified, identity even possible in the current political and socio-economic climate? Did Pakistan begin with a coherent sense of itself which was subsequently distorted? I propose that there were significant oversights in Jinnah's Two-Nation Theory, oversights that are only now beginning to manifest themselves seventy years after the vision became a reality. If we accept that Pakistan was, indeed, a half-baked idea set up

for failure long before it became a nation-state with well-defined borders, then the task at hand becomes monumental: Is it possible to find a unifying idea that would allow Pakistan to establish a distinct identity for itself, one that admits its Indian roots, but at the same time, branches out on its own? Are regional identities, differing religiosities, and a weak education system making it impossible for Pakistan to become a "Nation"? What is Pakistan's national identity, seventy years after the Partition and Independence?

PAKISTAN'S BEGINNINGS

Around the fiftieth anniversary of Pakistan's Independence, Akbar Ahmed and Aamir Muneer (artist) published a graphic novel entitled *The Quaid: Jinnah and the Story of Pakistan* "aimed specifically at a young audience" made up "not just [by] young Pakistanis, but . . . an informed readership throughout the world."[3] It portrays the Pakistan Movement and presents the Quaid in a heroic light, tracing the idea of Pakistan to the 1857 struggle and the British anti-Muslim pogrom. Constructed as a frame narrative, the novel is set in twentieth-century London. The action is launched by a dialogue between two friends traveling on a London bus. After a discussion of the "ills" besetting the Muslim world in the twentieth century, the conversation turns to an account of the "glory days" of the Mughals in India. The narrative asserts that "in 1857–58 when the uprisings in Delhi against the British failed we [India's Muslims] lost an emperor, an empire and a capital," to be rescued by the modern-day "Salahuddin . . . the Quaid-e-Azam . . . Muhammad Ali Jinnah."[4] This graphic novel parrots the official historical narrative which traces the idea of Pakistan to the period following the 1857 War of Independence (the Mutiny, according to British historians), and credits the creation of Pakistan to Jinnah. The novel creates an image of a lone, but heroic, political figure, who galvanized a floundering Muslim polity around the two-nation theory, a polity whose identity was, according to Pakistani political historians, invented by and established because of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan's Aligarh Muslim College (called the Anglo-Mohammaden Oriental College). Agha Ashraf's 1985 *Tehreek-e-Pakistan (The Pakistan Movement)*, in fact, asserts that Sir Syed Ahmed Khan took it upon himself to help India's Muslims recover from the political, social, and economic privation imposed by the British after the 1857 war and launched the Aligarh Movement[5] because he believed that the road to emancipation for India's Muslims was through the acquisition of British (English) education.[6]

Both the historical and literary narratives about the creation of Pakistan present a vision of a coherent Muslim polity in the early part of the twentieth century. Muslims had separated themselves as a distinct politi-

cal group[7] represented by the newly formed All-India Muslim League (which was officially declared a political party following a meeting in Dhaka in 1906). The demand for a separate nation, however, did not emerge until after the 1937 All India Elections in which the Muslim League got only 4.4 percent of the total Muslim votes cast,[8] the reason for which, according to Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, is that the Muslim League was not seen as a unifying force, nor was it perceived to be the true representative of India's Muslims[9] by the voting public. The idea of an actual territory for Muslims that would be called Pakistan was formulated in a March 1940 resolution passed at Lahore, which "formally demanded independent Muslim states in the north-west and the north-east of India on the grounds that Indian Muslims were a nation."[10] It is important to note here that the idea for a separate "homeland" for the Muslims of India had been informally discussed among the League's leadership, but historians have shown that there was little consensus about what that homeland would look like, and how the borders were to be drawn. The 1940 Pakistan Resolution, then, became the historical turning point as far as Muslim political identity in India was concerned. Based on a map envisioned by Chaudhary Rahmat Ali, who envisioned a Pak Commonwealth of Nations,[11] the 1940 Pakistan Resolution refused to accept any transfer of power from the British to the Indians without specific acknowledgments of, and protections afforded to, the Muslims of India, in the form of a nation-state. What that national identity would look like, however, remained undefined, even in 1940–47.[12] Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the leader of the All-India Muslim League, in his speech outlining the Pakistan Resolution, argued that India had at least two identifiable and separate nations (Muslims and Hindus) and that any transfer of power by the British to the Indians would "have to involve the dissolution of the unitary centre which was an artefact of British colonialism."[13] According to Jinnah,

> The Hindus and Muslims belong to two different religious philosophies, social customs, and literature[s]. They neither intermarry nor interdine together, and indeed they belong to two different civilisations which are based mainly on conflicting ideas and conceptions. Their aspects [=perspectives?] on life, and of life, are different. It is quite clear that Hindus and Mussalmans derive their inspiration from different sources of history. They have different epics, their heroes are different, and different episode[s]. Very often the hero of one is a foe of the other, and likewise their victories and defeats overlap. To yoke together two such nations under a single state, one as a numerical minority and the other as a majority, must lead to growing discontent, and final destruction of any fabric that may be so built up for the government of such a state.[14]

Jinnah goes on to contextualize his claim by comparing the Hindus and Muslims in India to other "nations" (geographically unified/contained

regions) that are divided along state lines and cites the examples of the Iberian Peninsula (divided into Portuguese and Spanish states according to nationhood) and the Balkan Peninsula, making the argument that a unified geographical region does not have to have a unified, central government and can, instead, be reimagined as multiple states. For Jinnah, "The present artificial unity of India dates back only to the British conquest and is maintained by the British bayonet, but the termination of the British regime, which is implicit in the recent declaration of His Majesty's Government, will be the herald of the entire break-up, with worse disaster than has ever taken place during the last one thousand years under the Muslims."[15] This particular articulation of India as constituent of two separate nations was, however, posited on a unified Muslim identity, one that did not necessarily exist, even in 1940 on the heels of significant unifying efforts on the part of the All-India Muslim League. The task, as envisioned by Jinnah, was the disentanglement of two "nations" who had become entwined historically and culturally, but the specific identities of which two nations remained undefined, and the question of who belonged in which "nation" remained unaddressed. Muslims asked for a "homeland" without knowing where that homeland was to be, and without defining who could "belong" to that "nation/ homeland." Ultimately, the claims for a separate nation succeeded, but the vision (such as it was) did not.

British colonization of India officially ended on the midnight of August 15, 1947, with power transferred to two separate nation-states: Pakistan and India. Thus, Pakistan was founded in the midst of one of the greatest migrations and dislocation of populations in the twentieth century.[16] As I have indicated already, one of the major problems consistently plaguing Pakistan's political and social identity since the Partition, both nationally and internationally, remains a lack of consensus about what actually constitutes Pakistan's identity, a fact that has often been attributed to the weakness of the two-nation theory.

Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal show, in their book *Modern South Asia*, that "[o]fficial histories of Pakistan have . . . subscribed to the 'two nation' theory, according to which Indian Muslims were always a distinctive and separate community that had resisted assimilation into their Indian environment."[17] They go on to show that Indian historians, on the other hand, have "blame[d] imperialism for tearing asunder two communities which history and tradition had joined."[18] Both historical narratives project the image of unified, monolithic communities—Hindus and Muslims. Even the political struggles for emancipation from the British have been reframed in official historical discourse. Agha Ashraf's text, for example—used as a history textbook in Pakistani schools in the late 1980s and 1990s—creates a narrative of the Pakistan Movement in which the Muslims of India faced discrimination at the hands of the British rulers after the 1857 War/Mutiny, based on, according to Ashraf, "political and

national differences."[19] Ashraf refers to the Hindu objection to the use of the Urdu language (a language associated with the Muslims of India[20]) in 1867 as further "proof" of Indian Muslims' disenfranchisement.[21] This narrative thread—one that highlights the religious, political, and cultural differences among the British, the Muslims, and the Hindus—has been used consistently to justify the demand for a separate nation/land for the Muslims of India, and continues to have resonance in Pakistani political and popular discourses. What this narrative fails to account for is a distinct vision or description of what the "Muslim nation" actually looks like, or even what unifies the Muslims of India beyond the fact that all of them are followers of the same faith. What the narrative also ignores are the numerous differences that more often than not divided Muslims in pre-Partition India, forcibly creating, instead, the myth of a united nation of Muslims that is only disintegrating post-Partition. This forces most Pakistanis to consistently ask themselves: Where did we go wrong?

The image of a united Muslim front, however, is one that is not historically accurate. In fact, historians like Yasmin Khan and Vazira Zamindar have shown that Partition was viewed as far from being inevitable, highlighting the differences in opinions about what postcolonial India would actually look like. According to Yasmin Khan, in 1946–47, what "people most wanted was freedom and sovereignty over their own communities. . . . The idea of *partitioning* ancient homelands was barely contemplated or understood . . . [and that] with the euphoria of an imperial ending surged the hope for self-rule and the will to power among princes, caste leaders, spiritual *pirs* and clusters of ethnic minorities."[22] The demand for Pakistan, for the Partition, then, was not a unified one as the official historical account would have it. As Yasmin Khan notes, Jinnah was asking himself in 1947: "what role will Islam play in the new state? Immediately Pakistan was declared a reality, the convenient ambiguities which had been used to glue the League together—hazy idealism and imaginative aspiration towards Islamic statehood—started to haunt the new country's leadership."[23] As Rafia Hasan puts it,

> The Muslim state of Pakistan was carved out of the Indian subcontinent on the basis of its Islamic ideology. However, this does not imply that the nation is only secular or theocratic in its basis. Pakistan is both and neither, for it aspires to be theistic without being theocratic and aims to improve life in this world within the framework of a supraindividual and supraphysical verity without being secular.[24]

It is, thus, important to note that there is very little consensus about the validity of Jinnah's two-nation theory. He may have subscribed to it, and he may even have successfully led an entire generation to demand a separate state because of his belief in its validity, but its weaknesses became evident quite soon after the theory was proposed. Akbar Ahmed's graphic novel, for example, includes an episode from Jinnah's pre-

1940 political career, during which he was asked by a young Muslim to justify his own religious beliefs before speaking on behalf of all Muslims. The young activist demands, "What do you know about us Muslims? You do not dress like a Muslim. You do not speak Urdu?," to which Jinnah replies: "I am proud to be a Muslim. I speak as a politician not as a religious leader. I speak to you in English because it is the political language of India. In our temples and our Mosques let us talk about God. But let's keep religion out of politics."[25] Jinnah, thus, is portrayed as having begun his political career by maintaining a distinction between religion and politics, one which he tried to maintain even after he switched from wearing three-piece suits to the (now famous) sherwani[26] and Jinnah cap, a switch in dress which he saw as "confidence in the future [balanced by] pride in the past."[27] Ahmed's text, thus, represents Jinnah as a calm, logical man, who, when challenged, adapts his dress, even his language, to become an accessible leader for a diverse populace in an attempt to unify it, which, in turn, suggests that the unity envisioned by Jinnah and encapsulated in the two-nation theory was a superimposed one. The fact that his two-nation theory refuses to acknowledge the diversity of the Muslim populace, symbolized by his adoption of the sherwani (over other forms of Indian dress) is problematic. A productive discussion of Pakistani National Identity, then, also becomes problematic, since the post-Partition claims of regional, cultural, and linguistic bonds seem to have proven to be stronger than those used by Jinnah to unify the Muslim nation in the 1940s.

Faisal Devji's conceptualization of the "Muslim Zion" can be seen as one way of reimagining the two-nation theory. In his book *Muslim Zion*, Devji compares Muslim nationalism (that resulted in the formation of Pakistan) to the Zionist movement and proposes that the concept of Zion (or the specific Muslim nationalism under discussion here) "serves to name a political form in which nationality is defined by the rejection of an old land for a new, thus attenuating the historical role that blood and soil play in the language of Old World nationalism."[28] This suggests, then, that the ideology that shaped the Pakistan movement in the 1940s was rooted in the imagination: India's Muslims were asked to imagine an ideal homeland that united its citizens based on shared religious beliefs while precluding other (and as it turned out, more unifying) forms of citizenship and unity, i.e., blood relations and an attachment to the soil/land. As Devji, among others, points out, Jinnah "made it clear that his new nation would have to repudiate not simply its colonial and more generally Indian past, but even the regional identities of its own Muslim majority, which he fearfully compared to nations in waiting."[29] The two-nation theory, thus, attempted to imagine a Muslim Nation within India, attempted to rewrite the discourse on nationhood, and succeeded in unifying a large segment of the Muslim population by simply imagining a

homeland that may or may not have specific geographical, or even cultural, borders or contours.

This unifying principle (shared religion and culture) sought by the Muslim Nationalist movement of the 1940s, however, lost its legitimacy almost immediately after Independence from the British. Regional and ethnic identities placed tremendous pressure on the center within months of the formation of the Pakistani state. That the Pakistani state has consistently found itself embattled by regional identities demanding supremacy at the state's center since Pakistan's inception is well known. In fact, political historians have compared India's success at unifying the nation post-Independence to Pakistan's inability to do the same, which is a problem to which I now turn.

POST-PARTITION PAKISTAN: THE 1940S AND 1950S

It is generally acknowledged that Pakistan lacked a national identity during the early years of its existence. Pakistani political and historical discourse consistently cites lack of resources, the influx of refugees, and a relatively poorly defined state identity as the reasons for Pakistan's early struggles. According to Yasmin Khan, the "League was handed a scarcely viable, 'moth-eaten' state to run, the Punjab and Bengal (ironically perhaps the two Indian provinces with the most distinctive regional cultures and interwoven populations) would be wrenched apart,"[30] which was a decision that ultimately cost millions of lives and exerted tremendous pressure on Pakistan's economy and statehood even before the official transfer of power. Vazira Zamindar's study of the post-Partition period, *The Long Partition*, for example, examines the exchange of goods and personnel, as well as populations (that she categorizes as refugees) in the late 1940s and 1950s, and shows that the exchange of people, goods, and resources "was by no means a straightforward process; it was a debated, contested, and fraught historical process of negotiation between two states, in which ultimately there was no consensus."[31] The new states faced an influx of refugees, fought multiple wars with each other, and tried to manage state machinery with limited resources. As Sarah Ansari points out, in her essay "Everyday Expectations of the State during Pakistan's Early Years," unlike India, "it took far longer to work out the . . . basic political coordinates for Pakistan. It was not until 1956 that Pakistan's first constitution appeared, and even then it barely survived two years before the 'rules of engagement' were redrawn by the military."[32] Thus, Partition may have resulted in the establishment of a physically well-defined nation-state, with clear borders and geographical contours, but the bureaucrats and politicians debated the basic contents of the constitution well into the 1950s, while dealing with an influx of refugees and a struggling economy which had not "recovered from the disruptions

triggered by partition,"[33] highlighting the impossibility of separating "nations" as inter-mixed as the Muslims and Hindus of India/Pakistan. Ian Talbot and Gurharpal Singh show, in their book *The Partition of India*, that the late 1940s were characterized by "disputes over assets and territory"[34] including the division of financial assets. These disputes "burnished the myth that India attempted to strangle Pakistan at birth."[35] Since Pakistan "was faced with the prospect of setting up an administration over territories that were devoid of any major industries or other sources of revenue generation. . . . Muslim League members of the Partition Committee fought hard to maximise their claims to the resources of united India,"[36] most of which were successfully thwarted or whittled down by members of the Congress, which cemented the impression that India was, and would remain, a threat to Pakistan's statehood. The dispute over territory, specifically over that of Kashmir, allowed Pakistan "to divert scarce resources to the 'political economy of defence' that rapidly expanded the Pakistan army from its modest beginnings, but at the cost of dependency on foreign aid and economic and social development,"[37] which resulted in a "perilous economy and insecure borders threatened by a hostile neighbor. In this context, the military and the bureaucracy emerged as the premier institutions that set the permanent template for the Pakistan polity in which democratic governance would always play second fiddle."[38] Thus, Pakistan's "instability" seems to have been guaranteed from its inception, and then cemented by the country's inability, or unwillingness, to separate military jurisdiction from that of the civilian, leaving little room for an analysis of, or establishment of, a Pakistan beyond the idea that Pakistanis are distinguishable as Pakistanis only because they are not Indians, as Ashutosh Varshney points out.[39]

Ashutosh Varshney shows, in fact, that one of the main reasons behind Pakistan's instability as a state is the country's inability to "lay out the respective spheres of civilian and military jurisdiction . . . [and that] none of the multiple constitutions of independent Pakistan has endured as a basic architecture for power arrangements."[40] He then compares Pakistan's reliance on the military to not only maintain order but to also act as politicians to India's ability to separate civilian and military jurisdictions,[41] suggesting that Pakistan's "low-level equilibrium"[42] is due to the co-mingling of the civilian and military power arrangements. In its seventy-year life span, Pakistan has had three major military dictatorships, each a result of strategic coup d'états by the Army's Chief of Army Staff, ostensibly to stabilize crumbling civilian governments. The first "dictator"[43] was General Ayub Khan, who was then followed by General Zia-ul-Haq. The third dictatorship was led by General Pervez Musharraf, ensuring that Pakistan's political "reins [remain] . . . effectively in the hands of the army for more than thirty-eight years since its independence."[44] Each "dictator" gained incredible popularity among the Paki-

stani people, however, and each has been hailed as a unifying force in Pakistan's national identity, which disputes the suggestion that military rule is the root cause of Pakistan's identity crisis. The causes of the current identity crisis are far more complex as, even though "the soldiers [of Pakistan] may not be favored by Pakistanis as political rulers, they continue to be trusted by a vast majority of people as the nation's armed forces,"[45] which, I contend, is a direct consequence of the events surrounding the Partition. An influx of refugees, a lack of adequate resources, and an unstable civilian government created the perfect atmosphere for the army to establish itself as the only institution capable of providing stability to the floundering nation. This left it up to the military leaders to decide what Pakistani identity would look like both nationally and internationally, which, in turn, was one defined as distinctly "anti-Indianism,"[46] bearing within it echoes of Jinnah's desire to disentangle the "two nations" of India.

The early years of Pakistan's independence were also plagued by regionalism fueled by mistrust between the Eastern (now Bangladesh) and Western parts of Pakistan. As Christophe Jaffrelot shows, the first decade of independence was characterized by friction over which language was to become the official language of the country—West Pakistan (and the political center) imposed Urdu, but Bengal (then East Pakistan) resisted it in favor of Bengali.[47] Other grievances dividing East from West Pakistan included disputes over fair division of political power, investment in infrastructure and economic exploitation of the East by West Pakistan. Ghulam Muhammad's dissolution of the Constituent Assembly in 1955 and the imposition of One Unit which united all four provinces into West Pakistan, and renamed East Bengal as East Pakistan,[48] further exacerbated these tensions, as the One Unit scheme was perceived by most Bengalis as West Pakistan's attempt to maintain its hegemony, placing tremendous regional pressure on the center, effectively undermining the two-nation theory almost immediately after the Partition. If the two-nation theory could not unify East and West Pakistan, then what was the basis of the Partition? This is, however, a question that the Pakistani state apparatus and the general populace have refused to confront. In fact, the co-mingling of the military and state machinery has ensured silence about crucial events like the 1971 war that, in turn, led to the sense of insecurity every Pakistani seems to feel in the twenty-first century and that has been highlighted by the question that launches the action in Akbar Ahmed's graphic novel: "What is our future? Are we as worthless as our critics say?"[49]

As suggested already, specific events of the late 1950s and most of the 1960s led to the 1971 war and separation of East Pakistan (as Bangladesh). Parliamentary government broke down within a decade of independence, and the failure of democracy in Pakistan was resolved, as Anthony Hyman and coauthors show, by the imposition of Martial Law in

1958. General Ayub Khan was appointed the Martial Law Administrator, who then, very quickly, took over the Presidency and effectively ran the country under Army rule from 1958 to 1969.[50] Relying heavily on US and Foreign Aid, Ayub Khan invested in infrastructure and industrialization, which further cemented the impression that the Army alone could provide stability to the nation. The 1965 war with India, however, marked the beginning of Ayub Khan's decline in popularity, resulting in his abdication to General Yahya in 1969. Even though Ayub Khan's reign is generally hailed as the Golden Era of Pakistan's history, leading the country through rapid industrialization, the decade also alienated East Pakistan significantly. The general elections of 1970 highlighted the political differences between East and West Pakistan, with Mujibur Rahman gaining majority in East Pakistan, and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in West Pakistan. East Pakistan became Bangladesh in December 1971, after India's military intervention in Bengal resulted in Pakistan Army's humiliating defeat.

The 1971 separation of Bengal from Pakistan highlights the regional and ethnic tensions that have consistently plagued Pakistanis' sense of national identity. Regionalism and an attachment to blood and soil that were overridden by the Muslim League's utopic vision of a "Muslim homeland" seem to have taken precedence over nationalism. Recognizing the regionalism dominating Pakistani politics, and fearing it, General Zia launched an Islamization campaign that, he hoped, would unite the country, details of which follow.

THE TURNING POINT: GENERAL ZIA-UL-HAQ'S DICTATORSHIP

Where General Ayub Khan's dictatorship led Pakistan through a decade of investment in infrastructure and industrialization (coupled as it was with attempts at unifying a disparate populace), the next military-led government, beginning in 1977, is characterized as the era of Islamization. The secularism espoused by the Quaid during the Pakistan movement of the 1930s and then promoted by Ayub Khan and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was deliberately abandoned by General Zia's Islamization campaign, which sought to create an Islamic State instead of a State for Muslims which had been the initial goal of the Pakistan movement. This Islamization campaign, however, only highlighted the differences among regions, rather than acting as the unifying force Zia had envisioned, exacerbating a national anxiety about Pakistani identity which, in turn, underlines the oversights in Jinnah's two-nation theory.

General Zia-ul-Haq led a coup d'état against Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's government in 1977 and declared himself president in 1978, after promising and then canceling elections twice.[51] According to Shahid Javed Burki, Zia forced Bhutto from the office of Prime Minister in "September 1977 on the charge that he had ordered the murder of a political oppo-

nent. Bhutto was tried by the Lahore High Court, convicted, sentenced to death, and allowed by General Zia-ul-Haq to be executed in Rawalpindi on April 4, 1979, after the Supreme Court upheld the verdict."[52] Having established himself as the president of Pakistan in 1978, "ostensibly on the expiration of Chaudhary's five-year term as there was no National Assembly and Senate in existence to elect a new president,"[53] Zia proceeded to implement numerous changes in laws and the constitution of Pakistan, under the banner of "Islamization of Pakistan." His claim: Pakistan was founded as a country for all Muslims of India/South Asia and must be brought in line with Islamic laws in order to make it a truly Islamic State. As Craig Baxter shows, however, how one defines Islam has a significant impact on the type of "Islamic State" created, an example of why Zia's Islamization campaign failed to gain currency or to unite the nation. Baxter shows that Pakistan's Muslims are divided along sectarian and religious lines, as well as differences in regional identities.[54] Thus, a monolithic view of Islamic jurisprudence is almost impossible, unless one chooses a singular school of thought at the cost of other, possibly contradictory, ones. In his article "Politics of Islamisation: Pakistan's Dilemma (1947–1988)" Sukhwant S. Bindra shows that, as a religion and as a system of rules about spirituality as well as one's role in "life," Islam "aims at striking a balance between the units and the whole, between the individual and the community"[55] but that there is little to no consensus in religious scholarship on what constitutes a truly "Islamic state." Scholars, instead, have offered their own descriptions and definitions, most of which have historically contradicted one another. Thus, General Zia's definition of, and attempt at, establishing an ideal "Islamic" state met with resistance and protests in Pakistan, with no real consensus as to what was meant by "Islamic," prompting debates about Pakistani national identity among political analysts and highlighting the diversity of the Muslim population in Pakistan.

In their article "Islamicisation and Social Policy in Pakistan" J. Henry Korson and Michelle Maskiell discuss the legal changes brought about by Zia's Islamization campaign and show that even though Zia ruled as a dictator, his Islamization program was far from a lone man's version of an ideal Islamic state. He took pains to ensure that the process itself followed Islamic guidelines for forming laws in a Muslim country. He announced, for example, the establishment of the *majlis-e-shoora* (assembly or parliament), an appointed advisory body that effectively replaced the elected National Assembly[56] in 1981, soon after declaring himself President. The appointment of the majlis, with an intended membership of 300 advisors, was meant to accelerate the process of Islamization of Pakistan's constitution as well as social system, but actual power to make new laws or to amend the constitution remained with the military government, so the role of the majlis remained an advisory one.[57] Any amendments made by the majlis were reviewed, in turn, by the Federal

Shariah Court to ensure that they were not contrary to Islamic laws and met with the dictates of the Quran and Sunnah, as interpreted by the Council of Islamic Ideology.[58]

It is important to note, here, that General Zia's Islamization campaign was resisted and questioned consistently by the civilian elite, and was characterized by significant disagreements over which school of Islamic thought was to become the dominant one, showing clearly that while the insistence on secularism embedded in Jinnah's two-nation theory had currency in some Pakistani circles, Zia's unification attempt on religious grounds failed significantly, drawing attention to the fissures in Pakistani national identity. In her essay "The Past as Present," Ayesha Jalal discusses the impact of Zia's Islamization campaign and asserts that "General Zia-ul-Haq (1977–1988) synchronized his so-called Islamisation policies with American-backed support for the Afghan resistance movement in the 1980s."[59] Thus, Zia used the Islamization campaign, according to Jalal, to cement his own claim to power in Pakistan. He launched a "state-sponsored 'jihad' industry"[60] which funded *madrasahs*[61] in the northwest "that shared a common Pakhtun culture with over three million Afghan refugees who had poured into Pakistan."[62] The problem arose when the madrassahs adopted ideologies different from those practiced by most Muslims in Pakistan. As Jalal puts it, "Long before the Taliban reared their heads in the tribal northwest of Pakistan, local rivalries dressed up as disagreements over Islam erupted in pitched battles between the militant bands of Sunnis and Shi'as as well as Deobandis, Barelvis and the Ahl-i-Hadith."[63] Thus, instead of unifying the country, Zia's Wahhabi-influenced Islamization campaign only succeeded in highlighting and exacerbating preexisting regional, ethnic, and religious differences.

PAKISTAN'S FUTURE: IS A COHESIVE NATIONAL IDENTITY POSSIBLE?

I began this chapter by asking whether Pakistan's founding ideology has "failed" its citizens and have shown that the two-nation theory imagined a unified Muslim Nation even as this redefinition of nationhood failed to acknowledge the (competing) claims of soil, blood-relations and cultural practices. I suggested that the most recent Federal Elections (held in 2013)[64] highlight a (perceived) growing regionalism in Pakistan that resists any attempts at national unity. I contend, however, that the All-India Muslim League's initial claims of a unified Muslim polity in colonial India were grossly exaggerated. In as much as the Muslim League (and to an extent, the Congress Party) relied on the two-nation theory which presented a vision of a unified Muslim majority, that unity did not actually exist.

Once the territorial boundaries were determined, Pakistan became "a prisoner of its geography and history,"[65] forcing the nation to define and recast itself continuously while simultaneously trying to negotiate internal and external stresses, given its strategic geographical location, and its historical wars with India. As Ayesha Jalal points out, "curbs on freedom of speech during extended periods of military authoritarianism, declining educational standards, and an obsessive fear of Indian hegemonic designs has stunted the development of a critical intellectual tradition"[66] in Pakistan. That, however, does not mean that a unified Pakistani identity is not possible. What is needed is a sustained analysis of both the Pakistan Movement of the early twentieth century and Pakistan's own political and social history, one that uncovers a credible history of the founding of the nation. That "Pakistan has found it difficult to project a national identity that can strike a sympathetic chord with its heterogeneous people"[67] is clear. What is less clear is how Pakistan can now build a national identity without continuously resorting to the myth of its origins—that the "country emerged from a religiously inspired separatist movement against Hindu domination in an Independent India."[68] As my analysis has shown already, this myth has presented a particularly distorted vision of Pakistan's origins, and has created tremendous anxiety around regionalism. An acknowledgment of the multiple voices that consistently debated the idea of Pakistan in the 1930s and 1940s does not negate the (perceived) need for Pakistan, but, instead, allows a space for dialogue about the multiple claims of the regional identities that now constitute the nation—both geographically and ideologically—so that those regional identities can begin to identify common goals for the country instead of focusing all their energies on gaining footholds at the center.

In his essay "Why Pakistan Will Survive" Mohsin Hamid outlines the incredible diversity that makes up the Pakistani identity. He points out that Pakistan is "the sixth most populous country in the world [and that one] in every forty human beings is Pakistani."[69] The population itself, thus, is incredibly diverse. Given the country's large population, it should come as no surprise that Pakistanis speak multiple languages, have more "non-Muslims than there are people in Toronto or Miami . . . have transvestite talk-show hosts, advocates for 'eunuch rights', *burqa*-wearers, turbaned men with beards . . . the Communist Mazdoor Kissan[70] Party and . . . Porsche dealerships. [Pakistanis] are nobody's stereotype."[71] Given the diversity of the population, Pakistan's insistence on a monolithic view of its identity—one country, one religion, one voice—has failed to find any traction, a statement underlined by the constant (and rather circular) debates about what Pakistani identity actually is. Once Pakistani politicians and historians open themselves to an acceptance of Pakistan's diversity, and to the multiple claims of the diverse regional identities that constitute the nation of Pakistan, meaningful di-

alogue can begin to take place about how the country can make a name for itself. Pakistan must open itself up to a critical examination of both the Pakistan movement and its own tumultuous history in order to come to terms with its own diversity, and to accept the fact that there is not one Pakistani identity, but many different ones, each equally valid, each shaping Pakistan's trajectory in its own way.

NOTES

1. It is important to note here that Pakistan's definition changed from a country for Muslims to Islamic State very soon after the Partition and the Quaid's death. General Zia, however, imposed a much stricter interpretation of Islam (often seen as having roots in Wahhabism, favored by the Saudis), which is often seen as the turning point in Pakistan's redefinition as Islamic State, details of which are presented in the essay.
2. I use "imagined" deliberately to signal Benedict Anderson's delineation of "imagined nations" in his text *Imagined Communities Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, Rev. Ed. (New York: Verso, 1991) in which he defines nation as an "imagined political community—and imagined as both limited and sovereign" (6). Jinnah became a proponent of the two-nation theory which utilized this very concept to mobilize a diverse group of people unified under one label, but which, seventy years after Partition, seems to be failing as a concept.
3. Akbar Ahmed, *The Quaid: Jinnah and the Story of Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1997). Book Jacket.
4. Ibid., 6–7; original ellipses.
5. Agha Ashraf, *Tehreek-e-Pakistan* [The Pakistan Movement] (Lahore: Zahid Printers, 1985), 17–18; my translation.
6. Ibid., 18; my translation.
7. The British Government granted separate electorates to Muslims in 1909 as noted by Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, Political Economy* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 138.
8. Ibid., 141.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid., 144.
11. The map drawn by Ali has been reprinted in Akbar Ahmed's text.
12. The Pakistan Resolution and the demand for a "homeland" for India's Muslims, as well as the two-nation theory proposed and espoused by the Muslim League were hotly contested political ideas, details of which debates cannot be recounted here in the interests of space. For an account of the interactions between Jinnah, Gandhi, Nehru, and British political representatives, see Jaswant Singh's *Jinnah: India—Partition Independence* (New Delhi: Rupa and Co., 2009).
13. Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, and Political Economy* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 145.
14. Frances W. Pritchett, "Text of Address by Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah at Lahore Session of Muslim League, March, 1940," (Islamabad: Directorate of Films and Publishing, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of Pakistan, 1983). All editorial emendations in square brackets are by Frances W. Pritchett.
15. Ibid.
16. For relevant statistics and analyses, see Jill Didur, *Unsettling Partition: Literature, Gender, Memory* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), or Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin, *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1998).
17. Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal. *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, and Political Economy* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 135.

18. Ibid.
19. Agha Ashraf, *Tehreek-e-Pakistan* (Lahore: Zahid Printers, 1985), 21; my translation.
20. During the struggle for Independence from the British in the early part of the twentieth century, Hindi was associated with Hindus of India, while Urdu became associated with Muslim culture. A conscious effort has been made to separate the two languages; Hindi, for example, traces its roots back to Sanskrit, while Urdu script draws from Arabic and Persian. The vocabulary of both languages, as well as the contemporary vernacular is similar enough to enable Hindi and Urdu speakers to communicate quite effectively, making the distinction between the languages difficult to detect.
21. Agha Ashraf, *Tehreek-e-Pakistan* (Lahore: Zahid Printers, 1985), 18–21.
22. Yasmin Khan, *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan* (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 86. Original italics.
23. Ibid., 93.
24. Rafia Hasan, "The Role of Women as Agents of Change and Development in Pakistan" *Human Rights Quarterly* 3, 3 (Aug. 1981): 68
25. Akbar Ahmed, *The Quai: Jinnah and the Story of Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1997), 24–25.
26. The sherwani is a long coat-like garment worn over "tang pajama" or cotton tights-like pants. It was favored by the nobles of Mughal India as a court dress and became a symbol of Muslim nobility in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The symbol continues to have resonance in contemporary South Asian society, in part due to the Muslim League's leaders' adoption of the sherwani as their primary dress in the 1940s.
27. Akbar Ahmed, *The Quaid: Jinnah and the Story of Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1997), 75.
28. Faisal Devji, *Muslim Zion: Pakistan as a Political Idea* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 3.
29. Ibid., 10.
30. Yasmin Khan, *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan* (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 88.
31. Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali Zamindar, *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia: Refugees, Boundaries, Histories* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 7.
32. Sarah Ansari, "Everyday Expectations of the State during Pakistan's Early Years: Letters to the Editor, Dawn (Karachi), 1950–1953." *From Subjects to Citizens: Society and the Everyday State in India and Pakistan, 1947–1970*, ed. Taylor C. Sherman, William Gould, and Sara Ansari (Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 173.
33. Ibid., 175.
34. Ian Talbot and Gurharpal Singh, *The Partition of India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 156.
35. Ibid., 157.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid., 159.
38. Ibid., 162.
39. Varshney, Ashutosh. "The Idea of Pakistan," *The Great Divide*, spec. issue of *India International Centre Quarterly*, ed. Ira Pande 35, 3 & 4 (Winter 2008, Spring 2009): 4.
40. Ibid., 3.
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid.
43. Military rule in Pakistan is inevitably greeted by the populace as a time of stability and, often, as one of prosperity for the masses. The suspension of legal constitutions and Martial Law are technically termed dictatorships, but are not viewed as such in popular Pakistani discourse. Ayub Khan's presidency, for example, is often

hailed as Pakistan's Golden Era, and Musharraf's presidency is seen to have brought economic prosperity and international acclaim for Pakistan.

44. Shuja Nawaz, "Army and Politics," *Pakistan: Beyond the "Crisis State,"* ed. Maleeha Lodhi (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2011), 79.

45. Ashutosh Varshney, "The Idea of Pakistan," in *The Great Divide*, spec. issue of *India International Centre Quarterly*, edited by Ira Pande 35, 3 & 4 (Winter 2008, Spring 2009): 4

46. Ibid.

47. Christophe Jaffrelot, *A History of Pakistan and its Origins* (London: Anthem Press, 2004), 21.

48. Ibid.

49. Akbar Ahmed, *The Quaid: Jinnah and the Story of Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1997), 2.

50. Anthony Hyman, Muhammed Ghayur, Naresh Kaushik, *Pakistan: Zia and After* (New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1989), 12.

51. Craig Baxter, "Restructuring the Pakistan Political System," *Pakistan Under the Military: Eleven Years of Zia-ul-Haq*, eds. Shahid Javed Burki and Craig Baxter (San Francisco: Westview Press, 1991), 32.

52. Shahid Javed Burki, "Zia's Eleven Years," *Pakistan Under the Military: Eleven Years of Zia-ul-Haq*, ed. Shahid Javed Burki and Craig Baxter (San Francisco: Westview Press, 1991), 1.

53. Craig Baxter, "Restructuring the Pakistan Political System," *Pakistan Under the Military: Eleven Years of Zia-ul-Haq*, eds. Shahid Javed Burki and Craig Baxter (San Francisco: Westview Press, 1991), 32.

54. Ibid., 36.

55. Sukhwant S. Bindra, "Politics of Islamisation: Pakistan's Dilemma (1947–1988)," *Punjab Journal of Politics* 27, 2 (2003): 124.

56. J. Henry Korson and Michelle Maskiell, "Islamicisation and Social Policy in Pakistan," *Asian Survey* 25, 6 (1985): 589.

57. Ibid., 590.

58. Ibid.

59. Ayesha Jalal, "The Past as Present," *Pakistan: Beyond the "Crisis State,"* ed. Maleeha Lodhi (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2011), 15.

60. Ibid.

61. Independent religious schools ostensibly devoted to Islamic instruction and the study of the Quran, but generally understood to be "breeding grounds" for extremist and fundamentalist ideologies.

62. Ayesha Jalal, "The Past as Present," *Pakistan: Beyond the "Crisis State,"* ed. Maleeha Lodhi (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2011), 15.

63. Ibid.

64. The Punjabi dominated PML (N) led by Nawaz Sharif won 214 of a total of 297 seats in the Punjab, while the Sindhi-led PPP won majority in Sindh, and the Pakhtun-led PTI won majority in KPK, with a Balochi party maintaining majority in Balochistan. The results allowed Nawaz Sharif's party to gain majority at the Federal level on the basis of sheer numbers, as the Federal seats are allocated according to a province's population, giving Punjab the maximum number of Federal seats. Given these election results, it is easy to claim that regionalism has finally begun to dominate the political scene.

65. Shuja Nawaz, "Army and Politics," in *Pakistan: Beyond the "Crisis State,"* edited by Maleeha Lodhi (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2011), 79.

66. Ayesha Jalal, "The Past as Present," *Pakistan: Beyond the "Crisis State,"* ed. Maleeha Lodhi (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2011), 9–10.

67. Ibid., 11.

68. Ibid.

69. Mohsin Hamid, "Why Pakistan Will Survive," *Pakistan: Beyond the "Crisis State,"* ed. Maleeha Lodhi (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2011), 35.

70. Mazdoor: Laborer; Kissan: farm-worker, i.e., The Communist Farm Laborer Party.

71. Mohnsin Hamid, "Why Pakistan Will Survive," *Pakistan: Beyond the "Crisis State,"* ed. Maleeha Lodhi (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2011), 36.

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THIRTEEN

Partition and the Bangladeshi Literary Response

Kaiser Haq

The Partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947 and the attendant bloodbath have become indissolubly linked to several horrific images. Armed gangs or mobs attacking helpless groups of men, women, and children trying to cross the border that had just been scratched on the map; trains carrying refugees attacked and arriving at their destination on the other side of the border with only dead bodies; women ambushed and raped and then killed. Muslim pitted against Hindu and Sikh and vice versa. And when the frenzy abates, a dead count of a million. A few years later, Partition literature becomes a tragic sub-genre. However, it does not have a uniform character throughout the region. Much of the massacre was centered on the Punjab and Northwestern India. South India was spared, and writers there, lacking firsthand experience of the violence, could not be expected to deal with it with the same raw power. In the eastern part, the pattern of violence was quite distinct, and produced a different demographic fallout. There was not the same degree of raw violence. The holocaust in the west led to ethnic cleansing and population transfers on a massive scale. Such wholesale demographic changes did not occur in Bengal.

Bangladesh is unique in that it has undergone partition three times, and each time it has been different from the other two. The result is a strange sense of historical disorientation that is largely repressed. As Ananya Jahanara Kabir, in her recent study of *Partition's Post-Amnesias*, puts it, "Thrice-partitioned Bengal, together with the partition of the adjoining province of Assam, has given rise to a most peculiar kind of

cartographic irresolution, caused by the repeated creation, dissolution, and transformation of the boundary demarcating its eastern and western regions."[1] The first time was in 1905, when the colonial administration decided to partition Bengal into two provinces, one comprising West Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa and with a Hindu majority; the other East Bengal and Assam and with a Muslim majority. The move was welcomed by the Muslims of East Bengal and violently opposed by Hindus; in the end the colonial authorities gave in and repealed the partition in 1911. Politics then became increasingly tinctured by religion.

As British withdrawal loomed, the task of splitting the subcontinent to create one or more Muslim-majority territories alongside Hindu-majority India became a contentious issue. Punjab, it was decided, would have to be split up. In Bengal, Muslims wanted an undivided province to go to Pakistan, while Hindus favored partition. A futile last-minute attempt was made to keep it intact as an independent state separate from both India and Pakistan. In the end East Bengal, along with the Muslim-majority district of Assam, was carved out as Pakistan's eastern province; it would be renamed East Pakistan, while the four Muslim provinces at the subcontinent's western end—(West) Punjab, Sindh, Baluchistan, and the North-West Frontier Province—would be amalgamated into West Pakistan.

But Pakistan soon began to strain at the seams, first over the choice of state language, then over economic disparity between the two wings. Mohammed Ali Jinnah, addressing a meeting at Dhaka University, foolishly declared that Urdu, understood by few Bengali Muslims, would be Pakistan's state language and was heckled by students. In 1952, students demanding that Bengali be made a state language alongside Urdu were fired upon by the police; at least five died. The movement spread and the government was forced to accede to the demand. The language martyrs are now Bangladesh's national heroes, and their death anniversary, February 21, has been declared International Mother Language Day by the UNO.

Two years later, in the elections to the provincial legislative assembly of East Pakistan, a newly formed United Front, comprising Fazlul Huq's Krishak Sramik Party (the Party of Peasants and Workers), the Awami League (formed by breakaway sections of the Muslim League led by Husain Shaheed Suhrawardy and Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani), wiped out the Muslim League and formed the provincial government. It was a short-lived administration, soon thrown out of office by the diktat of an unfriendly central government dominated by the West Pakistani elite. The Front articulated a twenty-one-point political program that demanded provincial autonomy, both political and economic, and thus struck at the foundation of the federalist system then taking shape. This program, though it could not be implemented, presages the

later six-point movement of the Awami League that eventually led to the independence of Bangladesh.

Independence came at the price of the most harrowing bloodshed ever seen in the country. When the Awami League, led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, won the majority of seats in the Pakistan National Assembly in 1970, on the basis of the six-point program that demanded provincial autonomy, the ruling military junta, with the connivance of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and his Pakistan People's Party, refused to hand over power; when protests intensified, a ruthless military crackdown tried to smother dissent. The independence war erupted and nine months later the rebels, aided by the Indian armed forces, assumed control of a newborn country. Often missing in this narrative is the attempt by the Pakistan Army to replay the Partition massacres of 1947. It is generally accepted that the Pakistan Army committed genocide in Bangladesh. The nature of the genocide is usually left unexamined. The Pakistani onslaught prompted nine million Bangladeshis to trek across the border to refugee camps in India, of whom 90 percent were Hindu; obviously the genocide was primarily aimed at the Hindus. The Pakistan Army wanted an ethnic cleansing of East Pakistan, something West Pakistan had completed in 1947. From 1947 to 1971, Pakistan lived with a disaffected eastern province. West Pakistan's ruling elite blamed the disaffection on its large Hindu population and their influence on Muslim Bengalis, whom they considered insufficiently Islamized. What the latter had failed to do in 1947, because they were "bad"—Hinduized—Muslims, the Pakistan Army attempted in 1971. This is not to minimize in any way the communal violence that has taken place in Bengal even without the participation of the Pakistan Army. The Bengal Partition of 1905 and its repeal in 1911 proved to be a watershed in Hindu-Muslim relations in Bengal. Henceforth, the two communities went their separate ways in pursuing an anticolonial agenda.

The Muslim peasantry identified a dual antagonist comprising the Hindu zamindars and British colonizers. The upper-caste Hindu gentry were unabashedly contemptuous of the Muslim peasantry. This opposition was further complicated by a class dichotomy among Bengali Muslims, with Muslim zamindars and their upper-class coreligionists labeling themselves superior (*ashraf*) as opposed to the inferior Muslim common people (*atraf*). Consequently, two kinds of Muslim political formations emerged, Fazlul Huq's Krishak Praja Party (Party of Peasants and the Tenantry) claiming to represent the peasantry, and the Muslim League, dominated by *ashraf* politicians, many from the zamindar class. The internal dialectic of Muslim politics had the two groups vying for the support of the Muslim masses, with the upper-class leaders happily falling back on the universalist message of Islam to paper over class differences. Similarly, there was a caste divide within the Hindu community, with some low-caste politicians demanding—unsuccessfully—a separate

electorate. However, communal violence overrode these complications of class and caste, and riots became endemic in many parts of Bengal from the thirties onwards; Dhaka was a particularly volatile city.

The most devastating riot in Bengal was the so-called Great Calcutta Killing, the three-day mayhem in August 1946 that seemed to make the political divorce between the Hindus and Muslims irrevocable. Estimates of casualties vary, and a blame game went on, but it would seem reasonable to go with Joya Chatterji's assessment: "The rioting, in which at least 5,000 died, was not a spontaneous and inexplicable outburst of aggression by faceless mobs. Both sides in the confrontation came well-prepared for it."[2] The knock-on effect was immediate. In Noakhali, now a district of Bangladesh, a Congress member turned Muslim League politician called Golam Sarwar delivered an inflammatory speech that triggered riots in which Hindu houses were burned, women raped, several thousand killed. Mahatma Gandhi went on one of his most famous peace missions to bring back a semblance of normalcy. In Bihar there was a more widespread communal conflagration with mainly Muslim victims; this was the preliminary act of terrorizing that brought about an exodus of Bihari Muslims in 1947, mostly to Bangladesh, where they eventually ran into fresh troubles: they collaborated with the Pakistan Army in 1971 and became victims of reprisals before being interned in Red Cross camps. They maintained their allegiance to Pakistan, which however has refused to take them. Some trekked to India and right across to Pakistan (subject of the Bollywood film *Refugee* in 2000), and the rest have willy-nilly adopted Bangladesh as their home.

True, the riots in eastern India and Bengal did not result in anything like the massacre in the west, but it is worth remembering, as Harun-or-Rashid points out, that "the Calcutta massacre triggered off prolonged communal warfare in different parts of India."[3] Calcutta, to put it metaphorically, sowed the wind that was reaped as a whirlwind in western India. Partition was followed by riots in Kolkata in 1947, and periodically in the ensuing decades. In Bangladesh itself, a number of riots took place after Partition, in 1950, 1964, and 1992. Most harrowing for the Bangladeshi Hindus has been the genocide of 1971. The resulting psychological trauma and general sense of insecurity have been a lasting legacy. Mercifully, the 1971 genocide did not produce the ethnic cleansing that the Pakistan Army aimed at, though the proportion of Hindus in the population of Bangladesh has come down to 9 percent, from around 29 percent at the time of the Partition. Ananya Kabir aptly notes that "this region did not experience the surgical cut of a clean transfer of populations,"[4] instead, there has been a "continuing trickle of refugees across the porous border."[5] It would be more accurate to say, though, that there has been migration of Hindus from East Pakistan and Bangladesh in periodic "quanta" and in trickles. As Nitish Sengupta puts it, "There was no exchange of population as between the two Punjabs. West Bengal always

had to face migration, sometimes in trickles, and sometimes like tidal waves."[6] The migration by "quanta" has been precipitated each time by a cataclysmic event, whether a riot or war. The trickle is the outcome of the continuing pressure exerted on the Hindu minority by local honchos from the Muslim majority. The motivation for such heinous behavior is usually greed. Those who trickle across into India do so after parting with their property at throwaway prices.

The Partition has cast a shadow from which the subcontinent has not emerged. Geopolitically, the militancy and unrest in many areas of South Asia are a direct consequence of Partition: Kashmir, the northeastern states of India, Baluchistan, the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh, where even after the signing of a peace agreement (as yet unimplemented) there are occasional outbursts of violence between Bengali settlers and members of indigenous communities. The origin of the conflict involved both demography and ideology. The influx of settlers from the plains was a direct threat to the traditional way of life of the indigenes; while the claim iterated by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman that after the independence of Bangladesh the indigenous communities of the Hills too were Bengalis, was seen as a threat to their distinctive identity.

An issue like the subcontinent's Partition ought not to be dealt with in a purely academic manner, or in a third-person style. Let me bring in my personal experience. It goes without saying that those who have directly experienced dislocation as a result of Partition can provide the most valuable, not to say moving, testimony. Neither my family nor I can personally claim such experience. And yet, like everyone in the region, we have not been spared the fallout of Partition. We all heard things, saw things, read things. The gradual diminishment of the Hindu population was something one could not but be aware of. I was born in 1950, and consequently had no direct knowledge of the initial exodus, precipitated by a mood of panic and uncertainty. In 1948 the zamindari system was abolished, and in itself it was no doubt a very good thing. But it also made the Hindus of the zamindar class who were in East Bengal realize that they would no longer have a sure source of income there, and that it was better to migrate to India and explore fresh avenues of economic activity.

In 1950 anti-Hindu riots broke out in East Bengal and led to another exodus; that these riots were engineered by the Pakistan government through non-Bengali, West Pakistani, officials.[7] In reaction there were anti-Muslim riots in West Bengal, which led to an influx of Muslim refugees, mainly but not entirely non-Bengalis, into East Bengal. I was just a few weeks old at the time. An aunt stood with me in her arms to expose me to the beneficial rays of the winter morning sunlight in the courtyard of our home in Dhaka. Suddenly she heard aggressive voices outside, and then the crack of a rifle shot. *A sauve qui peut* followed; a few men carrying lethal cleavers barged in through the front gate and with reassuring words to my panic-stricken aunt ran right through the house and

disappeared out the back. The attackers had besieged the house in front of ours, an imposing building owned by a Bengali Hindu family. They had telephoned the police, who mercifully responded promptly, and on seeing the clutch of attackers fired over their heads to disperse them. Soon afterwards, the Hindu family left for Kolkata, having successfully negotiated a property exchange with an Ismaili family. The latter were our neighbors until 1971, when they left for Pakistan after selling the house to a distant relation of ours.

It is worth noting that the 1950 riots in East Bengal were confined to Dhaka and a few other towns. The villages were unscathed. As I was growing up my holidays were all spent in the village, either my ancestral village, which was about five miles as the crow flies from Dhaka's city center, or—more often—in my mother's ancestral village, which was a further six miles away. My memories of the rural communities in both areas till I entered my teens are still vivid, and show an organic society made up of Muslims and various Hindu castes, each in their ancestral hamlets, living in a state of mutual economic dependence, without any apparent tension. We knew that some members of the Hindu community had migrated to India, but the multi-communal social fabric still held. In one Hindu family, one branch might have left for India, but those remaining could carry on with their caste occupation in peace. On Durga Puja holidays, our chief pleasure was visiting the Puja altars and devouring sweets offered by our hosts. In retrospect, I can elegiacally reflect that my generation was lucky to have seen the traditional bi-religious, bi-communal society of rural Bangladesh in its final phase.

The next round of buffeting suffered by the Hindus of East Pakistan took place in 1964, following the Hazratbal incident. This was the disappearance of the "Prophet's hair" preserved in a mosque in Kashmir, for which the blame game led to riots. The incidents in Dhaka have been fictionally memorialized in Amitav Ghosh's classic novel *Shadow Lines* (1988).[8] I was away at a boarding school at the time and later heard that this time the area around my mother's ancestral village hadn't been spared. An enterprising local entrepreneur had set up a cotton mill within a few miles of the village, but the mill hands he had to hire came from various districts of the country. They lived in makeshift quarters and lacked any organic connection with the surrounding villages, so that when news and rumors about the communal disturbances elsewhere reached them, they felt no compunction about going on a rampage, attacking Hindu villages. All attempts to talk sense into the mob were futile. My *mejo mama*, second of the brothers of my mother, lived in the village, looking after the family property and practicing as a physician. He was well liked by all in the area and would later play a significant role in local politics. Among the people who came to him for treatment were many Hindus. Faced with murderous mobs they came to him for succor. Without any hesitation he hid them in the lofts of the cottages at his

home, feeding them and taking care of the wounded till the danger passed and some sort of normalcy returned. One of the wounded had been slashed across the throat with a knife. Luckily, the wound was not fatal but would have been if my uncle hadn't promptly stitched him up, without anesthesia, needless to add, and administered antibiotics and painkillers. The riot survivor and his family were among those who left for India in the exodus that followed. In his new country he did well, became prosperous, but retained fond links with the old country. He kept track of events there, and when long after the birth of Bangladesh he got news that Uncle was seriously ill, he sent word that "Doctor Sahib" should go to India for better treatment; he had set aside 100,000 rupees for that. But it was too late; the illness was too far-gone.

In my father's ancestral village there was a Hindu hamlet whose inhabitants were a large extended family with which we had close ties. My father's parents being both dead, whenever he visited the village he stayed with the Hindu family. He helped a smart young man of the family make a career in publishing; Robi-da, as the young man came to be known to me and my siblings, was a frequent visitor to our home in Dhaka and was like one of the family. After the 1965 Indo-Pakistan war he decided to move to Kolkata, followed by most of his family; many made the choice to migrate in 1971. Only a handful of his relations remain in Bangladesh. The last "tidal wave" of emigration was prompted by the communal tension created by the destruction of the Babri Mosque. Taslima Nasreen's *Lajja (Shame)*[9] gives a disturbing account of the plight of the Hindu minority at the time and cogently frames the narrative in relation to to the Partition and subsequent political developments.

In comparison to Hindu emigration from Bangladesh, immigration of Bengali Muslims from India has been far less extensive. Only rough figures are available: if there were six million Hindu migrants from East Bengal to India, Muslims from West to East Bengal were a million and a half. This asymmetry is clearly reflected in the cultural impact of Partition. Far more books and films dealing with Partition have come out of West Bengal than Bangladesh. The sense of loss of one's home (*desh*) is a poignant theme that dominates Partition literature in West Bengal; East Bengal is romanticized as an idyllic land that had to be abandoned under unfortunate political circumstances.

It has been suggested that there is an asymmetry in the socio-economic and political destinies of the two Bengals. Ananya Kabir thinks that in contrast to "moribund" West Bengal, East Bengal's history through Partition seems like a fairy story of teleological progress: first emancipated from the shackles of the Bengali Hindu *bhadrolok* by becoming Pakistan's eastern wing; as East Pakistan, suffering blows of cultural imperialism yet again, albeit from a different quarter; and finally, emerging triumphant as the independent nation of Bangladesh, self-proclaimed guardian of Bengali culture and language.[10]

This teleological sketch, foregrounding the official ideology of Bangladesh as a secular democracy, perhaps minimizes an inherent tension between the secular nationalist ethos and political forces that draw inspiration from religion. A similar tension exists across the border between Hindutva and secular nationalism. In Bangladesh it is not simply a question of dealing with collaborators of the Pakistani Army who have been put on trial for crimes against humanity. There is also a long history of Muslim anticolonial activism that antedates the nationalist movement inspired by political theories of western provenance. It is a fitting irony that Ananya Kabir's study of "Partition's Post-Amnesias" should forget to make any mention of the Muslim reformist movements that often involved armed uprisings; some of these were first described in English by W. W. Hunter in *The Indian Musalmans* (1872).[11]

First, there was what came to be known as the *fakir* movement, which had its Hindu counterpart in the *sannyasi* movement. These religious mendicants, used to receiving tribute from peasants, organized rebellions against the Company, which had brought in a new revenue system that interfered with their traditional rights. The *sannyasi* movement inspired a classic Bengali novel, Bankimchandra Chattopadhyaya's *Anandamoth (The Abbey of Bliss,* 1882), which became a powerful ideological influence on the Indian nationalist movement. Peasants led by *fakirs* occupied the Company's warehouse in Dhaka in 1793. Subsequently three movements had a more lasting impact: the Faraizi movement led by Haji Shariatullah and by his son Dadu Mian; the jihadist Tariqah-e-Muhammadiya, inspired by Shah Sayyid Ahmed of Rae Barelli; and the breakaway Taiyuni movement of Maulana Keramat Ali. The first two described British India as Dar-ul-Harb, a land of strife, because infidels ruled it; the Taiyuni took a revisionist line by accepting British India as Dar-us-salam, a land of peace, thereby reconciling its followers to the alien order. It would be easy to dismiss these movements as fundamentalist if it weren't for their lasting impact on nationalist movements, even when they eventually took a secular turn. Laurence Ziring in his study of Bangladeshi politics argues that the organizational setup introduced by Dadu Mian in rural Bengal "later inspired Bengali nationalism and produced leaders like Fazlul Huq of Barisal and Maulana Bhashani in Mymensingh. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, a disciple but contemporary of these older personalities, was also a product of the later Faraizi movement."[12] Making the same point in a more general manner, James J. Novak asserts that Hunter's study "marks the beginning of modern Bangladesh. For the conspiracy it reveals pinpoints the moment when the Muslims forsook hope of returning to their past glory and began attempting to reassert themselves."[13]

But this attempt at reassertion led first to Pakistan and then to Bangladesh. Why this zigzag trajectory? The answer to the question will perhaps be grasped best if we compare two firsthand accounts, one by an

academic who refused to relinquish the idea of Pakistan, the other by the man honored in Bangladesh as the Father of the Nation. Professor Syed Sajjad Husain collaborated with the Pakistan Army in 1971, leading a delegation to the United Nations to argue that the Army was not violating the human rights of the Bengalis. After the surrender of the Pakistan Army he was picked up by a group of Bangladeshi guerillas, stabbed and left for dead. He survived and spent a couple of years in prison before being released through a general amnesty. He used his time inside to fill notebooks with a political memoir titled *The Wastes of Time: Reflections on the Decline and Fall of East Pakistan*.[14] Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, jailed by the Pakistan government in the 1960s on a sedition charge similarly used his time in captivity to write a political memoir. Translated from the original Bengali by Fakrul Alam, it was published as *The Unfinished Memoirs*.[15] Making allowances for differences in style, tone, and personal predilections, both accounts evince firm commitment to the Pakistan movement until Partition. Then the accounts diverge. To Husain Pakistan was the Promised Land; it had to be preserved at all costs; any criticism of its polity was reprehensible, even treasonable. Mujibur Rahman, on the other hand, evolved politically, responding critically to the treatment of East Pakistan by the West Pakistan–dominated central government. He became the ultimate leader of the movement for autonomy and eventually the freedom struggle of Bangladesh.

THE BANGLADESHI LITERARY RESPONSE

Perhaps the earliest fictional treatment of Partition by a Bangladeshi writer was the short story "The Escape," written in English by Syed Waliullah (1922–1971) and included in the Pakistan PEN *Miscellany* (1950).[16] The locale is unspecified but can be taken to be North India, though it could be on either side of the newly drawn border, and the action takes place on a train, an iconic emblem of hope and horror in that region. Except for the detail of a skull cap on someone's head there is nothing to indicate the religious affiliation of the passengers, thus lending the story greater universality. An anonymous corpse lying on a station platform produces the same effect. A moving piece, it uses expressionistic devices to evoke the horror of what was happening: a character described as a madman by another, who leaps off the running train; a story that the narrator's interlocutor is not interested in listening to and remains unfinished.

The short story is peculiarly equipped to render the powerful impact of a tragedy like the Partition. Manto is the first writer that comes to mind when one thinks of Partition stories. He produced his heart-wrenching pieces out of the crucible of firsthand experience. Waliullah too had direct knowledge of Partition horrors in Kolkata, where he lived in his youth and as an up and coming writer. He moved back after Partition to

East Bengal, where his family came from. Another story of his subtly captures the inner turmoil wrought by Partition on those who had become uprooted. "Ekti Tulsi Gacher Kahini" ("The Tale of a Tulsi Plant"), originally written in Bengali, was later translated by the author himself as well as by Tutun Mukherjee, whose version was included in *Stories About the Partition of India*.[17] It is clearly located in what was East Pakistan and features a group of refugees from India who break into and occupy an abandoned Hindu home. One of them finds a tulsi plant in a bedraggled state on the grounds of the house and wants to pull it out, as it is sacred to Hindus. Another refugee, who has caught a cold, points out its medicinal value in treating coughs and colds, and the plant is spared. Someone quietly tends the plant so that it begins to thrive again. One member of the group invokes the railway train, the iconic symbol of the deracination caused by Partition, as he imagines the housewife who used to look after the plant traveling to another country. Through the mediation of the plant the dispossessed owners of the house and its illegal occupants come to realize their common fate. It unites them even though the squatters are voluble in castigating Hindus for the wrongs they have done to Muslims. Niaz Zaman in *The Divided Legacy*, the only book-length study of Partition literature by a Bangladeshi critic, aptly comments: "Both the groups are homeless refugees, both forced to vacate their homes for an uncertain future in an unknown place. . . . Despite religious and political differences, Waliullah suggests, the human bond remains somewhere underneath."[18] The story ends with officials evicting the squatters from the house, which has been requisitioned by the government. The tulsi plant begins to wither again. The implication is clear: the suffering brought on by Partition is to be blamed on the impersonal decisions of officials.

One of the earliest Bangladeshi novels dealing with Partition is *Ranga Prabhat* (*Radiant Dawn)* by Abul Fazl (1903–1983).[19] Set in Chittagong, the novel features two families—one Hindu and the other Muslim—who have been linked by bonds of friendship. While communal hatred exacerbates all around, they remain an isle of humanist values. Two novels, both Marxist in inspiration, focus on the anxieties and social tensions in the decades leading up to the Partition. Alauddin Al Azad's *Kshudha O Asha* (*Hunger and Hope*, 1964)[20] deals on the one hand with the struggle of the downtrodden for sheer survival, and on the other with the Hindu-Muslim conflict seen from a middle-class perspective. The characters are left at the end in a state of uncertainty as they wait for Partition. Sardar Jainuddin's *Anek Suryer Asha* (*Hoping for Sunrise*, 1966), goes back to the thirties to portray colonialism as capitalist exploitation and forward to the tensions that would beset Pakistan.

More ambitious is Shahidullah Kaiser's *Shangshaptak* (*The Indomitable Soldiers*, 1965),[21] made into a highly successful television serial. Shahidullah Kaiser (1927–1971) was not only Marxist-inspired; he was a card-carrying Party member. The Communist Party of undivided India,

though opposed to the dismemberment of the subcontinent, advised members to accept it as an inexorable historical reality and to carry on party activities in whichever country they happened to have their domicile. Kaiser therefore views Partition as a historical accident within the broad dialectical play of social forces. His protagonist Zahed starts off as a committed Muslim League activist but turns later into a Communist. The conflicts that led to Partition give way to other conflicts, while the inherent class conflicts continue to impact on people's lives. The novel begins in a village in East Bengal, and then moves on to the region's two major cities. Niaz Zaman comments that it was "perhaps the first Bengali novel that told the tale of two cities, Calcutta and Dhaka."[22] Abu Rushd's *Nongor* (*Anchor*, 1967)[23] is the work of a West Bengali Muslim who chose to move to East Pakistan. It may be described as bourgeois realist fiction depicting the existential choices of a protagonist, Kamal, who is in many ways the author's persona. As Partition looms, he feels alienated from his native Calcutta and announces his decision to migrate to Pakistan. His father approves but refuses to accompany him as he considers himself too old to adapt to a new situation. His brother is firm in his decision to stay on, like millions of other Indian Muslims. The novel avoids depicting communal violence, though everyone in it must be aware of its occurrence. Kamal's budding romance with a Hindu girl in Calcutta is aborted. He comes to Dhaka, which is a provincial backwater, and finds it uncongenial, but there is no going back. The novel goes on to register the new conflicts and contradictions emerging in the new country.

Nostalgia is a powerful theme in Partition-related fiction from West Bengal, but not in Bangladeshi works. And so, when Taslima Nasreen forays into this theme in 1993 it is with a Hindu migrant to India who visits her old home in *Phera* (*The Return*).[24] Her protagonist Kalyani comes back to Mymensingh only to be dismayed at the changes that have overtaken the place and the society.

Akhteruzzaman Elias (1943–1995) has produced a novel of epic proportions in *Khoabnama* (*The Interpretations of Dreams*),[25] published posthumously in 1997. Supriya Chaudhuri in her essay "The Bengali Novel" describes it, with good reason, as "possibly the greatest modern Bengali novel," a prose epic spanning a vast and diverse timeline and creating a distinctive kind of magic realism drawing on "indigenous traditions of folk narrative, memory and legend, as on subaltern history."[26] The narrative opens with a mention of the *fakir* rebellion of the late eighteenth century and follows the lives of later generations steeped in legends derived from that age. Munshi Baitullah Shah, one of the Fakir leaders, was killed by an East India Company officer called Taylor. Shah is regarded as a martyr, and for nearly a couple of centuries has been a potent spiritual presence, a sort of guardian angel, in the wetlands where fisherfolk live side by side with agriculturalists. The novel's intertextual link with Bankimchandra's *Anandamath* is obvious. The difference in the ideological

import of the two novels is also noteworthy. Whether it is an intended consequence or not, Bankimchandra's novel has come to be associated specifically with Hindu nationalism, especially in the Muslim mind. Elias's novel, set in the forties of the last century, is infused with a more inclusive vision. A Hindu singer becomes a celebrated performer of a Muslim saint's compositions. Villagers do bring up questions of sectarian differences, but these are not congruent with the simplistic Hindu-Muslim divide that was becoming the dominant theme of all-India politics. Indeed these are differences of which the urban middle classes are hardly aware. Some characters affirm their identity as Muhammadi (that is, adherents of the Tariqa-e-Muhammadi, the Wahhabi-inspired sect mentioned above). The ideological effort of the pro-Pakistan activists to paper over such crucial local differences is exposed as a ploy to ensure that leadership of the Muslims stays with a certain class. The problems in the tenancy system led to the Communist-led *tebhaga* movement around the time of Partition; this unsuccessful venture aimed to obtain two-thirds of the produce for the tenant farmers instead of the customary half.

Khoabnama received the Ananda Prize, the most prestigious literary award given in Kolkata, as did *Agunpakhi* (The Phoenix) by Hasan Azizul Huq (2006). Unlike Elias, Huq hails from West Bengal. He migrated to Pakistan in a most lackadaisical manner, as a brief interview, anthologized in *The Bangladesh Reader,* reveals. In Burdwan, where his family came from, "the Muslims of that area did not experience any real trouble,"[27] he says. His sister's husband was an English teacher in a college in what had become East Pakistan. They asked him to live with them and study, so he went. After completing an MA at Rajshahi University he returned to Burdwan (he had an Indian passport) and took a job as a schoolteacher. After three months a visiting school inspector questioned his bona fide as an Indian, even though he had an Indian passport, so he came back to Rajshahi and settled there. He persuaded his parents to join him and his brother there, but his uncles and cousins stayed on in India even though they had supported the Pakistan movement.[28] *Agunpakhi* is a first-person account in the dialect of Burdwan of the life of a middle-class Muslim woman who sees the calm and peaceful community into which she had been born shatter under the impact of communal politics. The delineation of the older, organic community comprising people of different faiths and castes is rendered convincingly. The narrator, on her marriage, is received by the leading Hindu land-owning family of her husband's village and plied with gifts. This is a custom that effectively affirms a social bond between the two communities. Gradually, communal passions corrode the social fabric and violence becomes a palpable threat. Partition looms and migration becomes the obvious choice for many. But in the end she takes a stand and refuses to accompany her family to Pakistan.

I will end with a cursory look at the presence of Partition in the work of writers born after the event. A short story in English, Khademul Islam's "An Ilish Story,"[29] published in a Bangladeshi journal called *Six Seasons Review*, presents a scene in a middle-class Bengali home in Dhaka in the aftermath of the independence war of 1971. The narrator has escaped with his siblings and parents from Pakistan, where they would have been treated like prisoners. He watches his grandmother cut and dress a hilsa fish (*ilish* in Bengali). As she does so she narrates what she has seen and heard during the war. "'1971 was 1947 all over again,' she says, as she holds both ends of the fish with her hands and vigorously saws it back and forth across the blade."[30] The description of the cutting becomes more and more gory as she narrates how in her native district a maulvi led an attack on a Hindu family in the neighborhood and slaughtered every member (the word used, *jobai*, is the one used for the slaughter of animals at Eid). When the cooked fish is served, the narrator cannot bring himself to eat it: the title contains an apt pun, ilish=illish=sick, hence sickening.

Mahmud Rahman's short story collection, *Killing the Water* (2010),[31] includes a few pieces that sketch in the Partition as an unavoidable backdrop. Tahmima Anam's debut novel, *A Golden Age* (2007), links up partition with the 1971 war through the family of "Rehana Ali of Calcutta."[32] It is an interesting facet of our current cultural climate that the younger generation is drawn to a critical examination of the trauma of Partition in order to see their historical situation in perspective. An anthology of graphic narratives issued in 2013, *This Side That Side: Restorying Partition,*[33] curated by Vishwajyoti Ghosh, brings together the attempts of writers and artists from Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh to deal with the existential spin-off of the event. When the book was launched at the Dhaka Hay Festival in November 2013, all seventy copies brought over sold out in record time, and so would have three times that number. Six of the twenty-eight stories are by Bangladeshis. Mahmud Rahman's "Profit and Loss" is an autobiographical sketch moving from the Partition and the problems that came in its train to the 1971 war. Khademul Islam's "The Exit Plan" narrates the adventure of escaping from would-be incarcerated as undesirable aliens. M. Hasan's "Making of a Poet," Syeda Farhana's "Little Women," and Sanjoy Chakraborty's "An Afterlife" delve into facets of the identity crisis in our fractured subcontinent.

My own contribution, "Border," is a poem that tries to expose the existential consequences of having a shadow line scoring the region's map. It is based on an overland trip I made to India years back. In the poem the journey is prompted by desire, for where there is a boundary there is fascination with the other side: "Let us say you dream of a woman/ and because she isn't anywhere around, imagine her across the border." After a mildly nightmarish journey to the border, the speaker "instead of crossing over" lies "dreaming / of the woman, and the border:

perfect knife that slices through the earth / without the earth's knowing, / severs and joins at the same instant." The speaker cannot cross over because his desire, being based on fantasy, cannot be fulfilled. The border "runs inconspicuously through modest households, / creating wry humour—whole families / eat under one flag, shit under another, / humming a different national tune." Refusing to accept one side or another, the speaker embraces the border itself:

> You lie down on the fateful line
> under a livid moon. You
> and your desire and the border are now one.
>
> you raise the universal flag
> of flaglessness. Amidst bird anthems
> dawn explodes in a lusty salute.[34]

Bangladesh's Partition literature deserves to be considered alongside similar works from other parts of the subcontinent. But more important than literary criticism is the task of transcending the conflicts that have given rise to the literature. Perhaps the most deleterious outcome of Partition has been the partitioning of the subcontinental mind. We have not only become an extended family of squabbling nations, we have grown to deny our civilizational unity. A single language used in two countries is split into two or more literary entities. Punjabi is written in three scripts, so without making the special effort of learning all three scripts a speaker of the language cannot read everything written in it. Bengali literature is produced in Bangladesh and India today, but they are categorized in two different national pockets. A writer who has migrated as a result of Partition is automatically disowned by the country of his origin. There is no common critical framework within which the literature of the entire subcontinent can be considered. And yet, there are other regions of the world where such partitioning is unknown. Caribbean writers, whether from Trinidad or Jamaica or Guyana or St. Lucia, are considered within a common framework, as are African writers. It is imperative that we make efforts to rediscover our commonality. This is true in every realm of experience, the cultural as well as the socio-economic and political. We cannot go back to the status quo ante, we cannot undo a tragedy, but we can try to go beyond, towards a better order of things. Dealing critically with the cultural fallout of Partition is a necessary first step in that endeavor.

NOTES

1. Ananya Jahanara Kabir, *Partition's Post-Amnesias* (Dhaka: University Press Ltd., 2013), 173.

2. Joya Chatterji, *Bengal Divided: Hindu Communalism and the Partition of Bengal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 231.
3. Harun-or-Rashid, *The Foreshadowing of Bangladesh: Bengal Muslim League and Muslim Politics 1936–1947* (Dhaka: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 1987), 261.
4. Ananya Jahanara Kabir, *Partition's Post-Amnesias* (Dhaka: University Press Ltd., 2013),174
5. Ibid., 195
6. Nitish Sengupta, *Bengal Divided: The Unmaking of a Nation (1905–1971)* (New Delhi: Viking, Penguin, 2007), 232.
7. Ibid., 174
8. Amitav Ghosh, *The Shadow Lines* (New Delhi: Ravi Dayal, 1988).
9. Taslima Nasreen, *Lajja*, trans. Tutul Gupta (New Delhi: Penguin, 1994).
10. Ananya Jahanara Kabir, *Partition's Post-Amnesias* (Dhaka: University Press Ltd., 2013), 195.
11. W. W. Hunter, *The Indian Musalmans* (London: Trubner and Co., 1872).
12. Lawrence Ziring, *Bangladesh from Mujib to Ershad: An Interpretive Study* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1992), 9.
13. James J. Novak, *Bangladesh; Reflections on the Water* (Dhaka: University Press Ltd., 1994), 87.
14. Syed Sajjad Hussain, *The Wastes of Time: Reflections on the Decline and Fall of East Pakistan* (Dhaka: Notun Safar Proksashoni, 1995).
15. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, *Unfinished Memoirs*, trans. Fakrul Alam (Dhaka: University Press, Ltd., 2012).
16. Syed Waliullah, "The Escape," in Ahmed Ali, ed., *PEN Miscellany* (Karachi: Pakistan, PEN, 1950.)
17. "Ekti Tulsi Gacher Kahini," ("The Tale of a Tulsi Plant") in *Galpo Samagra (Collected Stories)* (Dhaka: Protik, 2011).
18. Niaz Zaman, *The Divided Legacy: The Partition in Selected Novels from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh* (Dhaka: University Press, Ltd., 1999), 133.
19. Abul Fazl, *Ranga Prabhat* (*Radiant Dawn*) (Chittagong: Boi Ghar, 1957).
20. Alauddin Al Azad, *Kshuddha O Asha* (*Hunger and Hope)* (Dhaka: Muktadhara, 1964).
21. Shahidulla Kaiser, *Shangshaptak (The Indomitable Soldiers)* (Dhaka: Gyankosh, 1993).
22. Niaz Zaman, *The Divided Legacy: The Partition in Selected Novels from India, Pakistan,and Bangladesh* (Dhaka: University Press, Ltd.,1999), 170.
23. Abu Rushd, *Nongor (The Anchor)* (Chittagong: Boi Ghar, 1967).
24. Taslima Nasreen, *Phera* (*The Return)* (Dhaka: Gyankosh, 1993).
25. Akhtaruzzaman Elias, *Khoabnama (Interpretations of Dreams)* (Kolkatta: Naya Udyog, 1998).
26. Supriya Chaudhuri, "The Bengali Novel," in Vasudha Dalmia, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Indian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 122.
27. Hasan Azizul Huq, "Teenage Migrant," in *The Bangladesh Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, ed. Meghna Guhathakurta and Willem van Schendel (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2013), 168.
28. Ibid.
29. Khademul Islam, "An Ilish Story," *Six Seasons Review* 1, 2 (2001).
30. Ibid., 116.
31. Mahmud Rahman, *Killing the Water* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2010).
32. Tahmima Anam, *A Golden Age* (Dhaka: Sahitya Prakash, 2007), 6
33. Vishwajyoti Ghosh, *This Side That Side: Restorying Partition [an anthology of graphic narratives]* (New Delhi: Yoda, 2013).
34. Kaiser Haq, "Border," in Vishwajyoti Ghosh, *This Side That Side: Restorying Partition [an anthology of graphic narratives]* (New Delhi: Yoda, 2013).

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FOURTEEN

Cosmopolitan Aesthetics in Shakeel Adil Zada's *Baazigar*

Masood A. Raja

Published intermittently over the last thirty years, as a serialized novel in *Sab Rang*, the most celebrated Urdu pulp magazine in Pakistan, *Baazigar* offers a historical aesthetic and politics that foregrounds, albeit in a romantic vein, the cosmopolitan narrative of colonized India in opposition to the official foundational narrative of Pakistan that emphasizes irreconcilable differences between Hindus and Muslims as the main cause of Partition.

In this chapter, relying on a general understanding of nationalism and cosmopolitanism, I will discuss this epic novel with an eye toward its usefulness in articulating and retrieving a more nuanced and more inclusive national narrative for Pakistani readers. I will also try, as best as possible, to offer my reasons for the need for such exercise. I understand cosmopolitanism as a general tendency to think against the normalized terrain of nationalistic and foundational histories and narratives. In that sense, I find Bruce Robbins[1] work aptly useful, especially his insistence that, besides other things, cosmopolitanism could also be a mode of thinking and feeling in which "we *value* the move away from ethnocentrism."[2] The nationalist-cosmopolitanism debate is nothing new, but is extremely important in the case of Pakistani national perception. While I have already touched upon my preferred theorization of cosmopolitanism above, it would be apt to discuss briefly my specific understanding of nationalism and cosmopolitanism. In most metropolitan works, cosmopolitanism is proffered as a more progressive concept that can, under the right circumstances, undo the pernicious effects of stringent nationalism.

Most theorists of cosmopolitanism have a sort of pseudo-agreement on this Universalist, egalitarian aspect of cosmopolitanism. Part of the reason for this philosophical view is because most theorists of cosmopolitanism either rely on early Greek philosophers to theorize the concept or, in most cases, Immanuel Kant's one specific work: *Perpetual Peace*.[3] Most pertinent to theorization of cosmopolitanism as a way of life is Kant's "Third Definitive Article" about hospitality and rights of strangers:

> And in this sphere hospitality signifies the claim of a stranger entering foreign territory to be treated by its owner without hostility. The latter may send him away again, if this can be done without causing his death; but, so long as he conducts himself peaceably, he must not be treated as an enemy.[4]

Note that so much of the rhetorical scaffolding of the current debates of cosmopolitanism are built around the above cited and other passages of Kant's treatise on perpetual peace. It is also important to remember that even for Kant, republican nation-states were a necessity to creating such a cosmopolitan world. Thus, it is absolutely necessary for all nation-states to also be a part of the larger global partnerships in order to work toward global peace. However, an elimination of nationalist identities is not necessarily a panacea for global peace. In the case of Pakistan, as I discuss later, one kind of existing cosmopolitanism needs to be replaced with a sort of neighborly and immediate cosmopolitan spirit.

In my opinion, for Pakistan a certain kind of existing Islamic cosmopolitanism and Pan-Islamism has replaced the local and regional historical originary narrative, and it is crucial for Pakistan to reclaim its immediate sub-continental past in order to ease tensions with India but also to safeguard against the pernicious effects of Islamist and fundamentalist cosmopolitanism. I will explain this further in the ensuing pages.

While I rely on Ernest Gellner's explanation of a certain aspect of the nation below, my discussion is also informed by the theorizations of nationalism vis-a-vis imaginative literature, and in this sense of the term, two theorists stand out: Timothy Brennan and Benedict Anderson. It would be highly useful, I think, to discuss their explanation of the role of imaginative fiction in the creation of a national imaginary. It is easier to discuss Anderson's explanation of "imagined communities" as his work has been quite prominent within the field of nationalism studies, but Timothy Brennan's early and later work is also crucial in understanding nationalism. For Anderson, the nation is an "imagined political community"[5] and for him this imagined community comes to be, besides other things, through the rise of print capitalism. While discussing the role of novelistic imagination, he discusses a novel and then provides us the following useful insight: "Here again we see the 'national imagination' at work in the movement of a solitary hero through a sociological landscape of a fixity that fuses the world inside the novel with the world outside."[6]

I believe this is an important aspect of Anderson's argument and also crucial to my own argument in this essay. The novels and newspapers, as I understand Anderson, do not "generate" or create a certain specific national imagination, but, rather, help the reader see many others as cotravelers within the linear temporality of a particular nation. Thus, the nation becomes an imagined community of readers who read and experience a certain kind of national identity as offered in a novel or in the national newspapers. What is included in these novels as "national" thus becomes extremely crucial in aligning our national imagination and national self-perception.

Similarly, Timothy Brennan also suggests that the rise of nationalism "in Europe in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries is inseparable from the forms and subjects of imaginative literature."[7] Similarly, Brennan asserts, in the case of the former colonies "in Third World fiction after the Second World War . . . the fictional use of 'nation' and 'nationalism' are most pronounced."[8] On the whole, for both these theorists, nation, in one way or the other, is imagined, and literature, fiction, and other forms of writings play a crucial role in creating a certain kind of national consciousness. Now, this brief discussion of the nation as an imagined community is quite pertinent to my discussion of Pakistani national identity and its articulation.

In the official narrative of the creation of Pakistan, a certain view of history is normalized through the official and popular texts and a certain specific mobilization of history becomes the underlining scaffolding of this narrative. Thus, Pakistan was created because of the two-nation theory, according to which the Muslims of India, despite their thousand-year history of living with Hindus, could, somehow, not live together as part of one nation. Furthermore, the narrative suggests, since the Hindus and Muslims were two separate nations, the Muslims, thus, needed a separate nation of their own. This official narrative is further complicated through an ideological alignment with the Arab world: in order to create a Muslim history that might connect Pakistan to a non-Hindu past, the historical novel in Urdu and Pakistani nationalistic poetry, to some extent, has sought to connect the Pakistani national identity to a pan-Islamic Arab past. As a result, while existing local history of cross-cultural tolerance is elided, it is replaced with a romanticized past in which the Muslims of India, somehow, remain in touch with the Muslims of Hijaz. Needless to say, this pan-Islamic narrative of the nation has now come back to menace the national imaginary with full force, as the global narrative of pan-Islamism has now become the exclusive domain of Jihadist and salafi groups who, in their zeal to fight apostate Muslim states—of which Pakistan is considered one—have brought the Muslim national project in Pakistan to a crisis.

Furthermore, the official narrative of the creation of Pakistan, by now, has transmogrified much beyond the early conceptions of it by its

founder and his allies. Since the mid-1980s, it seems, the Pakistani national imagination and conception of Pakistan has been increasingly Islamized and often at the cost of its pluralistic or cosmopolitan possibilities. As a result, contemporary Pakistan finds itself at the mercy and power of the most reactionary violent forces that claim to shape Pakistan into an Islamist state by acts of extreme physical and epistemic violence to the very idea of Pakistan. In an earlier work, I had charted the construction of Pakistani exceptionalism from the 1857 rebellion till 1947. I had finished that work emphasizing the constructedness of this narrative in opposition to the claims that offer Pakistan as natural and non-discursive.[9] This chapter, therefore, is an amplification of the originary narrative, its appropriations by various elements in Pakistan, and the need for reconnecting with a more inclusive and less exclusivist past.

The concept or ideology of Pakistan is perpetuated through varied media: the textbooks, history books, TV shows, and of course literary texts. The official historiography relies on an extremely exclusive and virulent explanation of what is termed the "two-nation theory." According to this theory, explained under various registers, Hindus and Muslims were two naturally irreconcilable entities and that is why the Muslims of India needed a new nation. Of course, such arguments were highly prevalent during the late 1940s, but are still taught as the main reason for the creation of Pakistan. For example, one scholar offers his essentialist explanation of the Hindu-Muslim separateness in the following words:

> The political and cultural history of the subcontinent testifies that the prejudices of the Hindu society against Muslims are inveterate. Hence, whenever the Hindus got a chance to wield authority, their treatment of Muslims was most shabby. . . . About one hundred million non-Aryan Hindus and Sudras, who are co-religionists of the Hindus, are untouchables. . . . If that be the plight of low-caste Hindus—whose religion is Hinduism—then what could the Muslims expect from them against whom their prejudices were manifold.[10]

This narrative of irreconcilability is the main crux of the foundational and official narrative of the Pakistani nation. Furthermore, during the last ten years of the Pakistan movement, which is always offered in opposition to the Indian National Movement for freedom, quite a few other scholars also used the narrative of irreconcilability to argue for Pakistan, some seeing it as a cause for the separation and others positing it as a solution to the long-held and naturalized differences between the two communities. This trend continues even in the works that are offered as objective and unmotivated. A. Punjabi, for example, in a book published in 1939, suggests that if Muslims cannot claim a separate homeland, then for the Hindus "nationalism denotes the revival of Hindu culture, Hindu supremacy in India and the replacement of the White bureaucracy by their

own brown one."[11] Similarly, F. K. Khan Durrani also concludes, in a book published in 1944, with the following statement: "Being a member of the Muslim nation, naturally I contend that Muslims should strive to reconquer India for Islam and make that their political goal. . . . But this is a long range ideal, whereas we are here concerned with the present and the immediate future."[12] In this case, then, not only is Islam "superior" to Hinduism with the ultimate goal of reconquering and Islamizing India, the creation of Pakistan is offered as just one step toward this larger goal. In these randomly selected works about the nature of the future state of Pakistan, the idea of past, present, or future reconcilability of Hindus and Muslims as two political entities under one nation is proven to be implausible. Of course, in this kind of argument any history of mutual coexistence and the possibilities of any future political coexistence are foreclosed and deemed impossible. Thus, the overall narrative about the creation of Pakistan in Pakistani foundational histories is built around a sort of all-inclusive myth of irreconcilability between the Muslims and Hindus. This irreconcilability thus becomes the cornerstone for the construction of the Pakistani high culture to which, it is hoped, all citizens of the state of Pakistan aspire, which ultimately becomes an exclusive narrative about Muslimhood. This extreme focus on Muslim identity, thus, has now come to haunt Pakistan, as due to the sectarian divide within Islam, the universal Muslimhood as a passport to Pakistani citizenship is no longer a simple and cohesive narrative.

While I have the liberty to pick and choose from a vast majority of works on nationalism, I will rely here, for practical reasons and even though I do not fully agree with him on all points, on the work of Ernest Gellner, especially the all important concept of "high culture" that he theorizes and that I find useful for my discussion. After discussing the nature of nationalistic dynamics under various phases of mode of production, Gellner provides the following tentative definition of nationalism and its relation to a national high culture:

> Nationalism is about entry to, participation in, identification with, a literate high culture which is co-extensive with an entire political unit and its total population, and which must be of this kind if it is to be compatible with the kind of division of labour, the type of mode of production, on which this society is based.[13]

What I take from Gellner's long discussion on various stages of nationalism, relevant to their particular mode of production, is that whether recycled or discursively constructed, a nation-state must have something that can be understood and transmitted as the national high culture so that people, despite maintaining their strong ethnic and regional identities, find it in their best interest to become part of the national project. Under ideal conditions, this is accomplished by a universal system of education. Now, the Pakistani national narrative of high culture is built on exclud-

ing all non-Muslim parts of Pakistani history as irrelevant and resultantly Pakistan and Pakistanis have increasingly highlighted their Muslim identity.[14] And it is this extreme focus on a certain kind of Muslim identity that has now brought the very basis of Pakistani national narrative to a crisis. There is, therefore, an urgent need to rearticulate and enunciate the very silences that had enabled the construction of an exclusionist narrative in the first place. In other words, Pakistan is in dire need of revamping and expanding the historical aspects of its national narrative. Shakeel Aadil Zada's novel, I suggest, enables us to do just that: to recover the silenced history of a pre-Partition life that involved a high degree of mutual respect, comradeship, and solidarity among a cross-cultural group of Indians. Furthermore, the novel and its imaginative content can also impact the readers' consciousness in the same vein as Benedict Anderson and Timothy Brennan, discussed above, suggest.

On the surface, the novel is a love story involving a quest motif, but in the process, in the words of one reviewer, it is an "intense love story that revolves around a young man of 17, who lost track of his sweetheart just before partition and is wandering in search of her from village to village and town to town in undivided India, struggling and facing unusual happenings that keep the readers glued to the pages till the finish."[15] In my opinion, it is in these wanderings and the companions who sustain and support Babar Zaman Khan, our hero, that one encounters the kind of cosmopolitan India that might not have existed but is imaginatively rendered in the novel that one can offer a more complex useable past for the Pakistani readers, who otherwise rely on a more restrictive view of the past and even in their cosmopolitan leanings opt for an imaginative connection to the Arab world rather than their collective past in India.

The novel, that spans over 2,500 pages at this point and would, according to the author, be about four thousand pages when finished, is the longest ever-Urdu novel. Though published in a pulp magazine, the novel is considered by all major Urdu critics to be one of the finest examples of modern Urdu writing, which, because of its publishing medium, has also garnered a loyal popular support over the years. This is why the narrative imaginary of the novel and its poetics and aesthetics is so crucial in reshaping the cultural and political imaginary of the Pakistani readers about their own pre-Partition, sub-continental past or, at least, its imaginative possibilities.

The story begins in Gaya, Bihar, where our hero Babar Zaman Khan, an Indian Muslim, and Kaura, a Buddhist woman, fall in love in their late teens and elope to Calcutta. Just the opening lines and the brief description of the city itself introduce the reader to the kind of multiplicity and inherent cosmopolitanism of pre-Partition India that is often elided in the official historiography of Pakistan:

> I am talking about Gaya, a small city in Bihar, one of the most beautiful states of India. With a population of about two hundred thousand, the city is surrounded by hills on three sides and a stream on the fourth. The city is also considered the birthplace of Buddha, and even though most of its population is Hindu and Muslim, every year, for one month, the city receives thousands of *yatris* for the celebration of Buddha's month.[16]

Even before we have delved deeper into the story, we are offered, as something natural, a multicultural city and a multi-ethnic and cross-religious romance as the beginning point of our story. In other words, a kind of India in which two young people from two different ethnicities and religions could meet at a religious festival and fall in love. This already breaches the very walls of ethnic and religious identity edifice that was and is offered as the ultimate reason for the irreconcilability of Muslims and Hindus in the official narrative of the Pakistan Movement. Then as they struggle to settle down, tragedy hits and Babar, while trying to protect Kaura from would be abductors, ends up killing two of the assailants and, accidentally, one police officer. Kaura, meanwhile, is presumed to have either been abducted or, in the best-case scenario, escaped with Maulvi Muhammad Shafiq who had taken the young lovers under his protection. Also important to note is that since Kaura, whose caretaker and teacher had already been murdered, belongs to an important family of Tibet, a group of Tibetans is also looking for her. So, when Babar and Kaura elope, the pursuing Tibetans are also a group that they need to avoid. The rest of the narrative, in simplistic terms, is a quest involving Babar's search for Kaura all over India, and it is this search and the group of friends and well-wishers who support him in the process that is crucial to rearticulating the kind of India that has been completely elided in the Pakistani foundational and official narratives. And it is in this aspect of the novel that the reader, imperceptibly, internalizes and feels the loss of that kind of cross-cultural past.

When Babar is arrested and tried, he keeps his connection to Kaura a secret for fear that the Tibetan seekers might find her, and thus, he ends up taking responsibility for the murders without providing the whole story that would have augmented his case of self-defense. While the novel is about Babar's quest, the most important aspect of the novel happens to be the deep relations that he develops with a diverse group of people, but especially with Bhattal, leader of a Delhi gang of cultural outcasts. While the court is deciding upon his trial, he is transferred to the jail and placed in a cell with another prisoner. This encounter, for Babar, becomes the encounter that provides him passport and passage to the powerful constituency of Calcutta's organized crime. But there is more to this first encounter than just this passage. Here is how Babar, the narrator, shares this first encounter with the readers:

> There was someone else already in the cell. He smiled and his eyes lit up on seeing me.
>
> He walked up to me, lifted my chin with his manacled hand and asked me: "You have done wonders at such a young age. Who did you kill?"
>
> "Myself," I said.
>
> "One, or two?" he asked.
>
> "Three," I said.
>
> "Three!" he jumped up. "What great luck," he said. "I was worried I would be housed with someone unworthy!"
>
> "Who are you?" I asked.
>
> "You don't know us, deary?" he asked. "I am the same as you; we have the same caste, same religion, and the same fate," he said.[17]

This is the first encounter between the protagonist and Ustad Bhattal: a Muslim and a Hindu, respectively, who come together in jail. This relationship also introduces the readers to a part of Indian sub-culture about which, to my knowledge, no one else has written anything. Within the diegetic world of the novel, all major urban areas have places for those involved in petty and larger crimes. Called "para," these are places that are run by an ustad who is supposed to be worldly wise and deft at the art of knife fighting. Each para has its own roll of members and they owe their allegiance, and a part of their income, to the para. The para, in turn, offers, extra-juridical protection to the local community and businesses in return for specified contributions. To keep his hold on the members, the ustad has to be generous and fair and also best at his trade, for he can be challenged for leadership at any time by anyone who deems himself fit to take him on in a knife fight. It is in the jail that Babar meets Bhattal, a Hindu, who immediately takes a liking to this passionate young man who has been sentenced to fourteen years of hard labor for murdering two of his assailants. Thus, Babar, a young Muslim, becomes accepted by the most diverse group of shady but honorable characters who all train him in different forms of native martial arts including staff fighting and knife-wielding. Alongside of that, Babar also decides to study and eventually takes the private exams for a master's degree. By the time he finishes his sentence, which is commuted due to good conduct, he is adept at knife fighting and also a graduate with a master's degree in humanities.

During his incarceration, Bhattal and his followers protect Babar within the jail and adopt him as an honorary member of their exclusive gang. It is after he leaves the jail that his quest begins in earnest. While looking for Kaura, Babar, Bhattal, and others traverse pretty much the entire Indian sub-continent. It is while reading about this quest, the places they visit, and the people that they encounter that one learns, imperceptibly, of the richness of pre-Partition Indian culture, and for the Pakistani readers, especially readers of popular fiction, this is quite a rewarding and unique experience, for not many official Pakistani texts offer such a complex and encouraging view of the cosmopolitan culture that existed all over India before the Partition. Yes, there were always communal differences and strife, but the novel focuses primarily on the relations between these men and women who exist outside the gambit of imperial law, but live in solidarity, especially when it comes to helping and aiding Babar.

So, why does this matter and how can one hope this aspect of the novel will have an impact on how Pakistanis think and imagine the nation. Naturally, I am not suggesting that one novel, no matter how popular, can alter normalized and naturalized belligerent views that Indians and Pakistanis hold about each other. But the novel, in the case of Pakistan, does create an affective space that if perpetuated and normalized could help in rearticulating the self-perception of average Pakistanis and may even enable Pakistanis to think about the state of minorities within the nation differently. And to really explain this, I will have to delve, briefly, into one important aspect of individual and collective identity formation as discussed and elaborated by Mark Bracher.

According to Bracher, whose work relies on empirical studies of the brain and neuroscience, we all stabilize our identities under "three different registers . . . the affective-physiological, the imagistic, and the linguistic."[18] Out of all these, the linguistic register is the most complex and crucial as it provides us "the identity-bearing master signifiers"[19] of which having one's national identity, as a master signifier, is crucial to our sense of national identity. We all also rely on what Bracher terms the "identity-bearing scripts and narratives."[20] These identity-bearing scripts and narratives have the following vital role in identity formation:

> The narratives are produced by unconscious self-narrative schemas (SNS) that direct the individual's attention, expectations, assumptions, and interpretations in the given domain and thus predispose the individual to find particular kinds of people having specific kinds of intentions, and to expect particular kinds of issues and conflicts, leading to particular resolutions and conclusions.[21]

It is important to note that these narrative schemas so vital to our identity stabilizations are a product of the unconscious, and when our self-serving narratives are threated, we close off the contaminating influences and either react violently to the shifting narratives or attempt to dismiss them.

Thus, to change individual and national approachs to the questions of one's individual and collective worldviews, it is necessary to change and shift the self-serving narratives. Now, if the national self-serving narrative for most Pakistanis is based in an exclusionary history, which involves excising and expelling the Hindu aspects of their cultural and political history, then any attempt at offering empirical knowledge to the contrary is not likely to have much impact. But when the same knowledge is offered, without announcing itself as such, in a story that offers characters that we fall in love with, imperceptibly the individual's repertoire of accepting others suddenly shifts, and it is this aspect of the aesthetics of the novel that is absolutely crucial for the long-term health of Pakistani national consciousness.

Thus, as one reads about the adventures of Babar and his group, one also learns about the nature of cross-cultural and trans-religious relationships that the novel stages for the reader: our characters travel across India overcoming problems but also sampling the kind of regional hospitality, regardless of religious differences, that is never really represented within the official historiography of the Pakistan movement. The group itself is a microcosm of regional, cultural, and different religious identities: Babar is a Muslim; Bhattal a Hindu; Jamu, from Mumbai, is also a Hindu; and Kante, who becomes like a brother to Babar, is presumably a Christian. As the group travels, following clues about Kaura, the people that they encounter and those who aid and assist them also provide a checkered mosaic of Indian culture all brought together by their respective tradition of hospitality and their material identity as Indians. Read attentively, this knowledge, and the feelings invoked by it are most certainly likely to impact the perceptions of the reader about his or her own cultural past. And it is only, *à la* Bracher, after our self-serving narratives are altered that we can alter our politics and our worldviews. Thus, the novel does that for the reader, and since the narrative is written as an epic adventure and spans some twenty years, and 2,550 pages, the narrative acts accentuating the collective past become the norm and normative for the reader.

The complex national identity staged in the novel spans both the public and private sphere: As a group, as Babar and his friends continue to travel, the people they help and rescue settle in Faizabad, at a haveli that belongs to a Muslim woman rescued by Bhattal and adopted as a daughter, where people of all Indian religions and ethnicities live as one large family. On the road, the group itself stages the multiethnic composition of national identity, and when the imperial law intrudes into their public sphere actions, the group becomes a formidable cohesive unit in opposition to the imperial imperatives and often remains immune to deep intrusions of the imperial system. Thus, in a way, the novel suggests, contra Partha Chatterjee,[22] that when together the natives can sometime also foreclose certain aspects of the public sphere to the imperial masters.

Overall, the novel offers to the general Pakistani readers a romantic tale that foregrounds, in a subtle way, the kind of complexity that had to be elided to create a purist and restrictive idea of the nation. Furthermore, in terms of novelistic imagination and its impact on creation of a national imagination, *à la* Anderson, works like *Baazigar* are extremely important, for while reading the novel, one would imagine oneself as part of a collective history before the Partition. This may still not break through the barriers created by a conflictual Hindu-Muslim past, but it may at least offer an alternative engagement and investment—both symbolic and emotional—in a less contested past. Of course, as I said earlier, one novel cannot alter the general perspective of a whole nation, but stories such as *Baazigar* can at least provide us a path out of the pit of exclusivity and may lead us to rethink the Pakistani nation as more inclusive and cosmopolitan!

NOTES

1. Bruce Robbins, "Comparative Cosmopolitanisms," *Cosmopolitics,* ed. Pheng Chea and Bruce Robbins (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 246–64. There are, of course, other theorists of cosmopolitanism as well and some of the prominent works have been produced by Anthony Appiah, Daniel Archibugi, Pheng Chea, Homi Bhabha, James Clifford, etc. I am here relying on just one such work by Bruce Robbins, whose approach to cosmopolitanism I find more nuanced and useful for this chapter.
2. Ibid., 260.
3. Immanuel Kant, *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Essay*, 1795, trans. M. Campbell Smith (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd, 1903). This brief pamphlet by Kant is composed in the style of a world constitution.
4. Ibid., 137.
5. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1983):6.
6. Ibid., 30.
7. Timothy Brennan, "The National Longing for Form," *Nation and Narration*, ed. Homi Bhabha (London: Routledge, 1990), 44–70.
8. Ibid., 46.
9. For details, see Masood Raja, *Constructing Pakistan* (Karachi and London: Oxford University Press, 2010).
10. Muhammad Munawwar, *Dimensions of Pakistan Movement* (Lahore: Services Book Club, 1993), 31.
11. A. Punjabi, *Confederacy of India* (Lahore: [Private Publisher] Nawwab Sir Muhamamd Shah Nawaz Khan, 1939), 19.
12. F. K. Khan Durrani, *The Meaning of Pakistan* (Lahore: Muhammd Ashraf Publishers, 1944), 146.
13. Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 95.
14. I have written on this extensively, and for further details on my take on the rise of fundamentalism in Pakistan, please read "Neoliberal Dispositif and the Rise of Fundamentalism: The Case of Pakistan," *Journal of International and Global Studies*, 3, 1 (2011), 21–31.
15. Naseer Ahmed, "Urdu is a 'Poor' Language," *The Dawn Daily*, March 6, 2008, http://www.dawn.com/news/1070979/dawn-features-march-06-2008.

16. Shakeel Adil Zada. *Baazigar*, Vol. I (Karachi: Sab Rang Publications, 1987), 1. All citations from the novel are provided in my translation from Urdu.
17. Ibid., 40.
18. Mark Bracher, *Radical Pedagogy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 13.
19. Ibid., 17.
20. Ibid., 28.
21. Ibid., 29.
22. I am referring to one of the main assertions in Partha Chatterjee's *Nation and Its Fragments* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994) and his point that in most cases the private sphere was closed to the colonizers and hence that is the locus of the rise of native nationalism. This emphasis on culture enables Chatterjee to dispel the "downward filtration" theory, according to which nationalism rose in the colonies as an extension of Western education.

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FIFTEEN

The Nexus of Class, Identity, and Politics in the Representational Economy of Partition

The Case of Hasan Azizul Huq

Md. Rezaul Haque

The division of the Indian subcontinent into India and Pakistan in 1947 is by now an extensively investigated subject. In fact, discourse on Partition is so rich and wide-ranging that revisiting it from a completely fresh perspective might appear to be almost impossible. Yet there are silences. The present essay[1] aims at addressing one such silence and thus contributing to the ever expanding Partition literature by adding a new voice to it: there is a conspicuous lack of critical discussion in English of Bengali writings on Partition produced by Bengali Muslims who chose or were compelled to leave India/West Bengal and settle in the newly created (East) Pakistan.[2] How do Bengali Muslim authors, in most cases English-educated, middle-class, and urban-based, look back at Partition? Part of an answer lies in the fact that they are simultaneously Bengalis and Muslims, a kind of double/split identity that works to generate some of the ambivalence in the way they come to terms with that brutal event of 1947. It is, however, the (self-)contradictions that derive from the intersection of the class they come from and the sort of humanistic-progressive politics the majority of them subscribe to that appear to complicate representations of Partition in the works they have so far authored on the subject. Discourse on Partition by Bengali Muslims is thus Janus-faced, torn between "[m]emory and desire," between nostalgia and new beginnings.[3]

In this essay, I take up the case of Hasan Azizul Huq, one of the leading fictionists in Bangladesh today, as a paradigmatic one, for the tensions informing representation of Partition in some of his early short stories, I argue, open up a site that can prove immensely useful for understanding Bengali Muslim psyche vis-à-vis Partition.

I begin with a brief overview of the historical-literary discourse on Partition in order to delineate the changing contours of that discourse and thus offer a broad discursive context for the analysis that follows. In the history of South Asia, the degree of brutality that accompanied the division of India has not, to date, been matched; the trauma of what transpired in 1947 remains unique.[4] However, such a deep and lasting trauma that is Partition—"a holocaust unprecedented even in the blood-stained annals of India's past"—has not drawn the amount and kind of creative and scholarly attention it deserves, though there has never been any shortage of attempts to manufacture consent to the "official," sanitized narratives of that horrifying incident.[5] One reason for such a state of affairs is the temporal proximity of the occurrence to its early narrativization. Busy in nation-building, India and Pakistan (and later on Bangladesh also) had little time left for self-appraisal. Consequently, whatever came to be written on the topic amounted to little more than state propaganda. It is only in recent times that, challenging "the often hostile and justificatory rhetoric about Partition," a positive change appears to have taken place.[6] The turning point is the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in October 1984 by her Sikh security guards, when several North Indian cities became theaters where the communal furies of Partition were reenacted. "For days afterwards," writes Urvashi Butalia, "Sikhs all over India were attacked in an orgy of violence and revenge. Many homes were destroyed and thousands died."[7] The "[g]hosts of Mrs Gandhi," to borrow from Amitav Ghosh, brought back the violent memories of Partition to the fore and thus prompted a reassessment of that thought-to-be unrepeatable event.[8]

The violent splitting of the subcontinent is now revisited much more critically and openly than has been the case during the regime of Mrs. Gandhi, for example. From the early 1990s on, discourse on Partition has gradually become much more nuanced; the already existing one has been problematized by inflecting it with voices not heard before. Studies by Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin (1998) and Urvashi Butalia (1998) have not only enriched the discourse but have also, more importantly, humanized it, by adding "human dimensions" to it.[9] In Pakistan, too, a similar tendency is visible. Ayesha Jalal in her brilliant work on Saadat Hasan Manto (1912–1955), one of the most talented chroniclers of Partition in Urdu, for instance, has convincingly argued for "a new historical methodology" that strives "to connect the micro history of an individual and a family with the macro history of communities and states during India's partition."[10] Most recent artistic-literary depictions of Partition from India and

Pakistan also try to go beyond the conventional binaries that have long been the staples of the discourse on that terrible incident.

Contemporary Bangladesh presents a somewhat different picture. Historical-scholarly discourses do not evince much interest in the division of the subcontinent. Nor do the creative ones. In fact, as Niaz Zaman notes, "Bengali [creative] writing seems to have elided the issue of Partition."[11] Even when Partition is revisited by Bangladeshi historians and scholars, it is not as a human tragedy. The tendency rather is to examine the de/merits of the two-nation theory that Mohammad Ali Jinnah, backed by the All-India Muslim League, so artfully exploited to mobilize Indian Muslims in favor of the separatist demand for an independent Muslim state to be called Pakistan.[12]

Artists and creative writers of present-day Bangladesh also appear to be largely apathetic to Partition. Yet at the end of the day one has to turn to whatever little they occasionally produce, to appreciate Partition in its human dimensions. While the indifference of Bangladeshi authors to Partition definitely deserves close scrutiny, I do not intend to go into it here.[13] I am rather concerned with the way one of them, namely, Hasan Azizul Huq, has engaged with Partition in some of his early short stories.[14]

Hasan was born in 1939 in a village in Burdwan district in (now West) Bengal, (then British) India. In 1954 at the age of fifteen, he left India and settled in the district of Khulna, (then East) Pakistan. The family Hasan was born into can be characterized as one belonging to landed gentry. The father, Doa Bakhsh, knew Persian, Sanskrit, and also a little English. A disciplined and honest man, he presents a distinct contrast to his extravagant father, Wajir Molla, son of Munshi (later Molla) Tajuddin. The ancestral village ultimately came to be populated by the progeny of Molla Tajuddin.[15] Given the solid economic base and spread of the family, it appears unlikely that Hasan left India under pressure. A personal essay titled "Je Bhitore Ashe" (He Who Comes Inside) opens with Hasan getting down at Khulna railway station one evening. Hasan reminisces: "That was my first coming to Khulna. In the month of September of the year 1954. The purpose was to attain higher education."[16] Hasan was (deliberately) out for a better future.

Significantly, "Je Bhitore Ashe" also relates how Hasan becomes an "insider," "one of us" in the newly created Pakistan (hence the title). The piece ends on a clear note of ambivalence that seems to originate from the angst of being *dis*placed, uprooted: "I cannot offer a full account of Khulna—do not even try that. How much do I really know about this varied land? He who comes inside from outside; he who is born anew; he whom a new country adopts; he who gets entangled in the intricate web of life-spider; my condition is like his. I am an insider now."[17]

"Je Bhitore Ashe," however, maintains absolute silence about the most essential requirement for ideologically becoming an "insider" in Pakistan

in the early 1960s—the Islamic/Muslim identity of the citizen subject. As far as self-fashioning is concerned, the essay envisions a (Bengali) self, defined not in terms of (Muslim) community or (Islamic) religion but (Bengali) culture—an early sign of the need for the Bengalis to reimagine the Pakistani nation along democratic-progressive-secular lines.

What does it entail to be reborn, as Hasan defines the fact of his migration metaphorically? As is frequently the case, in the case of Hasan, too, the experience is both depressing and enriching, one of loss and gain (hence the ambivalence in his representation of Partition). The Khulna years made and remade Hasan. It is here that he came to look upon himself as one solidly belonging to the middle class, simultaneously graduating from rusticity to refinement. In Khulna, Hasan came in close contact with a number of multitalented and progressive-minded individuals such as Abubakar Siddique (poet, fictionist, and critic), Nazim Mahmud (theater artist and cultural organizer), Sadhan Sarkar (musical artiste and composer), and Khaled Rashid (a man "made of pure steel").[18] Together they formed a socio-cultural organization called Sandipan (Kindling) in the early 1960s.

Initially, a vague humanitarian ideal was at the heart of the activities of Sandipan. In the early years most of its members were engaged in literary-cultural endeavors. But the 1960s were also as volatile a decade for the Bengalis as the 1950s.[19] In the context of the movements that spread like fire all over East Pakistan in the late 1960s, Sandipan could not but become radicalized. By 1969, the year of Mass Uprising in East Pakistan, it was no longer possible, Hasan notes, "to watch the struggle from a distance."[20] The rhetoric of Pakistan had lost all validity by then in the face of the palpable discriminations and exploitations Bengalis were routinely subjected to. The East Pakistanis needed to realign the hierarchy of selves, to reverse the one that had obtained at the political birth of Pakistan in 1947: history dictated that they became Bengalis first and then Muslims. Even Islam was not strong enough to hold the two wings of Pakistan together. Hasan recalls with pleasure that with all its limitations Sandipan did participate in the intense struggle that accompanied the reconceptualization of the Bengali cultural/national identity in the form of a nine-month-long Liberation War (from March to December 1971).

Another element also went into the making of cultural-political activists like Hasan. Both in culture and politics Hasan and his ilk championed the cause of the working classes. In a moving tribute to Khaled Rashid who was captured and then killed by the Pakistani army in the early months of the Liberation War, Hasan hints at the kind of politics he was involved in, in the 1960s. He was (most probably) a member of a secret Communist party, for he used to receive its papers which he sometimes showed to Khaled Rashid.[21] If commitment to Communist politics seeks to bring about a classless society free from class-based inequities, its literary-cultural counterpart is to be found (in Hasan) in the total (Marx-

ist) rejection of the aesthetics of "art for art's sake" on the one hand and a faithful depiction of the day-to-day life experiences and struggles of the subalterns on the other. No wonder Maxim Gorky (1868–1936) and Manik Bandopadhyay (1908–1956)—writers famous for socialist realism—are two formidable influences on Hasan.

The reason why I have discussed at some length some of the major factors that have influenced Hasan both as an author and a person is to provide a framework for exploring the way(s) he engages with Partition in several of his early short stories. The earliest one is titled "Uttar Bashonte" (1964).[22] The title (After Spring) suggests the kind of life the characters in the story are living as a consequence of migration following Partition: life now presents a stark contrast to life then. Before Partition the two sisters—Lipi and Bani—went to college and school, respectively. Maddeningly in love with Kabir, Lipi would confide to Bani: "Without Kabir I won't be able to live. This very year he'd pass BA with Honours. After that just two more years."[23] But before those two years could be over, there came the Partition. Through the exchange program, Lipi and her family came over to (East) Pakistan. But there was no news of Kabir. Weary of waiting and also perhaps to save herself from disgrace, Lipi one day committed suicide.[24] The small room she killed herself in has never been opened since.

To some extent the family comes round to accept the small existence life has been so brutally reduced to. The mother goes about doing household chores, talking to herself all the time: "Can man live in such a jungle, fie!"[25] Even at daytime the father does not come out of bed, sitting all along inside the mosquito net.[26] The two younger brothers—Rantu and Tuku—are listless. The deep shadows of Partition continue to haunt the house and its inhabitants. Once in a while Bani remembers "the red sunlight" of the old district town they have left: "That sunlight Bani would never see."[27] But Bani cannot afford to indulge in nostalgia for long. In the manner of a typical (lower) middle-class girl, she assures her mother of the new beginnings her education is going to open up for them: "One more year. I'd pass BA with Honours. Then we won't have hardships anymore."[28]

"Uttar Bashonte" is thus structured around the conflict between "[m]emory and desire" in the psyche of its female protagonist. The crisis comes to a head with the reappearance of Kabir on the scene. One day Bani finds to her utter surprise that the new lecturer in History at her college is none other than Kabir. A few days later when Kabir comes to visit the family, Bani opens for him the room in which Lipi took her life, despite her mother insisting not to do so. At the time of leaving, Kabir (shamelessly?) tries to win Bani over: "You could never understand me, Bani; you never tried to."[29] What Kabir implies here is that it is Bani who has always been the queen of his heart, not Lipi. Bani declines the offer: "No, don't tempt me. We all are sick. We shouldn't be tempted. We don't

have any right on life."[30] Paradoxically, by refusing to accommodate Kabir in her life, Bani is *not* surrendering to what Partition has turned life into; rather she is adamant to carry on, in the face of all odds. The same resolve is reflected in her opening the locked-up rooms in the house. To move on, Bani must come to terms with memory, outgrow nostalgia, and reconcile herself with the past, even if it is no less than a nightmare, much like her creator who permanently left India in 1963.[31]

A story like "Uttar Bashonte," I contend, can be authored only by a writer who is in deep sympathy with middle-class aspirations and ideals. Not only is the economic background of the major characters (lower) middle class, they all speak formal Bengali. The middle-class sensibility of the focalizer/narrator/writer is also reflected even in the way characters from different classes are (physically) described. Gani, who annoys Bani by sending her love chits, is an "ugly camel-faced" youngster, whereas Kabir has a "slender child-like face."[32] But the surest sign of the middle-class position of the author of "Uttar Bashonte" is the centrality he and his creations (characters, focalizers, and narrator) assign to formal education in the scheme of things.[33] Bani, Kabir, and Lipi all have absolute confidence in the efficacy of institutional education. For Bani, a BA certificate is the magic lamp of Aladdin that can solve all the problems she and her family are beset with. In addition to easing financial difficulty, it would protect her from sliding down into the vulgar (from her perspective) world of the Ganis and so empower her that she would be in a position to decide whether or not to give Kabir a second chance. And in the absence of any distancing device such as irony, sarcasm, or "a sardonic little twist" (authorial or narratorial), one can safely assume that Hasan endorses the ultimate choices of his characters/creations.[34]

Both structurally and thematically, "Khancha" (The Cage, 1973) resembles "Uttar Bashonte."[35] At its narrative center, "Khancha" has a (lower) middle-class, upper-caste Hindu family, torn between attachment and desire. Both husband (Ambujaksha) and wife (Sarojini) look forward to and at the same time dread the prospect of migration to India, though Sarojini is perhaps a little more insistent on leaving (East) Pakistan. Two events in the family—a young son's death by snake bite and a paralytic stroke that Ambujaksha's father suffers, thus becoming bedridden—work to foil all the planning of husband and wife.

On two important scores, however, "Khancha" and "Uttar Bashonte" differ too. Although from the same class as the Muslim characters in "Uttar Bashonte," both Ambujaksha and Sarojini feel so strongly attached to home(land) that they can never fully reconcile themselves to the prospect of leaving (East) Bengal/Pakistan: Ambujaksha keeps deferring the question of migration resorting to one excuse or another, while Sarojini keeps asking her husband to ensure that in exchanging property they do not lose much. The paralysis of his father finally provides Ambujaksha, if not Sarojini, with a good excuse to abandon the idea of migration. The

deep love Ambujaksha shows for home(land) appears as nostalgia in the essays of those Hindus who for some reason or other had to leave (East) Pakistan in reality. "The Hindu Bengali refugees who wrote these essays," writes the subaltern historian Dipesh Chakrabarty in his insightful discussion of the essays, had set themselves the task "of creating in print something of the sentimental and the nostalgic about the lost home in the villages of East Bengal."[36] Unlike "many if not most of the Muslims of East Pakistan," the Hindus of East Bengal/Pakistan who had to leave home(land) saw the Partition of India not as an achievement of "freedom" and the things it implies, but as an act of expulsion "from the familiar worlds of their childhood.[37] Thus to spare himself the shock of rootlessness, Ambujaksha ultimately decides not to leave home(land) and puts on hold the most distinct part of his (lower) middle-class dream—the education of his children.[38]

In depicting Kabir—the only beneficiary of Partition in "Uttar Bashonte"—as callous and irresponsible, Hasan seems to suggest the kind of (ideological) shift he would enact in representing Partition in some of his later stories. The story I examine next—"Atmoja O Ekti Karobi Gachh" (A Daughter and an Oleander Plant, 1967; "Atmoja" henceforth)—contains the seeds of that shift.[39] Although "Atmoja" too is about the unspeakable sufferings of a migrated (lower) middle-class family, unlike "Uttar Bashonte," it is neither narrated by nor focalized through any member of that family. As a result of being narrated by a third-person omniscient narrator (who is solidly middle-class in taste and temperament), the center of narrative gravity in "Atmoja" shifts from the tension between nostalgia and hope that structures "Uttar Bashonte" to a vague kind of class conflict.[40]

There is little narrative action in "Atmoja." Three teenagers—Feku, Inam and Suhas—come to the house of the migrated family in the middle of the night. The old asthmatic father admits the three and, like a typical middle-class host, asks them how they are doing, if they would like to have a cup of tea etc. Feku and Suhas then give him money to have sex with his eldest daughter, Ruku.[41] With no money in his pocket with which to satisfy his desire, Inam sits with the old man and listens to his asthma-hindered, phlegm-smeared tale of migration: "When I came here, when I came here."[42]

The story is simple. Immediately after they had come over to (East) Pakistan, the old man planted a *karobi* (oleander) plant, not for its flowers but for its seeds, a rich source of poison. Most commentators have read the act in symbolic terms. Abu Zafor, for example, notes a plain symbolic association between the two acts: the sowing of the *karobi* plant and the prostituting of the daughter; both yield poison.[43] The reading Sarifa Saloa Dina offers is hardly any different from that by Zafor; in regarding the division of India as the original and real source of poison(ing), Dina is, however, able to situate her reading in the broader socio-economic and

political context of Partition.[44] The symbolic meaning Sanjida Akhter invests the plant with, does not seem to take into account the (explicitly stated) reason why the father had planted it in the first instance. The plant, in her view, stands for a means of deliverance from the hellish life the old man has been forced to live in his newly adopted motherland.[45] Two points emerge from these readings. First, the plant with its poisonous seeds embodies the poisoned existence of the father. Despite the fact that (the latter) two of the three scholars are women, the question of what the daughter goes through every time she has to prostitute herself has not been raised at all.[46] Second, the symbolic decoding of the plant along the lines above serves to highlight the sad plight of the old man and thus absolve him from all guilt. The accusing finger that embittered Inam points at the father in the form of a repeated question at the end of the story—"Now you're crying? Now you're crying? You're crying now?"—plainly contradicts the latter end to which the *karobi* plant has been decoded.[47]

In his preface to *Deshbhager Galpo* (Stories of Partition, 2011), a collection of six previously published short stories on the division of India, Hasan lays bare what he goes through in writing about Partition: "Each of these stories came to be written in moments of intense pain, such pain as one might feel if the heart were to be cut with a saw."[48] Clearly, Hasan suffers intensely every time he writes about Partition. One visible source of suffering is his empathy with the (represented) victims of Partition. But Hasan is also aware that he must resist total identification with those characters lest he mar the artistry of his work by flouting the distinction between life and representation. In an interview with Shahaduzzaman, Hasan reveals the other side of the picture:

> [W]on't I write the very way I had suffered? For example, I wrote the two stories, "Mari" and "Parobashi," having keenly felt the meaninglessness of riots. . . . My "Uttar Bashonte" is almost full of family memories. All these are personal experiences. But I've been careful that these [stories?] do not remain entirely confined to personal experiences.[49]

So Hasan, himself a casualty of Partition, empathizes with the characters he represents as such; at the same time, Hasan, the creative writer, needs to stand apart from his representation to ensure that too much involvement does not impair artistic integrity.

Interestingly, Hasan uses his detachment as a space for criticizing the very character(s) he has so much consideration for. This tension, I hold, marks the characterization of the father in "Atmoja," a point glossed over by the commentators cited above. But the more interesting point about the way Hasan relates to the old man is his differential use of narrator and focalizer in the story. It is through his middle-class narrator that Hasan appears to empathize with the father, though the narrator too

would often seem to treat the old man a little critically. Such narratorial details as the face of the father lined with cracks, his two "thin" legs, the frequent attacks of asthma, his "vein-swollen fingers," the "dirty" nails not pared for long, and so on are clearly meant to evoke pity for him.[50] Yet one can hardly miss the irony when the narrator calls the old man a "*bhadralok*," that is, a gentleman.[51] The irony gains in sharpness in the light of the middle-class pretension of the father that he is borrowing the money Feku and Suhas pay him for having sex with his daughter.[52] Even the middle-class narrator remains ambivalent towards the old man.

In its most crucial concluding part, "Atmoja" dramatizes an encounter between middle and working classes over the selling and buying of the body of a girl for sex. No less crucially, as the story advances to its end, Hasan gradually withdraws his middle-class narrator, leaving the narrative to be unfolded through three working-class focalizers, mostly through Inam. The shift is (ideologically) deliberate, for it provides Hasan with the space he needs to go beyond the limits of his own middle-class sensibility and thus be able to present the old man in a critical light. Hence despite the overflow of tears drowning the face of the father, Inam is unwilling to let him off. Because the old man planted the *karobi* plant for its poisonous seeds, as Inam sees it, he should not hesitate to accept them now. Similarly, since the father himself is responsible for the prostituting of the daughter, he is not morally justified to shed tears at her disgrace: as one sows, so one reaps. Focalization through Inam enables Hasan to be critical of the old man. "Atmoja" thus marks a subtle ideological shift in the representation of Partition. Moving away from his evident middle-class outlook, which takes education to be the panacea of all middle-class difficulties in "Uttar Bashonte," Hasan in the latter story, as I hope to have been able to demonstrate, aligns himself with a different point of view to add the issue of class to his engagement with the division of India and its aftermath, especially the migrant-refugee question.

The tension between middle- and working-class sympathies is also manifest in the portrayal of Partition in another 1967 story titled "Mari" (The Plague).[53] A group of about four hundred refugees have taken shelter in a schoolhouse. The story revolves around how they are received and treated by the local community. "Mari" thus depicts the other side of the migrant-refugee question: unlike "Uttar Bashonte" and "Atmoja," it looks at the issue not from the perspective of those rendered homeless in the wake of communal riots but from the point of view of those belonging to the host community. The reaction is as diverse as is the motivation to help. A brief opening exchange between Moulavi Saheb, the school clerk, and farmer Rakib dramatizes the tension: Rakib is upset that so many refugees have come to stay with them for no one knows how long; looking after them means straining the limited resources of the community.[54] But Moulavi Saheb is sympathetic, even though he does nothing for the unwelcome guests. Inspired by piety, others like Motleb, Nafar,

and Reazaddi (mostly from the lower social strata) come forward and do whatever little they can to alleviate the sufferings of the refugees. Still others such as Moti, Jafar, Raham, and Habib just go about spreading the news, doing nothing meaningful.[55] Yet the odd man out is Kabir Saheb whom the narrator introduces as a "respectable *bhadralok*."[56] Initially, it is not clear why Kabir Saheb joins Motleb, Nafar, and Reazaddi as the three carry a pitcher of milk to the schoolhouse to be distributed among the refugees. A little later the third-person omniscient narrator discloses what the gentleman is thinking about: with his "*tapah*-fish-like face," Kabir Saheb walks along with the milk bearers but is engrossed in thinking "how well people are doing business."[57] The question of refugees is not a burning one for gentlemen like Kabir Saheb.

On two more occasions the narrator exposes how out of touch with existing reality Kabir Saheb is. Standing in front of the schoolhouse, where the refugees are temporarily housed, Kabir Saheb strains his ears to hear the "sound of silence"; instead, a "terrible screech" issues out from the schoolhouse to catch him unawares.[58] And at the end of the story when Motleb, Nafar, and Reazaddi have left after giving away the milk, Kabir Saheb suddenly hears the "odd sound of vomiting."[59] He then sees "a half-lying man is vomiting, his eyes sparkling in darkness."[60] Only then Kabir Saheb comes to *see* that countless men and women in all the nooks and corners of the schoolhouse are vomiting and gasping, staring at him with sparkling eyes.[61] An epidemic is about to set in (hence the title).

Is Kabir Saheb suffering from what Ian Watt defines as "delayed decoding"?[62] Perhaps not, for in "delayed decoding" the mind at least attempts to make sense of the impressions it receives but is only able to do so at a much slower pace (hence "delayed"). There is a (temporal) disjuncture in "delayed decoding" between experience and interpretation, but Kabir Saheb does not even try to take in what is going on around him. Rather reality appears to force itself into his consciousness to become meaningful. Nor is Kabir Saheb overwhelmed by what he comes across. Preoccupied with something else, he is physically there among the refugees, but in his thought he is somewhere else.

What engrosses Kabir Saheb so completely is not precisely spelled out. But his very first appearance in the story speaks volumes for the kind of aloofness, if not indifference, he ultimately shows to the helpless, homeless population. At the time when Motleb, Nafar, and Reazaddi were taking the pitcher of milk to the schoolhouse, Kabir Saheb was having a haircut in a saloon in the bazaar. The grooming detail is significant: the narrator seems to suggest "Nero fiddled while Rome burned." In plain words, gentlemen like Kabir Saheb have eyes for physical appearance but not really for human tragedy. Such details as his being "a respectable *bhadralok*," the consistent use of the (colonial) honorific *saheb* along with his (first) name, and the simile comparing his face with that of

a *tapah* fish also point to the irony and sarcasm the narrator (as well as his creator) treats him with. In comparison to Motleb, Nafar, and Reazaddi, who are not "gentlemen" like him but who at least initiate relief work for the refugees, Kabir Saheb is at best "a silent observer."[63]

Hasan has given the reader two Kabirs. The one in "Uttar Bashonte" impregnates a girl out of wedlock and, after the girl has committed suicide, shifts his attention to the younger sister, thus proving himself to be an extremely selfish young man. Kabir Saheb in "Mari" is possibly just a shade better: he is self-centered, if not outright selfish. Compared to them, Motleb, Nafar, and Reazaddi in "Mari" are definitely far better human beings. Put together, the two Kabirs (and through them Hasan) make it abundantly clear (against the backdrop of Partition and its after-effects) that self-interest is what regulates middle-class Bengali Muslim life both in quiet and turbulent times. So the hint of criticism that was there in the depiction of "*bhadralok*" Kabir becomes too substantial a component in the portrayal of the "respectable *bhadralok*" Kabir Saheb (for the reader) to miss how Hasan sees the question of class in relation to (the representation of) Partition in his short stories.[64]

If Hasan criticizes and thus distances himself from middle-class aims (or aimlessness) and aspirations in his representation of Partition in "Atmoja" and "Mari," his left-leaning sympathies bring to the fore the trials and tribulations working-class men and women had to live through during and after Partition in "Parobashi" (The Outsider, 1967).[65] The story is a simple one told simply. Bachir, a small Muslim farmer-laborer, has just lost his young son and wife in a communal attack by Hindus on his village. By the time the story opens he has already been walking for nights and days to get as far away from the scene of communal violence as possible. Now lying in a dried-up canal, Bachir relives all he is flying away from: one scene after another passes through his mind. The last scene projecting the speared dead body of his son and the burned one of his wife shakes him up. At that very moment Bachir sees a man in a dirty, coarse *dhuti* (indicative of his being a Hindu) going over to the country he has been forced to leave.[66] In a maddening rage, he strikes the man with an axe. The dead body of the victim rolls down into the canal.

The uniqueness of "Parobashi" among the Partition stories by Hasan is worth some elaboration. The most conspicuous point is that it clearly articulates why its male protagonist Bachir had to leave his home(land). Unlike the protagonists in the other stories, Bachir left India, not because he wanted to, but because he had been forced to. For him it is not a matter of choice but of compulsion. Unlike his middle-class counterparts, Bachir is not on the move in pursuit of a better fortune/future.

The second point is a related one. It has been repeatedly claimed that Bengali writers (both Hindu and Muslim) tend to avoid violence in portraying Partition.[67] Several theories are in circulation as to why such is the case. Even when violence appears, it serves as a background against

which the story unfolds. Hasan has a particular reason for using violence as *the* determinant of narrative action in "Parobashi," and the reason has to do with class.[68] In a critical essay on the early Bangladeshi novel, Hasan notes how ideology affects different classes differently.[69] Interestingly, the discursive context is communalism in pre-Partition Bengal. Even the strong wine of communalist ideology, Hasan confidently argues, could not generate any extraordinary reaction among the harmless Hindu and Muslim cultivators who have been (and still are) engaged in a relentless struggle to survive.[70] Working classes, especially those directly dependent on agriculture, do not respond to change, according to Hasan, unless they are able to perceive it realistically.[71] It is only a clear perception of the need for change, not ideology, that regulates the behavior of working-class men and women. Hence to be true to his own sociological hypothesis, Hasan can only accommodate a working-class protagonist like Bachir in a Partition narrative that incarnates that painful occurrence in some form or other. By incorporating communal violence in "Parobashi," Hasan is able to associate the action/agency of his subaltern protagonist with the first term in the classic Marxist binary: base/superstructure or mode-of-production/ideology.[72]

So far Hasan has written a total of six short stories on the division of India.[73] Each depicts Partition from a fresh perspective, thus narrating a range of effects and experiences resulting from that unique event. Given the variety of ways Partition (has) affected individuals and families, it comes as no surprise that it should mean different things to different classes and communities of people. Each portrayal of Partition is, therefore, an ideological/political endeavor. In representing Partition, Hasan too has been conditioned by his hyphenated identity, class location, and humanistic-progressive politics. It is the intersection of these socio-cultural and political determinants in the stories that accounts for how Partition is depicted in each of them. "Uttar Bashonte," for example, portrays Partition in terms of a conflict between nostalgia and hope, a conflict felt by most Bengali Muslim writers like Hasan who had to migrate from India for some reason or other. The tensions informing representations of Partition in the other stories mostly derive, as I hope to have been able to show above, from a different category of (self-)contradictions in which Hasan cannot help being caught up: the dichotomy of his solid middle-class sympathies and progressive-socialist politics is too real to be explained away. Overall, from whatever point of view Hasan revisits Partition, each revisiting is informed by the class he belongs to, the kind of politics he aligns himself with, and the sort of self-fashioning he subscribes to. And given the incongruity of the shaping influences, it is perfectly understandable why ambivalence should be the keynote of his representation of Partition.

NOTES

1. In writing this chapter, I received generous help from Syed Manzoorul Islam, Mohammad A. Quayum, Habib Rahman, Sarwar Murshed, Tapon Kumar Roy, and Sajib Kumar Ghosh. I thank them all.
2. A notable exception is Niaz Zaman, *A Divided Legacy: The Partition in Selected Novels of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh* (Dhaka: The University Press Limited, 1999).
3. T. S. Eliot, *T. S. Eliot: Selected Poems* (Calcutta: Rupa and Co., 1992), 51.
4. See endnote 13 below.
5. Ayesha Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 1.
6. Yasmin Khan, *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008), 4.
7. Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000), 4.
8. Amitav Ghosh, *The Imam and the Indian* (Delhi: Ravi Dayal and Permanent Black, 2002), 46.
9. Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence*: *Voices from the Partition of India* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000), 6; Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin, *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998).
10. Ayesha Jalal, *The Pity of Partition: Manto's Life, Times, and Work across the India-Pakistan Divide* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2013), xii.
11. Niaz Zaman, *A Divided Legacy: The Partition in Selected Novels of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh* (Dhaka: The University Press Limited, 1999), 331.
12. See, for example, Ahmed Sharif, "1947 Soner Rajnitir Punormulyayan" [A Re-evaluation of the Politics of 1947], in *Kichhu Biswaser Bajjhik Punorbibechana* [A Superficial Reconsideration of Some Articles of Faith] (Dhaka: Agamee Prakashani, 2000), 23–27; and Ahmad Rafique, *Deshbibhag: Fire Dekha* [Revisiting Partition] (Dhaka: Anindya Prokash, 2014).
13. Two possible reasons for this indifference can be put forward: first, in both scale and scope the Partition of Bengal was far less traumatic than that of Punjab; second, being much closer in time, the violent memory of Bangladesh Liberation War (1971) seems to have far outweighed that of Partition in the Bengali psyche.
14. Researchers spell the surname in several ways. For the sake of consistency, I have spelled it "Huq" throughout.
15. Hasan Azizul Huq, quoted in Mahibul Aziz, *Hasan Azizul Huq: Rarhabanger Uttaradhikar* [Hasan Azizul Huq: The Legacy of Rarhabanga] (Chittagong: Achira, 1989), 3–4.
16. Hasan Azizul Huq, *Rachanasangraha* [Collected Works], vol. 3 (Dhaka: Jatiya Grontha Prakashan, 2002), 47. Unless stated otherwise, translations are mine.
17. Ibid., 61.
18. Ibid., 60.
19. The two most remarkable socio-cultural and political movements of the 1950s include the Language Movement of 1952 and the formation in 1954 of the United Front, a five-party coalition, that eventually demolished the hegemony of the Muslim League in East Pakistan.
20. Hasan Azizul Huq, *Rachanasangraha* [Collected Works], vol. 3 (Dhaka: Jatiya Grontha Prakashan, 2002), 61.
21. Ibid., 468.
22. Hasan Azizul Huq, *Rachanasangraha* [Collected Works], vol. 1 (Dhaka: Jatiya Grontha Prakashan, 2001), 44–55. The year given parenthetically is the year of first publication in a book of short stories. So far Hasan has published eight such books.
23. Ibid., 51.
24. The suggestion is that Lipi was illicitly pregnant at that time. Ibid., 52.
25. Ibid., 44.

26. The image is reminiscent of Miss Havisham in *Great Expectations*. After Partition the father no longer appears (to Bani) to be "a creature of light." Ibid., 45.
27. Ibid., 50.
28. Ibid., 46.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. Hasan Azizul Huq, interview by Kaes Ahmed, in *Unmochito Hasan* [Hasan Azizul Huq as Revealed in Interviews], ed. Hayat Mamud (Dhaka: Ittadi Grantha Prokash, 2011), 62.
32. Hasan Azizul Huq, *Rachanasangraha* [Collected Works], vol. 1 (Dhaka: Jatiya Grontha Prakashan, 2001), 47, 50.
33. On the role of education in the life of the emerging Bengali Muslim middle class in post-Partition period, see Serajul Islam Choudhury, "Pakistaner Pore" [After Pakistan], in *Britter Bhanga-Gara* [Constructing and Deconstructing the Circle]. (Dhaka: Ahmad Publishing House, 1989), 101–12.
34. Amitav Ghosh, *The Shadow Lines* (New Delhi: Oxford UP, 1995), 4.
35. Hasan Azizul Huq, *Rachanasangraha* [Collected Works], vol. 1 (Dhaka: Jatiya Grontha Prakashan, 2001), 234–47.
36. Dipesh Chakrabarty, "Remembered Villages: Representation of Hindu-Bengali Memories in the Aftermath of the Partition," accessed June 14, 2014, http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~sj6/chakrabartyrememberedvillage.pdf, 319.
37. Ibid., 319, 320.
38. At one point in the story, Ambujaksha tells Sarojini that once in India they would put the children into school. Hasan Azizul Huq, *Rachanasangraha* [Collected Works], vol. 1 (Dhaka: Jatiya Grontha Prakashan, 2001), 242–43.
39. Ibid., 129–36.
40. If consistent use of standard Bengali is one clear indication of the middle-class background of the narrator, his/her reluctance to put the "unprintable" things that Inam says into words, is another. Ibid., 132.
41. In an interview with Kaes Ahmed, Hasan tells Ahmed that "Atmoja" differs from the incident it is based on in one important respect: the girl was forced into prostitution by her (maternal) uncle, not by her father. Hasan Azizul Huq, interview by Ahmed, in *Unmochito Hasan* [Hasan Azizul Huq as Revealed in Interviews], edited by Hayat Mamud, 59-67 (Dhaka: Ittadi Grantha Prokash, 2011), 63.
42. Hasan Azizul Huq, *Rachanasangraha* [Collected Works], vol. 1 (Dhaka: Jatiya Grontha Prakashan, 2001), 136.
43. Abu Zafor, *Hasan Azizul Huqer Galper Samajbastobata* [Hasan Azizul Huq: A Critical Perspective] (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1996), 33–41.
44. Sarifa Saloa Dina, *Hasan Azizul Haque O Akhtaruzzaman Eliaser Chotogalpo: Bishoy O Prokaron* [Short Stories of Hasan Azizul Huq and Akhtaruzzaman Elias: Form and Content] (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 2010), 112–16.
45. Sanjida Akhter, *Bangla Chhoto Galpe Deshbibhag* [Partition in Bengali Short Story] (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 2002), 180–86.
46. On the issue of gender in representing Partition, see Jill Didur, *Unsettling Partition: Literature, Gender, Memory* (Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 2006).
47. Hasan Azizul Huq, *Rachanasangraha* [Collected Works], vol. 1 (Dhaka: Jatiya Grontha Prakashan, 2001), 136.
48. Hasan Azizul Huq, quoted in Bikash Ray, "Deshbhager Galpo: Hasan Azizul Huqer Srijoni Chaitanya" [Stories of Partition: The Creative Consciousness of Hasan Azizul Huq], *Galpokatha* 2, 3 (2012): 149.
49. Ibid., 150.
50. Hasan Azizul Huq, *Rachanasangraha* [Collected Works], vol. 1 (Dhaka: Jatiya Grontha Prakashan, 2001), 134, 135.
51. Ibid., 135.
52. Ibid., 136.

53. Ibid., 162–67.
54. Ibid., 163.
55. Ibid., 164.
56. Ibid.
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid., 165.
59. Ibid., 167.
60. Ibid.
61. Ibid.
62. Ian Watt, *Conrad in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 175. Watt defines "delayed decoding" as a "narrative device" that "combines the forward temporal progression of the mind, as it receives messages from the outside world, with the much slower reflexive process of making out their meaning."
63. Sanjida Akhter, *Bangla Chhoto Galpe Deshbibhag* [Partition in Bengali Short Story] (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 2002), 184.
64. Hasan Azizul Huq, *Rachanasangraha* [Collected Works], vol. 1 (Dhaka: Jatiya Grontha Prakashan, 2001), 49.
65. Ibid., 137–48.
66. Ibid., 147.
67. See Sanjida Akhter, *Bangla Chhoto Galpe Deshbibhag* [Partition in Bengali Short Story] (Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 2002); Asrukumar Sikdar, *Bhanga Bangla O Bangla Sahitya* [Divided Bengal and Bengali Literature] (Kolkata: Dey's Publishing, 2005); Niaz Zaman, *A Divided Legacy: The Partition in Selected Novels of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh* (Dhaka: The University Press Limited, 1999).
68. In *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism and History in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001), 4, Gyanendra Pandey looks at how "violence . . . constitutes – and reconstitutes—the subject."
69. Hasan Azizul Huq, *Rachanasangraha* [Collected Works], vol. 4 (Dhaka: Sahittika, 2003), 15.
70. Ibid.
71. Ibid.
72. See Terry Eagleton, *Marxism and Literary Criticism* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002).
73. Taking length into account, I have left out the sixth story titled "Dibaswapno" (Daydream; Hasan Azizul Huq, *Rachanasangraha* [Collected Works], vol. 2 [Dhaka: Jatiya Grontha Prakashan, 2001], 299–303) in the present essay. Hasan has given Partition a fuller treatment in one of his novels *Agunpakhi* [The Phoenix]. In *Upannashsomogro* [A Collection of Novels] (Dhaka: Mowla Brothers, 2014), 201–352.

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SIXTEEN

Partition and Beyond

Intizar Husain's Quest for Meaning and Vision

Tasneem Shahnaaz and Amritjit Singh

Walter Benjamin had sounded an admonitory note on storytelling in his essay "The Storyteller: Reflections on the Works of Nicolai Leskov" (1936). He states that "familiar though his name may be to us, the storyteller in his living immediacy is by no means a present force" and "the art of storytelling is coming to an end."[1] Some thirty-eight years later, Intizar Husain echoed a similar sentiment when he wrote in his essay "Vikram, the Vampire and the Story" (1974) that "the future of the short story is dark because trees keep diminishing in the world and men grow more numerous. In a world of nothing but men, journalism can grow, but the poem and the story cannot."[2] Ironically, Husain has gone on to become one of the best practitioners of short story as a genre and was one of the finalists for the Man Booker Prize in 2013. Benjamin had identified two kinds of storytellers—the one "who has stayed at home" or the "resident tiller of the soil" and the one "who has come from afar" or the "trading seaman."[3] However, he goes on to add that the "actual extension of the realm of storytelling in its full historical breadth is inconceivable without the most intimate interpenetration of these two archaic types."[4] The storyteller in Intizar Husain encompasses the qualities and breadth of vision of both these types. Choosing to move to Pakistan, he can be regarded as having "come from afar," that is, from Dibai in India.[5] His sensibilities combine the consciousness of a native who carries within himself the presence of an earlier multicultural history and heritage. His stories and novels contain oral elements of storytelling along with the "lore of far-

away places . . . with the lore of the past, as it best reveals itself to natives of a place."[6]

DOUBLE VISION

Husain's perspective as a writer appears to be that of both an insider and an outsider. He was a resident of India who made Lahore his home after the Partition in 1947. Though he chose to go there, he never thought he would not be able to come back to his home in India.[7] In this sense, Husain displays what Edward Said calls the "double-vision" of an exiled secular intellectual. For Said, the dislocated migrant or exile "sees things both in terms of what has been left behind and what is actual here and now" and that is why he has "a double perspective that never sees things in isolation."[8] In his essay "Reflections on Exile," Said goes on to explain that "[m]ost people are principally aware of one culture, one setting, one home; exiles are aware of at least two, and this plurality of vision gives rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimensions, an awareness that—to borrow a phrase from music—is *contrapuntal*."[9]

Intizar Husain's "double perspective" enables him to take charge of his "tomorrows" which, in turn, are taken care of by "yesterdays." He can yoke the past and the present together with ease, the personal with the impersonal, the similar with the dissimilar. In his novel *Basti*, linear time is disrupted by flashbacks, references to myths, archetypal allusions, as well as intimations of personal and historical consciousness. The writer admits that "[t]he first Partition was in the *Mahabharata*, and then it was me when I was exiled. Only the Pandavas and I knew the pain of leaving one's land. The *Mahabharata* is such a powerful narrative of that pain."[10] This "pain" of leaving "home" gains more significance in times of crisis and loss. The title of the novel *Basti* (which means a dwelling place or neighborhood), itself hints at the sufferings of those who are exiled. The question is which *basti* is one's home? Which *basti* does one belong to and call one's own? Husain explores the exiled intellectual's state of mind and being through the character of Zakir, whose name means "one who remembers" and who is in search of a homeland, for the "exile knows that in a secular and contingent world, homes are always provisional."[11] The protagonist can only pray and look inwards in times of calamity when his adoptive hometown in Pakistan is "burning on all four sides"[12] and why Rupnagar (his original *basti* in India) is an unachievable distant dream. The association of heterogeneous ideas is what activates the creative process and gives rise to a dual perspective—double vision that nudges the exile to accept the unattainability of different *bastis*/homes in life, to understand what Said evokes as "the pathos of summer and autumn as much as the potential of spring [that] are nearby yet unobtainable."[13]

STORYTELLING AND THE EXILIC IMAGINATION

For Said, exile means a critical distance from all cultural identities and resolutely opposing all forms of identity politics and orthodoxies at the national or social level. For him, exile is more a condition of the mind that withstands and confronts sectarian, regional loyalties when living in one's adopted country or even in the nation of one's birth. Understood in this way, Said believes that exile, though painful, is also a morally valuable condition, and he quotes approvingly, yet ironically, Theodor Adorno's claim that "it is part of morality not to be at home in one's home."[14] Maybe Husain is not an exile in Said's sense of the word, but his "critical distance" from his original cultural roots in India creates a liminal space, which he occupies as a secular intellectual exile in an increasingly Islamic Pakistan, just as Salman Rushdie avers in the *The Satanic Verses* that exile "is an endless paradox: looking forward by always looking back."[15] Husain is prompted by an exilic anxiety and by the desire to define his condition and location, to take imaginative leaps backwards in time and history. But Husain, like Said, must know that in addressing the issues that Pakistan confronted after 1971 from "the exile's situation," he must show that "no return to the past is without irony, or without a sense that a full return, or repatriation, is impossible."[16] And yet as a writer, he savors the ancient Hindu scriptures, mythology, folktales, and the various other traditions of Indian storytelling. He draws freely from a variety of sources and traditions—Islamic, Buddhist, Hindu—to write his stories.

Along with the Persian tradition of the *qissa* and the ornate Urdu *dastaan*, he uses diverse archetypes, myths, and folktales like the *Jataka* tales, the *Panchatantra*, the *Puranas*, Buddhist philosophies, and Sufi mysticism. The *qissa* was an oral genre with a performative component. It was supposed to be constituted of four elements—*razm* (battle), *bazm* (courtly assemblies), *husn o'ishq* (love and beauty), and *ayyari* (trickery). Husain's stories may not strictly include all these elements, but his narratives deal with battles within and outside the self as well as speak of authoritarian policies and political decisions that adversely affect ordinary human beings. They recount innumerable instances of love and ensnaring beauty, even as they detail incidents of the duplicity of men and women. These variable experiences, which Benjamin considers to be the primary material of a story, also lend certain benefits in Benjamin's view: "[The story] contains, openly or covertly, something useful. The usefulness may, in one case, consist in a moral; in another, in some practical advice; in a third, in a proverb or maxim. In every case the storyteller is a man who has counsel for his readers."[17]

The Persian *qissa* tradition too has the same advantages of storytelling with the addition of a linguistic function wherein the listener learns to manipulate language by listening to language that is expressive ("*fasih*"), developed or mature ("*baligh*"), and in current usage ("*roz marra*"). The

Jataka tales and the *Panchatantra* collection of stories function like Aesop's fables where each story offers a moral or practical precept. The *Jatakas* expound Buddhist philosophy in stories about the previous births of the Buddha in different forms, while the latter purports to teach how to conduct life wisely. The *Puranas* contain stories about battles between *devas* (gods) and *asuras* (demons), religious lore and practices, as well as everyday customs, thereby providing a guide to *dharmic* (virtuous) living. Husain's stories and novels take shape when temporality is transcended by surrealism or dreams or mythic allusions, when artistic autonomy is maintained through fictionalization of events in order to explore human potential, and/or when collective memory and state-sponsored history are in perpetual conflict. It is his belief that stories may belong to different traditions but the underlying foundational philosophies are analogous. For example, in the short story "Boat" (*Kishti*), stories of Noah, Gilgamesh and Utnapishtim, *Manuji* and the Fish avatar of God *Vishnu*, *Markandeya* and *Narayan*, and *Hatamtai* are interwoven together to denote a similarity in figurative and moral significance. At the Karachi Literature Festival (2013), Husain went on record to uphold the importance of storytelling in providing solace and "counsel" (to borrow Benjamin's word) in violent times.[18]

At the same time, we cannot miss in Husain's narratives the modernistic elements of surrealism, psychoanalytic imagery, as well as postmodern techniques of plural narratives and perspectives. They combine archetypal consciousness with modern existentialism in order to make sense of life after the senseless violence of Partition. Using materials such as dream sequences (as in "The City of Sorrows" or *Shahre-e Afsos*), or containing smaller narratives of stories within a story like the Chinese box structure[19] or framed/embedded narratives (for example, "Tortoise" or *Kachhuwe*), Husain tries to explore the psyche of human beings and their relationship to history. The form resembles the psychoanalytical process of unearthing the unconscious mind behind the different levels of negative narratives gathered by the conscious mind. Like Conrad, Husain exploits the "undiscovered possibilities latent in one of the genre's most familiar forms, namely, the framed short story in which a first person narrator (who is sometimes the member of a group) introduces, comments on, and encloses another's tale."[20] His polyphonic technique includes the use of many voices that speak and listen to other voices. This is somewhat similar to the discourse produced by the French postmodernists in the 1970s where the univocal mode of speaking in the name of others and presenting a monolithic understanding of a universal Truth is deconstructed and decentered. In turn, this approach disrupts the notions of homogeneity and essentialism that get attached to racialized communities. It creates an imaginative space in which assumptions of majoritarianism and separatism can be negotiated and transformed into a more composite, pluralistic space. Such a space would accommodate *bhikshus*

and ordinary individuals, as well as men and women belonging to diverse communities.

Husain's stories do not reflect a conscious or overt serialization of history and events. But the act of remembering, albeit indirectly, strategizes the release of institutionalized history from official restrictions of forgetting. At the same time, it grants probity and meaning to a history that is characterized by division, violence, and loss. In engaging with history as a storyteller, Husain is able to address and redress forgotten and repressed experiences, give tongue to the silences of history, and imagine an alternative vision of the past and the future. *Basti* demonstrates his skillful use of subjective, personal memory in collaboration with collective memory.[21] In adding to this mix, "non-linear cultural mythology" as well as "centuries old historical events,"[22] Husain reflects his commitment as a writer to engage and transmute the brutal events of history into new modes of feeling and thinking. Zakir, a Shia professor of history, had moved to Lahore in 1947. Against this backdrop is the present in 1971, when East Pakistan broke away to become Bangladesh, a free nation. The exodus to Pakistan in 1947 was regarded by many as *hijrat*, reminiscent of how Prophet Muhammad had left Mecca to escape persecution and to form the first Muslim community in Medina. The people of Pakistan felt a sense of achievement in forming a new nation. They also felt a sense of responsibility for building this new Muslim state. The sense of victory was a way of coming to terms with the new life as well as the hardships they faced there. The second crisis in 1971 appears to dislocate the protagonist who is unable to take any action except to pray and to accept that "defeat too is a trust."[23] He realizes that he is responsible for the defeat, not merely as an individual but as an emblem of all persons who have witnessed in silence the injustices and inhuman treatment that had been meted out to the people of East Pakistan.

While interviewing Husain, Alok Bhalla comments that the writer's stories function at three levels. First of all, they appear to be based on personal memories. At another level, they depict "the cultural and political life of the subcontinent before 1947,"[24] which comes through the writer's powerful nostalgia. The third level engages with the creative and imaginative reconstruction of subcontinental history using examples from "the foundational stories of the Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists"[25] to define and understand it. Indeed, these stories articulate his angst, his search for the self and its identity, his initial hopes and idealism in being a part of a new nation-state, his waning optimism and increasing pessimism in relation to the realities of politics and governance. Somewhat like T. S. Eliot in *The Waste Land*, Husain constructs his own tradition through pastiche and allusion, through a retelling of old myths and tales, bringing together hints and directions, in Eliot's phrase "[t]hese fragments I have shored against my ruins."[26] His narratives signal the hope for reconciliation by reimagining a new world in which peacocks, royal

swans, and ducks live in harmony with humans. Such a reimagining would include the *Jataka* tales, stories of *Baital Pachchisee* or the *Panchatantra*, *qissas* and *dastaans*. Clearly for Husain, the writerly access to all these forms in conjunction with the Western tradition of independent linear stories is not the prerogative of one culture, literary tradition, or nation only. He subscribes to "an all-encompassing pluralistic civilization, including Mirabai, Kabir, Tulsi Das and Baba Farid."[27]

NEW WINE IN OLD/NEW BOTTLES

Husain's aim in combining these diverse traditions of storytelling together is also to "evolve a new mode of storytelling,"[28] to "create a new fictional form"[29] in the history of Urdu literature. Hindi and Urdu writers associated with the Progressive Writers Movement in the 1930s and 1940s by and large used realism and linear form in their stories, as they explored local social and political issues. Their intention was possibly more reformist or revolutionary than exploratory or experimental. In contrast, Husain spins his narratives on a loom of myth and fantasy that weaves threads from the *Alif Laila,* the *Jataka* tales, *Panchatantra,* into the patterns experienced in stories by Anton Chekov, Franz Kafka, and others. His narratives thus tend to be more suggestive than didactic. In claiming his distinctive space in the South Asian literary tradition, Husain seems to have pushed the potential of the short story and the novel to new limits. The Chinese box/frame technique of his narratives also fulfills a thematic function—of conjuring and accepting a common South Asian past.

The writer's vision of a pre-Partition past is nostalgic, but there is an air of unease and disquiet in this Garden of Eden. There is always the danger of Satan entering it with the help of the beautiful and innocent peacock, or a Cain who will murder his own brother and defile the land, or rats that will swarm all over it making it impossible to live (as in "Barium Carbonate"). In his retelling of the *Jataka* tales, Husain often seems to reverse the moral of the Buddhist tales and privilege the beauties and longings of the world of senses over the world of renunciation.[30] They address moral confrontations rather than function as moral imperatives.[31] At the end of the stories likes "Leaves" (Pattey), "Complete Knowledge" (Poora Gyan), "Tortoise" (Kachuwe), and "The Brahmin Goat," the protagonists face a quandary and do not know how to reconcile the beautiful sensory world with the demands of renunciation, the claims of humanity with the desire to escape this world of illusions. They stand confused at "the border between forests, villages, rational knowledge and uncontrolled passion, religious faith and despair,"[32] not knowing which way to go. They seem to prefigure the harassed passengers who are stranded on a railway platform and know not what to do except ask despairingly, "We are neither here nor there. Whose responsibility

are we?"[33] The stories, thus, have an unfinished air with no resolution offered. Husain sees this as "a condition of possibility, a reason to continue."[34]

The search for a new form also translates into a "quest for an identity,"[35] which concerns itself with Husain's position/location as a writer who is a citizen of the newly formed Pakistan but was born in India and grew up there. As a member of the Shia minority in a Sunni-dominated state, he appears to derive synergy as a writer from the diverse history and traditions of the subcontinent. In his interview with Bhalla, he remarks tellingly that he is a Muslim with a Hindu sitting inside him and that he has one foot in Karbala and the other foot in Ayodhya.[36] He has made the intellectual journey from thinking of the Partition as a *hijrat* to being an inheritor of an Islamic tradition preceded in South Asia by a rich history of other faith communities and cultural traditions. Instead of insisting on the separateness and exceptionalism that led to the Partition, Husain is acutely aware of his self as a "metaphysical and historical entity."[37] One wonders if Husain has been on a journey that has taken him in a direction quite contrary to that of Pakistan's journey as a nation—a phenomenon that began to occur soon after Jinnah's death and had reached its peak during the regime of General Zia-ul-Haq in the late 1970s and early1980s with the introduction of *Nizam-e-Mustafa* ("Rule of the Prophet" or Islamic System, i.e., sharia law) and by the replacement in large part of Pakistan's Penal Code by the Hudood Ordinance. Hudood placed legal limits of acceptable behavior according to sharia, adding criminal offenses of adultery and fornication and new punishments of whipping, amputation, and stoning to death.

THE DISLOCATED INTELLECTUAL *VERSUS* NATIONALISTIC URGES

After the Partition, Muslims in Pakistan began the process of redefining their identities. The question confronting them was about which history and culture to claim as their own. Many felt that the history that had defined them previously had been left behind in India. What they considered to be their Islamic past included the Delhi Sultanate and Mughal history, monuments like the Taj Mahal or the Red Fort, and poets like Amir Khusrau, Mir Taqi Mir, or Ghalib, to name a few. These became a part of India after the Partition. Some Pakistanis even questioned the right to claim Urdu as their own language, as it had its origins in the Indian milieu. Those who had migrated to Pakistan were *mohajirs* (derived from the word *hijrat*) and their condition was unenviable. They had left their homes in India and were struggling to survive in their adopted country. They were trapped in the slogans of their leaders, in the hostile environment around them, or on railway platforms because their train

had been cancelled ("Platform"). Bawa Jaan, in the story "The Jungle of the Gonds," whispers, "How funny! Pakistan hasn't fought a war but has lost . . . lost to itself."[38] In *Basti*, the formation of Bangladesh signals another internal loss.

What, then, was the history of Pakistan and when did it begin? The fledgling nation and its Islamic statehood stood in opposition to a secular, multicultural, democratic, Hindu-majority Indian nation. Rooting for Pakistan was part of the new nationalistic impulse and the rhetoric of its governance. In this arrangement, India was construed and constructed as the alienating "other," even though Pakistan had at first viewed itself as the "other," in opposition to the Indian identity. The dialectical paradox that Pakistan was once part of India made it extremely hard for the new nation to invent itself as something different and distinctive, except for its religious affiliation and/or for its "exceptionalism" and "separateness" whose history could be traced to political and ideological developments dating back to the nineteenth century.[39] Lured into a Pan-Islamic identity that might displace its solidly South Asian texture, Pakistan as a nation pushed itself under General Zia-ul-Haq into a monolithic mold of strict orthodox Islamization or "Wahhabism," distorting its hybrid, composite cultural heritage. Notwithstanding geographical divisions, the Partition could not nullify a rich and checkered past of shared Hindu and Muslim achievements, nor could it obliterate memories of Hindus and Muslims living together in peace and harmony. Sharing the same historical and cultural ethos, people on either side of the border participated in the same realities of everyday existence, using the same languages, enjoying the same music, and loving the same recipes in the kitchen. By 1971, many would begin asking the question: If being a Muslim was a way of entering the nationalistic discourse of belonging and identity, then why did East Pakistan break away from its parent country? Husain could only try and answer the question himself. Believing that "it was as if 1947 revisited us three decades later," he remarks that "in 1947 we had been told that Muslims of the subcontinent were a single nation. But in 1971 it was the same nation fighting amongst itself. The problem still remains. . . . And that makes up our cultural identity."[40]

In wishing to delineate his multifaced self, Husain digs deeper beyond his Islamic past into the history of India before the advent of Islam. He realizes that this specific historical ethos has given the history of Islam in South Asia a distinctive character (quite different from that of Islam in other parts of the world) and therefore he prefers to call it a "Hind-Islamic history."[41] He has to "find a way of acknowledging and appropriating the long history that lay prior"[42] to Muslim history in India. He comes to the conclusion that "we should not only acknowledge the historical and cultural past which we left behind in India, but that we should also make it an important aspect of our present concerns."[43] Structurally and conceptually, his stories have been greatly influenced by his readings

of the Hindu epics *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*, the *Jataka* tales, *Panchatantra, Katha Sarit Sagar*, etc. Instead of writing stories independent of each other, he tried to write stories from which emerged other stories "like threads in a spider's web."[44] The Chinese box narrative structure that he employs in many stories of his bolsters his worldview that everything in this world is interrelated, suggested by layering of a narrative within another narrative, sometimes continuing through multiple layers, supporting the simultaneity of multiple viewpoints on the same event. Stories such as "Tortoise" (*Kachhuwe*), "Leaves" (*Pattey*), and "Complete Knowledge" (*Poora Gyan*) may be read as independent tales, yet they are linked to one another and to other stories. Husain aims at demonstrating all of South Asian history and culture as an intricate Chinese box of interrelated signs, symbols, and meanings. For example, in stories such as "The One-eyed Dajjal," "Hisaar," and "The Staircase," the reader moves between a dream-like state and the quotidian, experiencing the "twilight zone between fable and parable,"[45] as poet Keki Daruwalla observes in his review of *A Chronicle of the Peacocks*.

LOCAL AND GLOBAL

The settings of Husain's stories may be local but they become macrocosmic representations of many binaries: trauma/loss and creativity/hope, exilic anxiety and the "resident tiller['s]" imagination, disenchantment and nostalgia, mythic archetypes and contemporary reality, historical truth and the literature of witness and memory, moral delusions and the failure of the power of reason. These binaries support the oppositions they represent, but they also signal the complexities they hide and suppress. As with William Faulkner in relation to the American South, they might provide an explanation for the apparent disconnect between the creative and discursive selves of the writer. In the 1950s in his speeches and interviews, Faulkner became quite defensive about the South and its ways, even though he had created a powerful sense of Southern racial injustice in fictional narratives such as "That Evening Sun," *Light in August*, and *Intruder in the Dust*. Similarly, while Husain often defended the act of Partition in his prose, his stories and novels provide a richly nuanced reading of culture, politics, and humanity in all of South Asia. His stories use the language of metaphor that traces the trajectory of celebratory creativity he senses in the formation of Pakistan, and the subsequent anxieties of dislocation and exile caused by the realities on the ground. They translate the losses incurred in displacement and migration into a discursive space in which the artist grapples with familiar global issues of geographical, natural, and mental boundaries, the sense of living, as it were, in an Eliotian wasteland, fear and distrust of other men and systems, violence and separatist politics. Stories such as "The Jungle of the

Gonds" (Gondon ka Jungle) and "The Chronicle of the Peacocks" (Morenama) convey a range of responses to the sense of antagonism and distrust between Hindus and Muslims, the desolation of cities, the evil within man, and the US-Iraq war, against the backdrop of the archetypal *Mahabharata* war. The trajectory of the archetypal to the local and the global explains the connection between people sharing traditions and cultures as well as the disjunction that occurs because of exile, loss, and migration. For example, the story "The Platform" is propelled by the metaphors of exile and rootlessness. The passengers who have no place to stay in Lahore have to wait on the platform because their train has been cancelled and there is no hope for the next train. Their situation is aptly framed in the question posed by the old man: "All of us are trapped on this platform. We are neither here nor there. Whose responsibility are we?"[46]

Like Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha County, Husain's world too has its genesis in the real world. In his 1956 *Paris Review* interview with Jean Stein, Faulkner suggested that "by sublimating the actual into the apocryphal I would have complete liberty to use whatever talent I might have to its absolute top. It opened up a gold mine of other people; I created a cosmos of my own."[47] Post-Partition, Husain's cosmos is one where human life is characterized by unease, violence, and desperation, where "[a] Muslim is afraid of other Muslims"[48] and because "we are exiled from our own courtyards," all that the writer "can do is find something to sit on . . . where he can find a foothold."[49] His stories provide the foothold by which he tries to reclaim the lost song of the peacocks so that he can finally write his *Morenama* or the chronicle of the peacocks.

At the end of "Morenama," the title story in the volume with that name, Husain asks despairingly: "When will I be able to write my *Morenama*, my chronicle of the peacocks?"[50] "Morenama" also gives voices to his longing to see trees, humans, animals, and birds coexisting in an environment of rare harmony. In the world around him, he desperately tries to shake off *Ashwatthama* ("the most damned and accursed man" of the Kurukshetra war), who is symbolized as Satan/Evil and whose use of *Brahmastra* (a powerful, lethal weapon meant only to threaten and not use), anticipates the political uses of modern-day nuclear weapons. The frightened peacocks leave their natural haunts. In Husain's oeuvre, the war in the *Mahabharata* prefigures the 1947 Holocaust, the 1971 Partition, and other global wars in recent decades. Husain is scathing in his condemnation of war, which annihilates everything good and beautiful: "The last days of war are always the most fearful. They are dangerous and unpredictable. . . . It doesn't matter then if a city like Hiroshima burns; at least the fighting comes to an end."[51]

His vision of a "battered and bruised"[52] lonely peacock is synonymous with the figure of a "forlorn duck covered with foul effluents, watching the waves in disbelief."[53] The latter is a "symbol of the horrors

of the war"[54] as the use of diabolical weapons has spared neither man nor nature. The poor bird is in pain and cannot even fly as his wings are "heavy with slime"[55] and poison courses through his veins. The birds also evoke the poor and the weak, who "take upon themselves the burden of suffering so as to redeem their times."[56] Viewed from this perspective, the duck assumes a Christ-like figure and becomes "symbolic of those prophets who, according to all religious texts, think of suffering as a sacred duty."[57] Like the duck, the narrator/writer has taken upon himself the onus and responsibility of suffering, to "bear the burden of our times."[58] At first he believes that crossing the border will get rid of *Ashwatthama*. But the respite is temporary. The evil spirit follows him to his new home and homeland. The old Arabic prayer ritual or *hisaar* to ward off evil spirits fail to relieve him of his burden. The violence that surrounds him has left him frustrated, helpless, and powerless. That is why he feels that his epic about Pichhwa ("An Unwritten Epic") and his *Morenama* will remain unwritten.

READING/WRITING THE TEXT

Jasbir Jain points out that the act of writing raises questions both for the reader and the writer. The reader wonders how to read such a text—"as a mere recording, a witnessing, a sadomasochistic act, a warning or a repulsion"[59] at the inhuman conduct of humans. For the writer, the question is whether this writing is a means to self-knowledge, a way of recovering from the loss experienced. Just as Bishan Singh in Saadat Hasan Manto's short story "Toba Tek Singh" defies the logic of Partition, Zakir in Husain's *Basti* too observes, "I can no longer imagine Rupnagar apart from this city. Rupnagar [in India] and this city [in Pakistan] have merged together inside me, and become one town."[60] In a similar vein, the story "Roots" (*Jadein*) by Ismat Chughtai, depicts a courageous mother who is willing to stay behind in India and run the risk of becoming a victim of communal violence because she doesn't want to leave her "roots"—her home and the memories of her life in that house after marriage. Her conviction and courage as well as the neighbor Roopchand's kindness in bringing back her family redeem the violence of the time.

Partition writers since the 1940s have been perplexed by the challenge of understanding the euphoria of independence on one hand and the enormity of the barbaric acts on the other. The feelings of shock, denial, anger, guilt, shame, and despair numbed many a writer's psyche. How should they speak/write about these events? Should they assign the blame to someone, preferably belonging to the other community? Or should they write regardless of religious or ethnic compulsions? How should the story speak of one's complicity and guilt? Is it possible to write stories about what really occurred and at the same time project a

sense of hope for a better future? Understandably, writers such as Husain, Manto, Chughtai, and Bhisham Sahni have all developed their own distinctive approaches to this painful topic. Noting the natural proclivity of writers—such as Chughtai and Manto—to write about controversial subjects, Husain observes, "Where Ismat moves away lightly after making a passing reference to such a subject, Manto is like the naughty boy who flings open the door, claps his hands and says, 'Aha! I have seen you!'"[61] Husain admires Manto for his starkly realistic stories about prostitutes, pimps, thieves, swindlers, liars, and gamblers—all those characters who inhabit the dark margins of society, and for Manto's ability to eschew the "sentimental approach" and "romantic flavor"[62] that his contemporaries brought to such difficult subjects. Husain finds it refreshing that "Manto makes no such attempt. He is cruelly realistic in his approach, depicting objectively what he has observed. With no romantic flavor or sentimentality, his are stark realistic portrayals. Realism finds here its best expression."[63] Clearly, as a critic and reader, Husain appreciates literary strategies and modes of storytelling that are quite different from his own. He does not practice Manto's stark realism, nor do his narratives dwell on the horrors of Partition violence—as do well-known works such as Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* (1956) and Bhisham Sahni's *Tamas* (1973).

In fact, Husain's stories and novels respond to the violence of 1947 and 1971 by critiquing the narrow identity politics of the present, its insistence and bigotry and by nudging his readers to consider the beauty and appeal of the hybrid and richly layered past shared by all South Asians. His literary method is gentle and indirect, in line with the paradigm evoked in Emily Dickinson's well-known poem "Tell all the Truth but tell it slant." Husain does not address his anguish directly like Faiz Ahmed Faiz. Maybe he resembles Qurratulain Hyder in writing stories that are incomplete without any resolution offered, stories that are suggestive and emblematic, not didactic or melodramatic. Violence is almost always reported indirectly in Husain's stories. The story "City of Sorrows" may be a partial exception where the three characters recount their misdeeds from the two Partitions—the one in 1947 and the second one in 1971, when East Pakistan emerged as Bangladesh. Like Cain, they wander around the city looking for a place to bury the corpses so that they may find some relief and peace. Their bestial acts disfigure them; they are no longer recognizable as human beings. Even their families do not recognize them. They are dead physically and morally. The stories of the three men are so similar that each person lays claim to the same story. The characters have no identity beyond their brutality, no place to belong to outside the city of sorrows. Their punishment is comparable with Sisyphus's—they have to carry forever the dead weight of their own bodies and of those whom they have killed in the city of ruins and sorrows. Only in "The City of Sorrows" does Husain directly visit the violence of parti-

tions and that too with no descriptive details of incidents. Rather, the conversation among the three men reveals the degraded acts of inhumanity they have indulged in and create an aura of paranoia and death. The story is a strong indictment of all partitions, which invariably result in unimaginable loss and grief.[64]

The deleterious effects of the Partition on people are portrayed—more indirectly but equally powerfully—in other short stories like "The Stairs" (*Seedhiyaan*) and "An Unwritten Epic" (*Ek Bin Likhi Razmiya*). In "The Stairs," Syed arrives in Pakistan feeling robbed of a sense of identity and a sense of the past. This is revealed in his inability to dream. In Husain, dreams function as important bridges between the past and the present and help in activating memory. Razi, Syed's friend, recounts his own dream and accidentally sets off Syed's memories. By the time the story ends, Syed is able to dream again and relive the past, signifying its regenerative aspect. The protagonist in "An Unwritten Epic," Pichwa is a respected fighter of Qadirpur and a subject worthy of an epic. After the Partition, the writer migrates to Pakistan and loses contact with Qadirpur and Pichwa. He begins his epic optimistically with this larger than life character of Pichwa. As long as Pichwa is far off, the writer's creativity flows unhampered. Later on, when Pichwa moves to Pakistan and meets the writer, reality intrudes and impedes the creative process. The struggle for securing a livelihood reduces the stature of Pichwa, the heroic character, to ordinariness. The writer too has lost interest in completing his epic. He is more interested in getting a flourmill allotted to him. Pichwa returns to India but fails to regain his lost stature. His beheading is reported through a third person, even as Qadirpur has now become Jatunagar. His story ends with a whimper and the epic remains unwritten. Pichwa's weakness and failure to get "some kind of work"[65] shows how a person is undermined by circumstances beyond their control. "An Unwritten Epic" is as much about human suffering as about writing a story. Pichwa's falling stature is matched by the decline in the writer's creativity when confronted by the tyrannical reality of taking care of ordinary needs. The writer loses credibility but manages to immortalize the simple, courageous, vulnerable Pichwa.

Since Husain's works do not project violence overtly, some readers might feel that they do not deal with the hard issues surrounding the Partition. But, as Tarun Saint notes, "they engage at a deeper level with the differentiated historical trauma of the Partition, initiating a dialogic negotiation with the past that was initially not possible, given the ideological demands of Pakistani nationalism."[66] The challenge before Husain was to make his stories and storytelling a potential medium for mediating the trauma of 1947, as well as for overcoming the sense of guilt and responsibility for 1971. In Husain's imagination, these two partitions are inseparably linked. At the same time, he must feel the burden of being a responsible citizen of the country, which was the destination of

his 1947 *hijrat*. The reimagined construct of a new Muslim nation as another *hijrat* not only renewed contact with an archetypal experience, but it also helped in negotiating the sense of loss and dislocation caused by migration. The idea was to celebrate the birth of a new Muslim nation by "turning that experience [of the Partition] into something creative."[67] Husain admits that "as a writer of fiction, I was born with Pakistan. Partition made me a fiction writer."[68] But when he left for Pakistan, the "idea was not to go away forever."[69] He depicts a similar situation in *Basti*. However, in a 1974 interview with Muhammad Umar Memon, he confessed: "[T]he great expectation that we had of making something out of it [Partition] at a creative level and . . . in developing a new consciousness and sensibility—that bright expectation has now faded and gone."[70] Zakir, the protagonist of *Basti,* internalizes the political and moral chaos, feeling unbearably alienated and lonely like a migrant in a new country. He accepts responsibility for defeat at the national and individual level: "I thought that somebody ought to take up this trust."[71] However, the silver lining in this dark cloud is his capacity for introspection, which can "lead to true self reckoning and even, hope."[72] Husain offers this human discourse as an answer to the brutality of the two Partitions that have been directly part of his own life experience.

CONCLUSION

In his essay "The Location of Brazil," Salman Rushdie celebrates the migrant sensibility by reminding us that the

> effect of mass migrations has been the creation of radically new types of human being: people who root themselves in ideas rather than places, in memories as much as in material things; . . . The migrant suspects reality: having experienced several ways of being, he understands their illusory nature. To see things plainly, you have to cross a frontier.[73]

Obviously Husain has crossed such a "frontier" and his writings testify to his ability to perceive things steadily and clearly, not merely as binary oppositions but as discrete and disjointed, elusive and yet connected. His writings exemplify Said's notion that "exiles cross borders, break barriers of thought and experience."[74] As an exiled secular intellectual, Husain uses local and historical materials to propose a new form of transnationalism. In the present world where communal strife, fundamentalism, politics of identity, and a divisive sense of "otherness" have reached destructive levels, it has become an exigent necessity to create an awareness and understanding of interracial, interethnic, international relations. This could be a strong reason why Husain uses the Chinese box narrative strategy in his fiction to articulate not only the human fate, but also the

artist's vision and his sense of the reader's role and functions. According to Frank Stewart and Sukrita Paul Kumar,

> The best writers work in a more subtle realm, where the truth is revealed in a nonpartisan narration of life experience, and where such essential human values as social justice, compassion, and love are not put aside. At the same time, these writers do not flinch from the reality of combative feelings, criminality, vengefulness, and cruelty. Some have rendered events with stark realism; others have created parabolic stories; and still others have explored the psychic responses that give rise to nostalgia, the wish to recall and value a lost connectedness that transcends communal strife.[75]

Having been subjected to the trauma of two Partitions, Husain has created his "parabolic stories" to confront the realization of loss, disruption, and dislocation, as well as the horror and repulsion of what a human being could do to another human being. What Edward Said averred of Eric Auerbach for writing *Mimesis* appears to be true for Husain, that he "was not merely practising his profession despite adversity: he was performing an act of cultural, even civilizational, survival of the highest importance."[76] Husain's stories, novels, essays, and interviews collectively explore trauma in sensitive and suggestive ways, even as they articulate the possibility of renewal and redemption, of reclaiming the values of compassion, connection, and shared humanity that have been lost through egregious violence and fragmentation.

NOTES

1. Walter Benjamin, "The Storyteller: Reflections on the Works of Nikolai Leskov," in *The Novel: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory 1900–2000*, ed. Dorothy J. Hale (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 362.

2. Intizar Husain, "Vikram, the Vampire and the Story," translated by Frances W. Pritchett, originally published in *Journal of South Asian Literature* 18.2 (1983): 149–52. http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00fwp/published/txt_intizar_vikram.html.

3. Walter Benjamin, "The Storyteller: Reflections on the Works of Nikolai Leskov," in *The Novel: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory 1900–2000*, ed. Dorothy J. Hale, (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 363.

4. Ibid.

5. In his interview with Alok Bhalla in Intizar Husain, *A Chronicle of the Peacocks: Stories of Partition, Exile and Lost Memories*, translated from Urdu by Alok Bhalla and Vishwamitter Adil (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002), 226–27, Husain underscores that while he and his mentors believed that Muslims of Uttar Pradesh should not migrate to Pakistan, they felt compelled, like millions of other Muslims in North India, to migrate because of "deteriorating conditions" and fears of violence. Of course, Husain also looked forward to being part of Lahore, which had a fine reputation as "a place of literary culture." Bhalla reminds us a bit later in the same interview of the unending trap of blame regarding the Partition that most South Asians are caught in: "As post-colonialists we blame the British, as Pakistanis we blame the Indians, as Hindus we assert that it is the Muslims who started it all, etc. But we never look at ourselves and say that we—each of us—contributed to the nightmare that our

lives have become since 1947. Till we can do that [,] we shall never be able to bury the dead—or find ways of living within a peaceful civilization" (234).

6. Walter Benjamin, "The Storyteller: Reflections on the Works of Nikolai Leskov," in *The Novel: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory 1900–2000*, ed. Dorothy J. Hale (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 363.

7. Bhisham Sahni left his family in Rawalpindi a few days before August 15, 1947, hoping to return there after participating in the Independence Day celebrations in Delhi, but that was not to be. See Alok Bhalla, *Partition Dialogues: Memories of a Lost Home* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006), 127.

8. Edward Said, "Lecture 3: Intellectual Exiles," *Reith Lectures 1993: Representations of an Intellectual*, BBC Radio 4.7, July 1993.

9. Edward W. Said, "Reflections on Exile," in *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 148. Said describes *contrapuntalism* as a way of connecting or considering together disparate social practices. In *Culture and Imperialism*, he says: "That is, we must be able to think through and interpret together experiences that are discrepant, each with its particular agenda and pace of development, its own internal formations, its internal coherence and system of external relationships, all of them co-existing and interacting with others." See Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (NewYork: Vintage, 1994), 32.

10. Muhammad Umar Memon, "Requiem for Vanished Hopes: Intizar Husain's Early Fiction," *The Dawn*, August 4, 2013, http://www.dawn.com/news/1033398/column-requiem-for-vanished-hopes-intizar-husains-early-fiction (Accessed August 20, 2014).

11. Edward W. Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 147.

12. Intizar Husain, *Basti*, translated from Urdu by Frances Pritchett, introduction by Muhammad Umar Memon (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007), 200.

13. Edward W. Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 148–49.

14. Ibid., 147.

15. Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses* (London: Vintage, 1998), 205.

16. Edward W. Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), xxxv.

17. Walter Benjamin, "The Storyteller: Reflections on the Works of Nikolai Leskov," in *The Novel: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory 1900–2000*, ed. Dorothy J. Hale (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 364.

18. M. Asaduddin, "Intizar Husain and His World: The Unreconciled Selves of the Exalted Pakistani Writer," *The Caravan*, June 1, 2013, http://www.caravanmagazine.in/books/intizar-husain-and-his-world?page=0,1 (Accessed August 30, 2014).

19. Chinese nesting boxes are a series of boxes that fit one inside the other. Russian matryoshka dolls, also known as babushka dolls, are a more modern interpretation of the same idea. These boxes have been popular and used for almost hundreds of years as toys for children and for storage purposes. Frame stories, like Chinese nesting boxes, have been around for a long time, and this device is prominent in both *Panchatantra* and *The Arabian Nights*. Examples in Western literature include two fourteenth-century texts—*Decameron* and *The Canterbury Tales*—as well as more recent works such as Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, Jostein Gaarder's *The Solitaire Mystery*.

20. Keith Carabine, "Introduction," in *Selected Short Stories: Joseph Conrad* (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Ltd., 1997),vii–xxiv.

21. In her translator's note, appended to the *New York Review of Books* edition (1995, 2007), Pritchett notes how some Pakistanis believe *Basti* "offers a 'negative impression of their culture, a mood of 'nostalgia.'" Here is part of Pritchett's response: "*Basti* [does] not represent a definitive, complete picture of modern Pakistan. . . . Self-critical literature is one mark of an open and confident society. . . . *Basti* is not a perfect novel, but it is a fine one, and thought-provoking, and unforgettably evocative at its best." In

the introduction to the same edition, Asif Farrukhi urges us not to read *Basti* as "a handmaid to ideology, whether political or aesthetic, but precisely as a novel, one that mixes different narrative modes with extraordinary skill to describe a crisis that is as spiritual and universal as it is national" (xiv). For parallel uses of memory in ethnic American writing, see the introductions to *Memory, Narrative and Identity* (1994) and *Memory and Cultural Politics* (1996)—both edited by Amritjit Singh, Joseph T. Skerrett, and Robert E. Hogan (Boston: Northeastern UP).

22. Frank Stewart and Sukrita Paul Kumar, eds., *Crossing Over* in *Manoa: A Pacific Journal of International Writing,* 19.1 (2007): x.

23. Intizar Husain, *Basti,* translated from Urdu by Frances Pritchett, introduction by Muhammad Umar Memon (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007), 155.

24. Intizar Husain, *A Chronicle of the Peacocks: Stories of Partition, Exile and Lost Memories*, trans. from Urdu by Alok Bhalla and Vishwamitter Adil (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002), 210.

25. Ibid.

26. T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land* in *Selected Poems* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1980), 67.

27. Gillian Wright, "Migratory Birds," review of *A Chronicle of the Peacocks: Stories of Partition, Exile and Lost Memories* by Intizar Husain, trans. from Urdu by Alok Bhalla and Vishwamitter Adil (New Delhi: OUP, 2002), March 3, 2003, http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/book-review-a-chronicle-of-the-peacocks-stories-of-partition-exile-and-lost-memories/1/206949.html (Accessed August 20, 2014).

28. Intizar Husain, *A Chronicle of the Peacocks: Stories of Partition, Exile and Lost Memories*, trans. from Urdu by Alok Bhalla and Vishwamitter Adil (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002), 240.

29. Ibid., 242.

30. Aamer Hussein, review of *Basti* by Intizar Husain, translated by Frances Pritchett, *The Independent* (UK), May 17, 2013, http://www.independent.co.uk/arts/entertainment/books/reviews/basti-by-intizar-husain-trans-frances-pritchett-8619088.html (Accessed August 30, 2014).

31. Jason Francisco, review of *Leaves and Other Stories* by Intizar Husain in the *Annual of Urdu Studies*, 9 (1994): 190, http://jasonfrancisco.net/intizar-husains-leaves--a-review-essay (Accessed June 21, 2014).

32. Intizar Husain, *A Chronicle of the Peacocks: Stories of Partition, Exile and Lost Memories*, trans. from Urdu by Alok Bhalla and Vishwamitter Adil (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002), xvii.

33. Ibid., 140.

34. Jason Francisco, review of *Leaves and Other Stories* by Intizar Husain in the *Annual of Urdu Studies*, 9 (1994): 190, http://jasonfrancisco.net/intizar-husains-leaves--a-review-essay (Accessed June 21, 2014).

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Part V

Partitions Within

SEVENTEEN

Buckle in the Hindu Belt

Contemporary Hindu-Muslim Violence and the Legacy of Partition in Banaras

Jeremy A. Rinker

Modern Banaras is the seat of Hindu orthodoxy, a stronghold of traditional conservative Brahminical values, and an exemplar of humanistic ideals of multiculturalism and religious pluralism.[1] Banaras has component stories and one long story. That there are competing narratives that justify each of these stories of Banaras—what will here be referred to as metanarratives—should be no surprise given the city's long history. Also referred to as Kashi and Varanasi, Banaras is believed by Hindus to be founded by Lord Shiva and, yet, is also the home to famous religious syncretists like Kabir and Tulsidas. Despite the paradoxical conflagration of such ancient and modern sentiments and religious sensibilities, competing metanarratives of Banaras not only coexist, but interact in ways that work to mask important interconnections between painful historical memories and modern communal identities. That Banaras is a historically complicated place is not in question—as Pankaj Mishra says in describing the 1980s Banaras of his novel *The Romantics*, "the past does live on, in people as well as, cities."[2] But, how this past is remembered and spoken about also impacts how the present is lived.

The many competing conceptions of Banaras expose real and hidden unmet psychological needs and yet also conspire to make those needs remain little noticed, obscure, and underaddressed. This essay argues that understanding the historical legacy of the 1947 Partition of India-Pakistan is critical to overcoming modern identity-based conflict in Bana-

ras. Such attention to past psychological trauma exposes the venal roots of the modern Indian State's approach to the marginal "other," and, in turn, leads to an understanding of the tangible social legacies of the failure to "learn" the harsh lessons of Partition violence. The proceeding essay does not argue that Partition, or even colonialism, is the sole cause of the present hegemonic control of elite state officials over marginalized Indian bodies. Rather, I claim that failure to explore and acknowledge the links that Partition violence, in all its many forms, has on current hierarchies of power makes peace and reconciliation nearly impossible to achieve.

For discourses of positive peace[3] to take root in the complexity of modern Banaras, sinews of interdependence between ongoing communal violence and historical "chosen trauma"[4] must be excavated and discussed. The connections between modern torture practices and Partition represent varied expressions of the penultimate culmination of authoritarian colonial policy. Exploring the metanarratives of Partition in present-day Banaras in tandem with a contemporary analysis of the social dynamics of the oppressed in the city unmasks the destructive legacy of Partition and its displacement of trauma, communal identity, and hegemonic violence. In taking a "walk through history"[5] with local respondents one can identify the unmet needs of past social and historical trauma. This unmasking of trauma's legacy reveals social spaces for greater understanding of the 'other' and opens the possibility for future-going reconciliation.

Since, at least, Mark Twain's now famous description of Banaras as "older than history, older than tradition, older even than legend,"[6] Western images have marked Banaras as the center of orientalist wonder and exotic mysticism. This essay paints a more complicated view of Banaras as, paradoxically, seat of both communal identity formation and multicultural peacebuilding, of violent communalism and peaceful religious association.[7] That these two competing metanarratives coexist in one place requires the careful attention to not only historical trauma, but also the important connections between justice, identity, and memory. Keeping in mind that "classification (identification) is unlikely to be disinterested,"[8] one can begin to see the centrality of needs/interests as a root of these seemingly paradoxical metanarratives and control/power as operating as the context for realizing these needs. Taking a needs-based approach to conflict and remembrance[9] opens the possibility of approaching South Asia's Long Partition as not only a discourse of historical suffering, but also a means to empathetic listening and potential narrative shift.[10]

Through a focus on psychological needs, constructive futures can be made of destructive pasts. By questioning and observing the social relations of present-day Banarsis (residents of Banaras), past social-psychological traumas can find more present-day pro-social homes. The histori-

cal paradoxes and ambiguities that Banarsis continually, and often unwittingly, embrace are an important means of developing present-day communal peace and reconciliation. Banaras, where "Brahmin priests with little top-knots on their shaven heads form a mafia of sorts,"[11] may hold important keys to unbuckling a sense of "memory justice"[12] about Partition—one that is consonant with reaching nonviolent coexistence and communal reconciliation across India.

PARTITION, BANARAS, AND UNMET NEEDS

Far from immune from communal violence, Banaras has historically been less prone to communalism and violence than other similarly sized North Indian cities.[13] In one sense then, Banaras might be considered a "zone of peace"[14] relative to India and its specific brand of communalism. But, such realities mask deep local divisions and important historical scars. Even in relatively peaceful Banaras the ongoing reality and legacy of communal violence not only exists, but also festers like an open wound. With Muslims totaling roughly a quarter of the population,[15] Banaras has seen many examples of communal rioting and violent outbreaks including in 1809, 1952, 1972, 1977, and 1991, to name a few. Still, when communal violence does occur in the city, as it did more recently in 2006 and 2010, there is immediate realist recourse to political causes, as if such a focus would provide the most direct avenue to maintaining harmony. Yet, a concerted focus on root causes not only privileges elite political forces, but also elides the need to look at outcomes and effects and, in the process, the lasting social and psychological legacies of past violence as a cause. The fact is that "those who look for causes of communal riots fail to realize 'that a fully satisfactory explanation will always remain elusive, and further that the pursuit of causes is itself implicated in the political process."[16] While there has been only scant scholarly attention paid to how communal violence has led to interreligious collaboration,[17] even less work has explored the psychological scars and identity legacies of communal violence in Banaras. To understand communal violence in Banaras one has to look beyond causes and sources and integrate a focus on dynamics and outcomes of traumatic historical legacies and memories of unmet needs. Power is both source and outcomes of all communal violence. We, therefore, must study the dynamic changes violence creates as both source of future conflict and outcome of powerful motives.

Though some have realized the overattention to causes and instead focused attention on outcomes,[18] few have attempted to explore the persistent life cycle of trauma. In one historical example, instead of focusing on causes, Pandey (1990) looks at the 1809 riots in Banaras aiming to focus on these events as being purposefully retold by the colonial regime as "native" in character.[19] Less concerned about causes of 1947 Partition

violence and more concerned with the effects of history's retelling, I choose to focus here on the legacy of Partition narratives in everyday life of Banarsis. How is what happened in the past remaking the present and conditioning the future social psychology of interaction between various identity groups? Invoking Erik Erikson and following Gilmartin, "rather than aim for a 'master narrative' of partition . . . we need to understand the ways that tension between multiple constructions of identity and the search for moral community itself defined the partition event."[20] By developing an understanding of marginal communities' quest for recognition in Banaras, one clearly sees that trauma requires an outlet and the stories that victims of political violence tell, indeed, provide the seeds of reconciliation and change. "Storytelling is the central part of the [reconciliation] process, not only for the victim reconstructing the story, but also for the persons representing the aggressor group."[21] Stories aim at the meaning of events, not just causes. Stories work to continually rethink trauma, thereby, opening possibilities for creatively encountering unmet needs.

As if identifying the current needs and power dynamics in Banaras was not difficult enough from an outsiders' perspective, critical analysis of Partition's role in Banarsi society also requires us to expand our notion of dichotomous identities such as Hindu-Muslim.[22] Far from simple, the interplay of Hindu-Muslim, high-caste and low-caste, rich and poor, center and periphery, acts to simultaneously clarify and complicate our understanding of Partition's legacy and the important role these dichotomies play in rewriting the schematic scripts of collective memory and remembrance. While the complexity of religious identities make blanket statements about psychological needs as suspect as blame statements from one community towards another, the obvious lack of memorial space and judicial recourse for past victims of Partition violence does signal rampant unmet psychological needs. The absence of space[23] following traumatic violence for collective grieving, "performative memory,"[24] or mourning for loss of not just life, but also, of opportunities, allows blame and dehumanization to take root, makes identity salient, and perpetuates conflict. While important to be attentive to the symbolic interactionism of binary identities, such dichotomies obfuscate the role that stories can play in processes of both dehumanization and peace. In complicating these dichotomies we can work to rewrite the possibilities for peaceful change—this is the power of taking a "walk through history."[25]

STUDYING ONGOING PARTITION: NARRATIVE METHOD AND FORM

Acknowledging the difficulties of linking past and present an interdisciplinary mixed-method approach of narrative reconstruction forms the methodological core of this study. Respondents and interlocutors are here seen to be narrators of past collective trauma, as well as of present identity-defined injustices. In asking how these two are linked through story, this narrative methodology "gives prominence to human agency and imagination, it is well suited to studies of subjectivity and identity."[26] My narrative-based action research agenda attempts to complicate and challenge the "canonical storylines"[27] of historical Partition and its modern legacy. While this need to confront and deconstruct the ongoing historical narratives of Partition was clear to me as I began the study, it should not have been surprising that my research assistant's immediate response to studying the historical legacy of Partition was to suggest a trip to Delhi instead of a random sampling of her Banarsi neighbors. Clearly unstructured open-ended random sample interviews were my best means of capturing past trauma's persistent legacy, yet a clear struggle remains in articulating the fact that direct experience of Partition's many historical traumas is not necessary, or even desired, to prove the impact of Partition's present-day social-psychological bequest. The best way to both collect modern narratives and push against the received knowledge of the past is not to go to the "epicenter of violence,"[28] but rather to look at the modern legacy of violence from a more peripheral position. Though places like Delhi and Amritsar experienced a higher level of direct violence during the time of Partition, the cultural and structural legacies of Partition violence[29] can be just as felt in more peripheral places such as Banaras. Peripheral narrative spaces hold the keys to unlocking the invisible hand of cultural and structural violence. Seeing interlocutors as narrators moves one past an individualistic orientation inherent in study of direct violence towards a more collective orientation that explores structural and cultural amoralities.

Unlike Banaras, Delhi experienced the full brunt of Partition migration and the legacy of the shift of nearly twelve to fifteen million people in the course of a few weeks' time. Delhi, also unlike Banaras, experienced more than protracted episodes of sporadic violence and looting—Delhi's shift was drastic.[30] Yet, while Banaras, and other Northern Indian cities, are not perceived to be as important to the dominant epistemology of storytelling about Partition, I argue that in such peripheral spaces the socio-political impacts are just more masked. Assuming that what is masked is likely more revealing of complex social relationships, I remained adamant in seeing Banaras as more than a simple bystander of the period of Partition; more than mere margin. Though not an essential participant in Partition's violent upheaval, Banarsis' central role in the

religious nationalism, communalism, and resistance that both preceded and followed Partition is clear, even though little defined. As Diana Eck has argued during the course of her work with the Pluralism Project at Harvard University: "Imperative as it is to see clearly the raw facts of neighbor turning on neighbor in violence, is it not equally imperative to understand the deep resistance and active response to this violence."[31] Banaras' relationship to Partition, and Partition's persistent legacy, is, though paradoxical, extremely important. Exhibiting a peripheral relationship to direct violence and both resistance and surrender to religious nationalism, Banaras is simultaneously Brahma and Shiva—both the creator and destroyer of communal ideology.

Hidden deep within the Banarsis' paradoxical relationship with Partition are important questions about power and marginality. As Raman's (2007) writing on Banaras' fabled sari industry makes clear, it is the marginalized that retain the narratives of past suffering, yet their histories remain the most obscured. For example, she writes: "The Muslims of Banaras, constituting one-quarter of the city's population and forming the core of the Banarsi sari industry find no place in standard accounts of the city."[32] Realizing that the erasure of marginal voice has been noticed in recent Partition histories,[33] it is important to look towards local civil society organizations working in marginalized communities to understand the modern impacts of Partition. In Banaras, I found easy access to these challenges to Partition's canonical storylines in the work of a local civil society organization called the People's Vigilance Committee on Human Rights (PVCHR). Blending observation of their pragmatic testimonial therapy work with unstructured interviews, my fieldwork in Banaras developed. This fieldwork, which I will return to below, finds complementarity in much of the growing literature of Partition studies by unmasking the uneven connections between stories of Partition and stories of power.

PARTITION NARRATIVE: RESISTANCE AS GRAMMATICAL FORM

In comparatively examining the Partition motif modern academics are only beginning to understand the interplay of identity, nation, and subjugation.

> The diverse understandings of the [Palestinian] war in 1948 or the [South Asian] partition in 1947, in turn, efface or erase traces of the perspective of lower status groups within each society. The dialog between memory and community touches on questions of whose memories have been suppressed in shaping the mainstream "national" narrative.[34]

Unless you are from a non-dominant community, which, for example, my Banaras Hindu University (BHU) student/research assistant simply

was not, then your ties to (and therefore memory of) Partition in a place like Banaras are minimal at best. Thus, to develop answers to how Partition effects the culture and sociology of present-day Banaras we need to resource not just the historical discourses of the event, but the language techniques, what Wittgenstein would call the "grammatical"[35] devices, that residents use to describe the event and place it in present-day context. While the meaning of any concept is determined by historical conditions and context of its use,[36] meaning is also established in relation to actors' own particular needs and projective future desires. Pitkin adeptly notices this theme when she writes: "Meaning is compounded out of cases of a word's use, and what characterizes those cases is often the speech situation, not the presence of something being referred to."[37] So when Banarsis use the word "Partition," the grammar of the individual speaker and their context could mean vastly different things—a forced political separation, a religiously ordained social order, an exemplar of difference, or even a traumatic historical event that marks present-day identity boundaries. Close attention to this grammar of meaning is critical to unmasking the tense mystique and local syntax of Partition.

Such attention to the grammar, or logic, of not only the powerful, but also the marginalized, opens opportunities to challenge the canonical storylines of dominant Partition histories. Undoubtedly, Partition did have a political and social effect on Banaras, but to see it one must capture the narrative myths and metaphors of common people. For example, Raman outlines the use of military metaphors such as the Line of Control (LoC) to describe the social boundaries that cannot be crossed by Muslims in Banaras.[38] Just as the "hidden transcripts"[39] of the weak and marginalized present subtle resistance, the language of the strong also constructs subtle borders. Thus, Raman unmasks local discussion of both "mini Pakistans" and the "ghettoization" of the Muslims of Banaras.[40] Though little discussed in the back rooms of elite institutions like BHU, the realization of a Partition effect, or legacy, still finds outlet in both likely and unlikely places—marginalized basti and central university backrooms. It is in reading the grammar of not only dominant voices that we must turn to understand the meaning of Partition in a place like Banaras; it is here we read the history of identity, nation, and subjugation.

Driving in his car, three-year-old son in his lap, a real estate agent cum doctoral student at BHU contemplatively responded to my queries about Partition's legacy in Banaras: "It changed everything, of course! There is not a single aspect of present-day life in Banaras that does not in some way bear the marks of Partition history."[41] But, when pressed how specifically social life had changed, the conversation became stalled and my respondent became equivocal, as was true for many of my elite Hindu interlocutors, when the specifics of Partition's modern legacy were breached. Here, I believe, lies the space where a shared experience can

play a keen role in the possibility of reconciliation, yet taboo constructions of the "other," as well as dominant storylines about Partition's memory, get in the way of such shared possibility. The need for authentic dialogue between the powerful and the marginalized is glaring in a place like Banaras and failure to read the "grammar" of Partition's use stymies dialogue and stops the potential of reconciliation. While the creation of such dialogue space inevitably requires strong Hindu-Muslim associational bonds within civil society,[42] it also requires legitimate third-party actors committed to dialogue and not unaware of the power of canonical storylines. To understand present-day meanings of Partition there is a need to develop the grammar of both tellers and listeners.

Though the Indian state's failure to be an important third-party actor in creating such dialogue has profound effect on Partition's legacy, others can, and must, step into this intervention role. Beyond the state, communities themselves have the capability to create opportunities for storytelling and communal reconstruction of their local Partition narrative. Such are the complexities that Badri Narayan brings out in his discussion of the politics of communalism among Musahars, a large low-caste group in abundance outside of Banaras.[43] Mythical and metaphorical narratives are shared within communities and passed down in a process of "transgenerational transmission."[44] To break the transmission of the chosen traumas the space and structure for a dialogue about unmet psychological needs and historical wrongs is required—what Joseph Montville calls "a walk through history."[45] While such public outlet of Partition narratives is critical for reconciliation, it is also necessary for addressing the more recent history of political violence and state-sponsored torture that perpetuates the forced separation of fixed communal identities. The necessity for public dialogue also underscores the need to interrogate our assumptions about the motives of the powerful and the needs driving protracted identity conflicts, thus, opening ourselves to the question: are powerful interests in a place like Banaras really interested in stopping communal violence?

Though it is clear that "the age of communalism was concurrent with the age of nationalism; they were part of the same discourse,"[46] it is also true that to understand these complex and interdependent discourses (or grammars) one must attempt to understand the social, political, and cultural overlay of competing elite and marginal interests. This multifaceted endeavor requires us to lay aside our bifurcated view of Indian sociality as simply Hindu versus Muslim and resist the tendency to "rarefy religions, removing them from the social milieu in which they develop."[47] Still, one cannot deny the unsophisticated pull to latch on to social categories as a means to simplify understanding of the chaos of an ancient city like Banaras. Even Mishra's fictional curiosity with both Western seekers and the concomitant way in which traditional Brahmin "regulated life was unraveled with bewildering speed"[48] draws one to read post-

colonial Banaras as understandable only through the juxtaposition of dichotomies and paradox. Yet, it is through reference to the myths and metaphors that actors narrate to us about these paradoxical relationships, both past and present, that we can get past the "factuality" of these often competing stories to the "interests that undergird the intent to narrate them."[49] In listening for these needs and interests we find the ongoing violence meted out by the powerful (and their institutional arrangements) acts to reinscribe Partition upon the bodies of the marginalized. Simultaneously, the marginalized act in creative ways to rewrite the means of elite inscription.

MODERN REALITIES: CUSTODIAL TORTURE AS EXTENDED PARTITION NARRATIVE

When I asked a friend from Odisha (Orissa), a twenty-year implant to Banaras, how he would describe his adopted home, he replied simply by saying: "Feudal!"[50] While the myths and metaphors of the marginalized may be crucial for reinscribing the dominant Partition narratives of Banaras, the underlying interests of the majority Hindu elite cannot be overlooked in the process. Such elite interests work to keep Partition violence ever present in the imagination of the average marginalized Banarsi citizen. In such a space, historical metaphors meet with present reality, and communal identities are constructed like a wall, layer by layer, or better yet, like a metaphorical line of control. Possibly the best way to excavate the elite construction of this line of control is to look at the ubiquitous phenomenon of custodial torture. This extreme example of human rights abuse, though widespread across India, is particularly endemic to Eastern Uttar Pradesh. No other act unmasks so starkly the feudal and communal realities of modern India, and particularities of a complex social milieu like Banaras. Custodial torture connects Partition pasts with the present-day realities of marginalized exclusion. While custodial torture, like Banaras, could easily be described as feudal, the practices' ubiquitous presence in modern-day Banaras underscores critical ideological links between power, memory, identity, and justice. These are the links alluded to in my friend from Orissa's inspired grammar about Banaras. Similarly, present-day torture provides the violent canvas upon which political elites of the dominant majority can both express their interests and ensure their hegemonic impact on the bodies of the tortured.

It is through custodial torture that the state punishes those undesirable "others" and reinforces the power, identity, and sense of justice for the Hindu elite. Einof, in arguing for a definition of torture that can be used in cross-cultural historical analysis, argues that motive and morality must be left out of the comparative study of torture.[51] Despite the benefits of Einof's social scientific approach for comparative analysis, such a

rigid definition does little to assist in explaining either torture's historical roots in social control or the practice's forward-going traumatic political effects. Torture as reinscribing a psychological fear of the "other" compresses the space for acceptance and reconciliation within both tortured and torturer. Impossible to describe as amoral, apolitical, or ahistorical, the practice of custodial torture speaks volumes to the powerless. In speaking an elite line of control, torture reifies modern-day partitions—partitions that are understood upon the backdrop of communal storylines about 1947's Long Partition.

Still, in following Einof's definition of custodial torture as "an act in which severe physical pain is intentionally inflicted on a person by a public official while that person is under the custody or control of that official where there has not been, or not yet been, a formal finding of guilt,"[52] one must be careful not to limit the study of torture only to behaviors. Behaviors themselves have meaning and residual effect, and critical research attempts to uncover the full political and social-psychological effects of torture behavior. It must be remembered that it is the aftereffects of torture that work to control the marginalized and maintain the majority elite's hegemonic control. Torture reaffirms control by connecting new individual trauma with past collective trauma. As much as "the psychological force of [Hindu-Muslim] rivalry has had great material impact, for state policy has been guided by fears legitimized by the process of Partition,"[53] it is the aftermath of torture that acts to control the marginalized. It is the fear and trauma that torture instills, which feeds caste and communal identities and solidifies the perceived need for these constructed dichotomies. Until this fear and trauma has a social space of outlet, the colonial mentalities of divide and rule and collective punishment will continue to reinforce communal divides and reconciliation will remain a distant dream.

The current use of torture in the Indian context can clearly be seen as a vestige of the colonial legacy of control because torture's lasting social and psychological effects reinscribe and maintain exclusion. This fact is, indeed, supported by Einof's claim that certain "general patterns"[54] arise in the cross-cultural practice of torture. The first of Einof's four general patterns is instructive here. He says: "Torture is most commonly used against people who are not full members of a society, such as slaves, foreigners, prisoners of war, and members of racial, ethnic, and religious outsider groups."[55] Such a pattern easily applies to both low-castes and Muslims in the local context of Banaras. Never being accepted as true Banarsis, these groups remain marginalized and excluded from Banaras culture and are, in the eyes of the Banaras elite, in need of control and minimization. Add to this an ill-trained and decentralized Indian police force and you have an incubator for torture and dehumanization aimed at delegitimizing deviant "others" who pose a challenge to elite control and interests. The historical connection between torture and colonial rule

is not lost on the marginalized—indeed in post-Partition India the very language of elite "othering" revolves around citizenship. Hindutva, literally Hindu-ness, has become a national political barometer across India, and particularly omnipresent in Banaras. The fact is: "there is no neutral way of stating the historical circumstances from which Hindutva ideology emerged."[56] Custodial torture, like Hindutva, sees no separation between history and citizenship.

Added to the obvious colonial foundations of custodial torture is an equally obvious lacuna of training for a decentralized, locally empowered, and inadequately funded police force.[57] Still, colonialism and lack of training does not fully explain the depth or scope of the problem of custodial torture.

> From 2001 to 2010, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) recorded 14,231 custodial deaths. . . . These deaths reflect only a fraction of the problem with torture and custodial deaths in India. Not all the cases of deaths in police and prison custody are reported to the NHRC.[58]

While statistics also only partially expose the long psychological legacies of trauma, they do reveal something more measurable. Between this same period (2001–2011) only Maharashtra (250) topped Uttar Pradesh with 174 custodial deaths in police custody. Further, Uttar Pradesh was on the top of the list with 2,171 deaths in judicial custody.[59] Thus, people awaiting charges were more likely to die not knowing the charges against them in Uttar Pradesh than anywhere else in India. Clearly the description of Banaras as "feudal" is not so surprising when one sees Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state, outstripping all other states in such human rights indicators. Further, one could make the strong argument that the North East region ranks the worst for police torture in all of India.[60]

Though such statistics only scratch the surface of the problem of police torture in India they give clear evidence for the caste-based hierarchy undergirding present-day Banaras—the center of the least developed region of India. Custodial torture statistics provide a macro image of a "culture of impunity"[61] in the city. To map the modern and highly communal context of Banaras further, I outline below some of the work of the People's Vigilance Committee on Human Rights (PVCHR). Aimed at empowering local human rights workers in and around Banaras, the PVCHR uses the power of storytelling to challenge the structure and discourse of Banarsis' "feudal" society. PVCHR's work aims to reconstruct the grammar of the marginalized so as to awaken an awareness of privilege in the powerful. PVCHR's testimonial therapy work not only develops marginalized resistance to dominant hegemony, but also develops a legal and emotional testimony of Partition's most visible and lasting legacy: modern torture by state agents. PVCHR's work accounting for

this represents the first steps in developing a reconciling walk through history.

CUSTODIAL TORTURE AND TESTIMONIAL THERAPY: NARRATIVE RECONCILIATION AS A WALK THROUGH HISTORY

The People's Vigilance Committee on Human Rights (PVCHR) is a member based human rights movement begun in 1996 in Banaras, Uttar Pradesh. In working with women, children, dalits, adivasi, and Muslims the PVCHR works to ensure human rights and build grassroots advocacy for those most marginalized in the villages surrounding Banaras. PVCHR, working in over 120 villages in Uttar Pradesh, has a developed network of activists across India focused on creating people friendly villages aimed at opening space for the marginalized to work for positive social change. Since 2009 PVCHR has been partnering with the Danish organization Rehabilitation and Research Center for Victims of Torture (RCT-Demark) to devise a unique approach to "the widespread use of torture in police custody,"[62] which they call testimonial therapy. This procedure of creating the "self-suffering story"[63] works to produce both legal testimony and subjective, emotional, and cathartic release of suffering, which culminates with a ceremony of public sharing. This process not only empowers rural human rights activists, giving them voice and agency in a system that allows them little, but it also unmasks a postcolonial attitude towards perceived "anti-national others" in Indian society.

PVCHR activist testimonies provide a rich reservoir of narrative data to develop the connection between postcolonial violence and elite Indian's self-interest to maintain control through constructing "others" as "non-citizens." In addition, the testimonials the PVCHR staff help to develop the means to analyze the role that narrative conflict intervention may play in reconciling competing interests and traumatic memory. As stated in PVCHR's own documents: "The point of departure for our campaigning and political lobbying is always the meticulous analysis of the individual case."[64] Such an approach decenters the dominant discourse of communal "othering" and raises the voice of individual victims to the fore. The transactional empowerment of the telling of past and present violence creates links to future nonviolent outcomes.

The testimonial therapy process, first developed in India by Lenin Raghuvanshi and Shabana Khan from the PVCHR, in collaboration with Inger Agger of RCT-Denmark, is performed over four sessions, which include various stages of sharing and processing suffering on the part of the torture victim. The culmination of the process is the delivery of the testimony in the form of a public ceremony in the village.[65] Below is a brief overview of one exemplar public testimonial followed by a brief analysis of this individual case which links the therapeutic relevance of

the narrative to the idea that such intervention is needed on a much larger scale to address the lingering legacy of the structural, cultural, and direct violence of Partition. Without such an ability to hear the stories of past marginalization and abuse, future attempts at peacebuilding are forsaken and forestalled.

Asha Mushahar[66] is a forty-year-old black market hawker living in Banaras, Uttar Pradesh. In 2010 Asha narrated a story of torture and harassment to PVCHR field staff that underscores the embedded nature of caste and communal legacies of violence, as well as the constructed identity such legacies support. Threatened by police to register his small shop, Asha went with a local Gram Panchayat leader to the local police station to see what could be done to get the police off his back. After being told to wait for hours, the police finally took him in the back of the station, "planted a knife,"[67] and accused him of using it for a recent burglary. He was "booked under public nuisance"[68] and locked up for the night. Although Asha suffered harassment by the police since the age of fourteen, he had never been treated like this. After taking a loan to cover the 6,000 rupee bail, Asha attempted to move from his basti and operate a hand cart selling goods in a different section of Banaras. Again the police found him, breaking into his house in the middle of the night to arrest him on burglary charges. Beaten incessantly upon arrest, Asha, his father, and uncle were all locked up. Despite their injuries they received no first aid. They suffered torture and abuse for three years in jail before their case was finally dismissed. In describing the fear and torment of beatings during custody, deprivation of food, and hard labor while in jail Asha says: "it seemed that what crime we have committed was being born a 'Mushahar.'"[69] Notice how Asha equates the injustice he endures directly with his identity and community, not with ill-training of the local police. Asha's brief account of his plight reveals the deeply embedded nature of communal identities and reminds one of the costs of crossing the line of control.

The role of testimonial therapy as conflict prevention cannot be understated—it helps "survivors regain self-esteem and dignity,"[70] but it also "creates a democratic structure for the voiceless to enable them access to the constitutional guarantees of modern India."[71] This grassroots response is critical for change of the dominant discourse of oppression and to begin to challenge the delegitimizing reality that torture engenders. Like Muslims, the Mushahars have been completely absent from the historical record of Banaras, and testimonial therapy helps them regain their historical place and identity. By providing them the space and structure to express their psychological needs and humanity, the testimonial therapy process creates an opportunity to analytically and emotionally address immediate and long-term grievances. Given the lack of any memorial space, such testimony fills a critical gap. Without such space and structure, past psychological needs go unmet and communal conflict con-

tinues to spiral and grow. Asha's story also underscores the elite use of violence to control and further separate the marginal from Banarsi centers of power. His story highlights the need to acknowledge injustice as a means to ensure the possibility of reconciliation.

CONCLUSION: IDENTIFYING NEEDS—BANARAS' ENDURING WALK THROUGH HISTORY

On December 7, 2010, as I was preparing to take a small group of DePauw University students to Banaras, a bomb rocked the Dashashwamedh Ghat during daily Ganga Aarti ceremonies. One person was killed and thirty to forty people were injured. Assuaging concerns, I assured my students' parents that this incident was relatively rare for Banaras. Confident in this assessment, my mind drifted to the 2006 bomb that had hit the Sankat Mochan temple dedicated to Hanuman. At least twenty people were killed and fifty injured in this well-coordinated attack. In trying to understand the 2010 attacks, I remembered how Upadhyaya argued that the 2006 attack

> posed an unprecedented provocation to communal harmony in the city. Amid the serious premonitions of communal violence, the people of Banaras showed remarkable intercommunity understanding and forestalled any outbreak of frenzy.[72]

In mapping the positive civic engagement in Banaras after the 2006 blast Upadhyaya fills a lacuna in research about communal collaboration amid tragedy and trauma. He highlights the socio-religious spaces in which connection is necessary for communal peace during times of stress. Still, Upadhyaya's jubilatory perspective on multicultural and religious interaction masks ways in which the psychological needs of the vast populace of Banaras go unaddressed in the wake of such trauma. From a marginal perspective this collaboration was not as "remarkable"[73] as the powerful might like to portray. Despite the religious leaders coming together to issue joint statements, the deep psychological wounds of common Banarsis remained underaddressed in the wake of both the 2006 and the 2010 tragedies. Cooperation, pluralism, and multiculturalism, which are laudable goals, assume existing power structures are functional and equitable, but this is a huge assumption in a traditionally conservative and hierarchical locality like Banaras. Despite, the changed dynamic of the city post-2006 bombing, the lives of the most marginalized have become only more precarious in the wake of the attack. The tight streets of Banaras are now filled with not just religious pilgrims, but also a massive security presence. Many respondents told me that such a conspicuous show of police force has pushed marginal communities further towards

the margins of Banarsi society—further into their "ghettos" that demarcate the metaphorical line of control.

Though the dynamic of communal relations is always shifting, reflecting on particular traumatic events is critical to understanding how to marshal these dynamics towards positive outcomes. I believe the approach to historical justice of Joseph Montville provides valuable resources for a place like Banaras, where the potential for violence is ever-present. As Montville argues: "the challenge in dealing with victimhood psychology is that of reviving the mourning process, which has been suspended as a result of traumatic experience, and helping it move toward completion."[74] While reviving trauma may seem counterintuitive, it is just such historical analysis that, if not acknowledged, becomes displaced as future violence. Anti-racism and oppression educators have long realized the need for acknowledgement and, thus, have attempted to address, not suppress, past violence as a means to building not only knowledge of suffering, but privileged allies ready to spread that knowledge. "What makes violence a phenomenon of social injustice, and not merely an individual moral wrong, is its systemic character, its existence as a social practice."[75] It is in the persistence of violence as a social practice, exhibited in a phenomenon like custodial torture, that marginality is maintained and constructed.

Though PVCHR's testimonial therapy is aimed at building "critical consciousness"[76] among the oppressed, it also has the benefit of educating the privileged to take action. Of the 361 survivors involved in PVCHR/RCT's project on testimonial therapy, 89 percent of them are from scheduled caste backgrounds.[77] The public stories fashioned from the experiences of these testimonial therapy participants form the vanguard of a slow walk-cum-march, through history. The broad psychological effects of these testimonies develop the seedbed of future reconciliation. Just as collective punishment acts to silence marginal communities, collective retelling works to unbuckle the dominant discourse of past atrocity and unfetter the voice of the long-marginalized and overlooked. Though the caste calculus remains the "final denominator"[78] for all social interaction in and around Banaras, the stories of the marginalized provide a means to build allies and transform self-confidence. While such witness is a critical tool for modern-day human rights advocacy, the accounting of past trauma remains an underused instrument in attempts at creating lasting social transformation of past injustice.

The history and legacy of Partition in multicultural places like Banaras works to create a disequilibrium between marginalized "others" and dominant elites. By focusing on the variegated histories of local communities and their narratives of ongoing trauma and extreme hardship, the contours of Partition's legacies become more transparent. In this increased transparency, "story" provides critical hope for moving towards reconciliation and power relations within society are illuminated. Recon-

ciliation in this sense does not mean forgiving and forgetting, but rather coming to grips with the complex network of broken relationships that political violence creates. This is a reconciliation that aims to understand trauma and grief as a means to ensuring that such trauma and grief become increasingly unfeasible. The public testimonial therapy that PVCHR is engaged in opens space for a narrative shift from the legacy of past trauma to the future-orientation of reconciliation. Coupled with honest recounting of Partition's deep traumatic wounds such work creates the foundation for lasting multicultural peace. The specifics of how to achieve this multicultural peace locally in Banaras deserve further scholarly attention, but some outlines of these specifics have been revealed in the forgoing work. For one, by creating opportunity spaces for sharing about Partition and other traumatic stories, the seeds of reconciliation can be sown. In addition, by unmasking the elite workings of power the space for marginalized access to this power can create newly inclusive forms of "identity justice."[79]

The paradoxes of Banaras are both resource and curse. In dialoguing and memorializing these paradoxes historical traumas can be transformed into spaces for interconnection as opposed to markers of division and distrust. Exploring the metanarratives of Partition in Banaras in tandem with a contemporary analysis of the local social dynamics of marginalization, the destructive legacy of Partition and its displacement of trauma through communal identity and violence are not only unmasked, but exposed as traceable, and, thus, transformable. As needs theorists have argued, protracted social conflict, though by nature difficult to overcome, is possible to transform through persistent attention to parties' needs. As action science, this essay has exploited the spaces of paradox in the life of contemporary Banarsis and highlighted ways to overcome destructive and traumatic Partition trajectories. Custodial torture, as resonate with the most extreme examples of colonization and structural violence, requires creative response to overcome. Focus on the creativity of a walk through history is not intended to downplay the trauma and loss of Partition, or, for that matter, more recent communal violence, but to explore ways to empower that trauma and loss to create constructive political and social effects. While PVCHR's testimonial therapy program is beginning to help reproduce, heretofore unheard, narratives of past trauma in and around Banaras, this process must be expanded to reach further back towards the historical traumas of Partition. To unbuckle the paradoxical divides of modern Banaras, unmet psychological needs associated with past trauma must find space for "outlet or absorption."[80]

NOTES

1. See Priyankar Upadhyaya, *Communal Peace in India: Lessons from Multicultural Banaras* (Occasional Working Paper, Banaras Hindu University, 2010), and Vasanthi Raman, *The Warp and the Weft*, among others.
2. Pankaj Mishra, *The Romantics* (New York: Anchor, 2000), 3.
3. Johan Galtung, "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research," *Journal of Peace Research*, 6, 3 (1969): 183.
4. Vamik Volkan, *Bloodlines: From Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terrorism* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997), 48.
5. Joseph Montville, "Justice and the Burdens of History," in Abu Nimer, ed., *Reconciliation, Justice, and Coexistence* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2001), 323.
6. Mark Twain, *Following the Equator: A Journey Around the World* (Createspace Independent Publishing Platform, Reprinted 2013), 261. Originally published 1897.
7. See Priyankar Upadhyaya, *Communal Peace in India: Lessons from Multicultural Banaras* (Occasional Working Paper, Banaras Hindu University, 2010), and Ashutosh Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).
8. Richard Jenkins, *Social Identity*, Third Edition (New York: Routledge, 2008), 7.
9. See John Burton, *Conflict: Resolution and Provention* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990); Joseph Montville, "Reconciliation as Realpolitik: Facing the Burdens of History in Political Conflict Resolution," in D. Rothbart and K. Korostelina, eds., *Identity, Morality, Threat: Studies in Violent Conflict* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2006), 129–44; and Montville, "Justice and the Burdens of History," in Abu Nimer, ed., *Reconciliation, Justice, and Coexistence* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2001), 367–92.
10. Sara Cobb, "Empowerment and Mediation: A Narrative Perspective" *Negotiation Journal*, 9, 3 (1993): 247.
11. Pankaj Mishra, *The End of Suffering: The Buddha in the World* (New York: Picador, 2004), 215.
12. James Booth, "The Unforgotten: Memories of Justice," *The American Political Science Review*, 95, 4 (2001): 788.
13. See Asutosh Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life : Hindus and Muslims in India* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002) for detailed comparative analysis of communal riots in similarly sized Northern Indian cities.
14. Landon Hancock and Christopher Mitchell, eds., *Zones of Peace* (Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press, 2007), 3.
15. Jonathan Perry, *Death in Banaras* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 33; and Vasanthi Raman, *The Warp and the Weft: Community and Gender Identity among Banaras Weavers* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2010), 263.
16. Paul Brass, *The Politics of India Since Independence*, Second Edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 22, quoted in Raman, *The Warp and the Weft*, 150.
17. See Upadhyaya, *Communal Peace in India*, and Diana Eck, "Prospects for Pluralism: Voice and Vision in the Study of Religion," *Journal of the Academy of Religion*, Vol. 75, 4 (2007): 743–76.
18. See Priyankar Upadhyaya, *Communal Peace in India: Lessons from Multicultural Banaras* (Occasional Working Paper, Banaras Hindu University, 2010); and Asutosh Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).
19. Gyanendra Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990).
20. David Gilmartin, "Partition, Pakistan, and South Asian History: In Search of a Narrative," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 57, 4 (1998): 1070.
21. Joseph Montville, "Justice and the Burdens of History," in *Reconciliation, Justice, and Coexistence*, ed. M. Abu Nimer (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2001), 133.

22. See Peter Gottschalk, *Beyond Hindu and Muslim: Multiple Identity from Narrative in Village India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), and Amartya Sen, *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2006).

23. By using the term "space" here I wish to underscore Lefebvre's (1991) sense in which space "bridges the gap between the theoretical (epistemological) realm and the practical one, between the mental and the social, between the space of the philosophers and the space of people who deal with mental things." Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1991), 4.

24. Zvi Beckerman, "Collective Memory and Obstacles to Reconciliation Efforts in Israel," in *The Partition Motif in Contemporary Conflicts*, ed. Smita Jassal and Eyal Ben-Ari (New Delhi: Sage, 2007), 327.

25. Montville, "Reconciliation as Realpolitik: Facing the Burdens of History in Political Conflict Resolution," in *Identity, Morality, Threat: Studies in Violent Conflict,* ed. D. Rothbart and K. Korostelina (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2006), 367–92; and Montville, "Justice and the Burdens of History," in *Reconciliation, Justice, and Coexistence*, ed. M. Abu Nimer (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2001), 129–44.

26. Catherine Riessman, *Narrative Analysis* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1993), 5.

27. Francesca Polletta, *It Was Like a Fever: Storytelling in Protest and Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 27.

28. Ian Talbot titled his own study of Amritsar exactly this, and though one may argue that close studies of the stories of people in places like Amritsar and Delhi are critical to reconstructing the historical narrative of violence, my work here is attempting to make a slightly different argument about the modern narrative found in those more removed, yet still reliving Partition. Talbot's (2006) collection, in his own words "is an attempt to uncover a few of those private stories." My work here is an attempt to uncover the public stories which reinscribe collective identity and marginalization. Ian Talbot, *Epicenter of Violence: Partition Voices and Memories from Amritsar* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2006), 15.

29. See Johan Galtung, "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research," *Journal of Peace Research*, 6, 3 (1969), 167–91.

30. For detailed discussion of Partition's impact on Delhi, see Gyanendra Pandey, *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism, and History in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

31. Diana Eck, "Prospects for Pluralism: Voice and Vision in the Study of Religion," *Journal of the Academy of Religion,* 75, 4 (2007): 750.

32. Vasanthi Raman, *The Warp and the Weft: Community and Gender Identity Among Banaras Weavers* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2010), 263.

33. For an understanding of the recent reemergence of this historical narrative, see Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000); and Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin, *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998) in particular.

34. Smita Jassal and Eyal Ben-Ari, "The Partition Motif: Concepts, Comparisons, Considerations," in Jassal and Ben-Ari, eds., *The Partition Motif in Contemporary Conflicts* (New Delhi: Sage, 2007), 29.

35. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations,* 4th Edition (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 1990), 90.

36. See especially, Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study of Moral Theory* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984).

37. Hannah Pitkin, *Wittgenstein and Justice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), 95.

38. Vasanthi Raman, *The Warp and the Weft: Community and Gender Identity among Banaras Weavers (*New Delhi: Routledge, 2010), 273.

39. James Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 4.

40. Vasanthi Raman, *The Warp and the Weft: Community and Gender Identity among Banaras Weavers* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2010), 276–77.
41. Personal interview, Doctoral Candidate at BHU Malaviya Center for Peace Research—May 2013.
42. This is described so eloquently by Asutosh Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).
43. Badri Narayan, *Fascinating Hindutva: Saffron Politics and Dalit Mobilization* (New Delhi: Sage, 2009).
44. Vamik Volkan, *Bloodlines: From Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terrorism* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997), 43.
45. Joseph Montville, "Reconciliation as Realpolitik: Facing the Burdens of History in Political Conflict Resolution," in *Identity, Morality, Threat: Studies in Violent Conflict*, ed. D. Rothbart and K. Korostelina (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2006), 378.
46. Gyanendra Pandey, *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism, and History in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 61.
47. Peter Gottschalk, *Beyond Hindu and Muslim*: *Multiple Identity from Narrative in Village India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 4.
48. Pankaj Mishra, *The Romantics* (New York: Anchor, 2000), 68.
49. Peter Gottschalk, *Beyond Hindu and Muslim: Multiple Identity from Narrative in Village India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 6.
50. Personal interview, friend and neighbor in Banaras—June 2013.
51. Christopher Einof, "The Fall and Rise of Torture: A Comparative and Historical Analysis," *Sociological Theory*, 25, 2 (2007): 101–21.
52. Ibid., 103.
53. Suvir Kaul, ed., *The Partitions of Memory: The Afterlife of the Division of India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001), 9.
54. Christopher Einof, "The Fall and Rise of Torture: A Comparative and Historical Analysis," *Sociological Theory*, 25, 2 (2007): 105.
55. Ibid.
56. Chakravarthi Ram-Prasad, "Being Hindu and/or Governing India? Religion, Social Change and the State," in *The Freedom to Do God's Will: Religious Fundamentalism and Social Change*, ed. G. ter Haar (New York: Routledge, 2003), 168.
57. Since Independence the Indian state has dramatically increased its police force. Brass reports that between 1953 and 1983 there was an 87 percent increase in police strength in India. Paul Brass, *The Politics of India Since Independence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 59. Despite the almost equivalent population growth in Post-Independence India, the fact is the majority of the police growth was on the lower levels (i.e., head constables and constables) and that this growth was not accompanied by adequate training. "Broken System," accessed February 2015, http://www.hrw.org/node/84624/section/1.
58. "Torture in India 2011," accessed February 2015, www.achrweb.org.
59. "Torture in India 2011," accessed February 2015, www.achrweb.org.
60. The tiny neighboring state of Bihar was second on the list with 1,512 deaths in judicial custody. "Torture in India 2011," accessed February 2015, www.achrweb.org.
61. *Voice of the Voiceless,* Banaras: People's Vigilance Committee on Human Rights, 1:1 (2010): 45.
62. Lenin Raghuvanshi, Shabana Khan, and Inger Agger, "Giving Voice: Using Testimonial Therapy Intervention in Psychosocial Community Work for Survivors of Torture and Organized Violence," *A Manual for Community Workers and Human Rights Defenders* (Uttar Pradesh, India: PVCHR, 2008), 6.
63. Ibid., 9.
64. *Voice of the Voiceless,* Banaras: People's Vigilance Committee on Human Rights, 1:1 (2010): 46.
65. Lenin Raghuvanshi, Shabana Khan, and Inger Agger, "Giving Voice, Using Testimonial Therapy Intervention in Psychosocial Community Work for Survivors of Tor-

ture and Organized Violence," *A Manual for Community Workers and Human Rights Defenders* (Uttar Pradesh, India: PVCHR, 2008), 12–16.

66. This narrative retelling comes from the written testimony of Asha Mushahar recorded October 15, 2010, that was later published in *Voice of the Voiceless,* Banaras: People's Vigilance Committee on Human Rights, 2:2 (2011): 5–6.

67. Ibid., 5.

68. Ibid.

69. Ibid., 6. Mushahars are on the bottom of the local caste system of graded inequality and are among the poorest populations in Eastern Uttar Pradesh and neighboring Bihar. The Mushahar name is said to derive from two words meaning "rat catchers" and it is assumed that this name came from the groups' tendency to eat field rodents in times of famine. It is not uncommon today in Varanasi to hear these people dehumanized as "mouse eaters" or "rural untouchables." These are the communities, described earlier, that Narayan (2009) underscores as resisting through the recreation of oral myths and "hidden transcripts" of their community. See Badri Narayan, *Fascinating Hindutva: Saffron Politics and Dalit Mobilization* (New Delhi: Sage, 2009), and James Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 183.

70. Lenin Raghuvanshi, *Justice, Liberty, Equality: Dalits in Independent India* (Kolkata: Front Page, 2012), 59.

71. *Voice of the Voiceless,* Banaras: People's Vigilance Committee on Human Rights, 1:1 (2010): 45.

72. Priyankar Upadhyaya, *Communal Peace in India: Lessons from Multicultural Banaras* (Occasional Working Paper, Banaras Hindu University, 2010), 1.

73. Ibid., 1.

74. Joseph Montville, "Justice and the Burdens of History," in *Reconciliation, Justice, and Coexistence*, ed. M. Abu Nimer (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2001), 133.

75. Iris Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 43.

76. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum, 1970), 183.

77. Lenin Raghuvanshi, *Justice, Liberty, Equality*: *Dalits in Independent India* (Kolkata: Front Page, 2012), 27.

78. Ibid., 29.

79. James Booth, "The Unforgotten: Memories of Justice," *The American Political Science Review*, 95, 4 (2001): 788.

80. Erik Erikson, *Gandhi's Truth: On the Origins of Militant Nonviolence* (New York: Norton, 1969), 98.

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EIGHTEEN

Hyderabad, Partition, and Hindutva

Strategic Revisitings in Neelkanth's "Durga" (2005)

Nazia Akhtar

The body of scholarship we now know as Partition studies took definitive shape in the aftermath of events in South Asia in the 1980s and 1990s: the terrible "communal" (sectarian) violence against Sikhs in 1984 and Muslims in 1989; the demolition of the Babri Mosque in 1992, which was followed by more communal violence in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh; and the fervor with which India and Pakistan celebrated fifty years of independence in 1997. Amid the nationalist jubilation that followed such bloodthirsty aggression, scholars were compelled to rethink that which remained forgotten: Partition, the darker side of independence. As a result, the corpus of interdisciplinary scholarship that concentrates on the human dimension of Partition has expanded dramatically. However, in spite of the determination of scholars to look for forgotten or marginalized experiences, there is a tendency to assume that there was no impact of Partition in South India because it is geographically far removed from the provinces that were cartographically cut up.

And yet, when we look at places such as the princely state of Hyderabad, the experiences that emerge call for investigation through the Partition lens. In fact, Hyderabad—the largest and wealthiest princely state in India—was completely transformed as a result of Partition. Ruled by Osman Ali Khan (1886–1967), the seventh Nizam of the Muslim Asaf Jahi dynasty (1720–1948), Hyderabad was home to many inequalities by the 1940s. Although the Muslim population was only 12 percent, the administrative set-up consisted of a 90 percent majority of elite Muslim offi-

cials.[1] Thousands of Hindus migrated out of Hyderabad after being systematically persecuted by the Razakars, a paramilitary group that emerged in 1946 and was associated with the Majlis-e-Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen (Council of United Muslims). The year 1946 was also when the peasants and workers of Telangana revolted in what would become an armed struggle that went on for five years. And large numbers of Muslims poured into the state looking for sanctuary from communal violence in British India.[2]

Additionally, repeated demands were made by the Congress leadership that the Nizam must unconditionally accede to India. There were months of protracted negotiations and heated debates, in which the Nizam expressed his reluctance, as the head of a state which had both Hindu and Muslim citizens, to join either India or Pakistan.[3] He cited Partition and the communal violence that had brought misery to other parts of the subcontinent as a valid reason to remain independent.[4] But Indo-Hyderabad relations had deteriorated to such an extent that India invaded Hyderabad on September 13, 1948, ignoring the fact that the latter had approached the UN Security Council with an urgent appeal to put the matter on its agenda for September 15. The invasion took less than five days, for the obsolete arms, maps, and equipment used by Hyderabad's army and the scantily armed Razakars were able to do little in the face of an organized, four-pronged attack by an efficient Indian army.

Following the Nizam's surrender, there were major crackdowns by the Indian army and police on peasants, workers, and progressive individuals, many of whom were Muslims and/or had participated in the Telangana Armed Struggle.[5] Sources, such as the "Report on the Post-Operation Polo Massacres, Rape and Destruction or Seizure of Property in Hyderabad State" (1949), which is believed to have been commissioned by the Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru himself but whose existence and/or content has not been officially acknowledged by any Indian government thus far, state that the military regime particularly targeted Muslims, and that many hundreds of Muslim women were raped and approximately 30,000 to 40,000 Muslims were killed by local Hyderabadi Hindus and Indian police and armed forces.[6] The importance of this report is underscored when we realize that no other official record of the actions of Indian state apparatuses in Hyderabad is known to exist.

These realities of Hyderabad in the 1940s—Razakar violence, feudal oppression, the Telangana struggle, the military invasion of Hyderabad (sanctioned by a government whose key members had struggled nonviolently for independence from British rule), and the persecution of Hyderabadi Muslims by the apparatuses of a constitutionally secular Indian state—remain mostly unacknowledged in Indian and Partition historiography.[7] Literary depictions, on the other hand, tend to deal retrospectively and, often, seemingly tangentially or obliquely with these questions in

relation to Hyderabad. Prominent texts include short stories, such as "Kaali Raat" ("The Black Night," undated, Urdu) by Aziz Ahmad (1914–1978), and novels, such as Anita Desai's canonical text *Clear Light of Day* (1980; English), Samina Ali's *Madras on Rainy Days* (2004; English), Huma R. Kidwai's *The Hussaini Alam House* (2012; English), Ian Bedford's *The Last Candles of the Night* (2014; English), and Kishorilal Vyas Neelkanth's *Razakar* (2005; Hindi).

It is Neelkanth's text that I am concerned with in this essay. The "novel" is divided into discrete, often thematically unconnected sections that incorporate specific legends, anecdotes, and/or historical episodes from Hyderabad. For the purpose of this essay, I will focus on the preface and the episode called "Durga." This restricted choice is made necessary by the complexity and diversity within the text. I have also chosen "Durga" specifically because it is a literary text that represents Razakar violence towards Hyderabadi women. The episode opens with an idyllic portrayal of a peaceful residential locality called Jampanna Gate in Brahmapuri, Nizamabad district. But soon this locality is threatened by Razakars. Since the men have left for work, only women and children are at home. The women cower in fear, certain that the Razakars will rape and murder them. It is a Sikh woman called Balwinder Kaur, a refugee from partitioned Punjab, who adopts the warlike demeanor of the goddess Durga, confronts the menacing Razakars, and saves the women from them.

This essay focuses on the writer's choice of Durga as the women's savior and the fact that it is a Sikh woman who plays her. Neelkanth's episode is, as I show in this essay, a Hindu nationalist (Hindutva) text that serves as an example of how the Hindutva right-wing represents the history of sexual violence perpetrated by Muslim Razakars against Hindu women in Hyderabad in the late 1940s as a pretext to justify present-day violence against Muslims. In doing so, I argue, Neelkanth conflates the Razakars, who were dominant only from 1946 to 1948 and whose activities were limited to princely Hyderabad, with almost all Muslims in present-day India. In fact, Neelkanth declares that the Hindu/Indian state must not let its guard down; it must watch Muslims constantly in order to ensure that new Razakars are not born among them. The problematic nature of Neelkanth's text also extends to the attempted cooptation of Sikhs into the Hindutva fold, as the representation of the Sikh woman in his text suggests. I argue that this is a subtle but forceful strategy employed by Hindutva groups in an effort to close ranks against minorities such as Muslims.

The most insidious strategy through which Neelkanth narrativizes his agenda is through the depiction of Balwinder Kaur as the goddess Durga. This image is carefully crafted through a focus on Balwinder's appearance and visage, both of which recall Durga as a warrior-goddess. The earliest representation of Durga in this military *avatar* probably occurs in the "Devi Mahatmya" (circa 400–500 CE), which portrays her as a weap-

on-wielding, ten-armed goddess who strides purposefully into an occupied Heaven to defeat the *asuras* and restore Heaven and worldly order to the gods. In Neelkanth's story, as the Razakars threaten to break the door, Balwinder becomes Durga as she is depicted in the "Devi Mahatmya": she leaps up and snatches a sword hung on a nail, draws it from its scabbard, and loosens her long hair. The sword flashes like lightning in the sunshine, and we are told that "Balwinder's face had an unflinching and sacrificial expression. Her face was lit with a strange glow. Her big eyes and open hair recalled Durga of Bengal."[8] She shouts at the Razakars, daring them to enter the premises. The Razakars scatter.

While Durga has many gentler and creative attributes, the one that is usually propagated by both mainstream Hindu culture (such as the Bengali Durga Puja festival) as well as Hindutva organizations such as the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (National Association of Self-Volunteers; RSS) and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (World Hindu Council; VHP) is that of her ferocity, aggression, and anger as she slays the demons. This particular image suppresses "the available pastiche of Durga myths and attempts to emerge as a totalising narrative which renders its material as coherent, continuous and unified."[9] And it becomes even more problematic when we remember that "Hindu deities are . . . constituted through plurally authored, multiply motivated myths which must be read not only as alterations and reinterpretations but also as appropriations and contestations."[10] It becomes imperative, therefore, to explore the objectives behind the privileging of one specific attribute of Durga through constant narrative reiterations of the same in Hindutva representations and mainstream portrayals.[11]

Furthermore, Neelkanth appropriates Durga as she is referred to in Sikhism. Durga as Chandi was Guru Gobind Singh's favorite literary subject, and she appears in many compositions, such as *Chandi Charitra* (Braj; The Exploits of Chandi), *Var Durga Ki* (Punjabi; The Ballad of Durga), and *Akal Ustati* (Braj; In Praise of the Timeless One). Nikky-Guninder Kaur Singh and Nidar Singh Nihang and Parmjit Singh have argued that Durga is recalled as a mythical and literary figure and metaphor in the Guru's compositions. They point out that the Guru's narration uses the archetypal and psychological potential of myth to set up Durga as "a model of moral force and martial prowess for both men and women."[12] It is easy to see why such an idea appealed to the Guru. Durga is the only goddess in the Puranas who is independent of male partners. She also impressively personifies the battle against injustice and evil because she is the central figure fighting the demons who threaten to destroy the world.[13]

Singh points out that the Durga of the Puranas will not go on a rampage and annihilate the world. On the contrary, her disciplined energy and fury are "directed towards annihilating and destroying only the demons, symbolic representations of evil and negative forces in the individ-

ual psyche and in society."[14] Durga and her sword remain central to Sikh religious practice, and the first verse of *Var Durga Ki* is recited at the beginning of prayers.[15]

Hence, it would appear at first glance that it is not unusual for Balwinder to be connected to Durga. Balwinder as Durga is successful in protecting the helpless Hindu women without any male assistance. The historical parallel between the Sikhs of the seventeenth-century fighting Mughal state's repression and Balwinder in the mid-twentieth century fending off a communal paramilitary force from a Muslim-ruled state is clear.[16] The decision to lay the responsibility of protecting the Hindu women in Balwinder's hands is also perhaps made apt by the information we are given earlier in the text about Balwinder's refugee status. Balwinder and her husband have experienced personal and financial loss during Partition and have fled from the violence in Punjab. So when she becomes the one who dispenses with the Razakars, it appears as if justice is served.

But although there is a precedent in Sikh religious tradition that would make such a representation plausible, this portrayal has to be read in its immediate context: the attempted cooptation of Sikhs into the violent project of Hindutva. Besides claiming to represent all Hindus, Hindutva ideology threatens to engulf certain other minority communities such as Sikhs, many of whose members resist these attempts because they wish to maintain a separate political and religious identity.[17] However, organizations from the Arya Samaj to the RSS "have been consistent in their claim that Sikhs are an integral part of the Hindu social and religious structure."[18] Since Partition, which positioned Sikhs and Hindus against Muslims, Hindu nationalist discourses have claimed with greater and greater insistence that Sikhs are Hindus because Muslims killed Sikhs along with Hindus during Partition.[19] But in spite and perhaps partly because of this discourse, tensions between Sikhs and Hindus continued in independent India, most prominently during the Khalistan movement, which sought to establish a separate homeland for the Sikhs.

Veena Das has argued that Sikh militants' discourse in the 1980s consciously pitched a singular construction of Sikhs as a masculinized, martial community against an equally unidimensional construction of Hindus as an effeminate, weak, and cunning community in control of the Indian state.[20] The escalation of the tension maintained by this discourse culminated in Operation Bluestar (June 3–6, 1984), a state military operation designed to weed out militants hiding in the Sikh Golden Temple at Amritsar. This attack by what was seen by Sikh militants and their followers as "the Hindu state" on the most sacred Sikh shrine was followed by the assassination of Indira Gandhi on October 31, 1984, by two of her Sikh bodyguards. The assassination in turn triggered off anti-Sikh riots in Delhi and its surrounding areas in which 3,000 Sikhs were killed, many of them by Congress leaders and workers, in Delhi alone.[21] It is estimated

that a total of 5,000 Sikhs were killed during these "riots," which affected mostly North Indian states that were being governed by the Congress.[22]

Political efforts to mend the Hindu-Sikh breach after 1984 include the alliance between the BJP and the Akali Dal in Punjab in 1996, which resulted in the government patronage of the Sangh Parivar, which in turn has allowed the RSS, VHP, Bajrang Dal, and Shiv Sena to develop Hindutva activities in Punjab.[23] The RSS also created an organization called the Rashtriya Sikh Sangat (National Sikh Association; Sangat) in Delhi in the aftermath of 1984. What is deeply objectionable about this organization is that it is meant exclusively to drive home to rural Sikhs the point that they are, after all, Hindus and must reintegrate with their brethren to serve the violent cause of Hindutva against Muslims.[24] Through its door-to-door campaigns and personal contact programs (strategically begun around the three hundredth anniversary of the inauguration of the Khalsa in 1699), the RSS has tried to recruit young Sikhs. Through these outreach programs, the RSS and the Sangat have tried "to impress on villagers in Gurdaspur and Amritsar districts that Sikhs are only a sword arm of the Hindu faith."[25] The RSS also took considerable pains to emphasize to Sikh villagers that those who seek to institutionalize a separate identity for the Sikhs are nothing but "Pakistan-sponsored terrorists,"[26] thereby revealing the perennial anxieties of the Hindutva right-wing about further post-Partition "vivisections" of the "motherland." Such fears not only permeate the advances Hindutva organizations make towards Sikhs, but they also become rhetorical justifications for persecuting Indian Muslims, who are constantly being suspected of conspiring to divide the country.

However, what makes the presence of the Sangh Parivar in Punjab dangerous is the sheer versatility and innovation of Hindutva ideology.[27] It is this remarkable ability of Hindutva to act expediently that we see in the insidious narrative strategies in Neelkanth's "Durga." Through the martial representation of a Sikh woman, the armed savior of the Hindu women, Neelkanth subtly and meaningfully employs mainstream narratives of Partition, which incorrectly maintain the perception that Partition violence exclusively consisted of intercommunal (and never intracommunal) violence against women.[28] He places Hindu and Sikh women in binary opposition to predatory Muslim Razakars in yet another politically motivated attempt by Hindu nationalists to build bridges with Sikhs against Muslims after 1984. He does this by applying to Balwinder the template of the warlike aspect of Durga, which, as I will explain later, is being used by Hindutva organizations to recruit Hindu women to commit violence against Muslims during periods of communal tension. By referring to the context of Partition, when many Hindu and Sikh women were raped by Muslim men, and aligning a Sikh female character alongside Hindu women against Razakars, Neelkanth is emphasizing what Hindu nationalists have been stressing for a century or more: Sikhs are,

after all, Hindus and must fight alongside Hindus against Muslims, all of whom, according to Neelkanth, have the potential to be Razakars.

Thus, couched in a familiar and convenient Partition story about the possible abduction of women by violent men of the Other community, the upright and righteous Balwinder as Durga represents yet another Hindutva attempt to mobilize Sikhs against Muslims.[29] Neelkanth's sustained focus on Balwinder's sword, which "flashed like lightning,"[30] is an appropriation of the great ritual, scriptural, and historical significance of the sword for Sikhs. Indeed, Nihangs Sikhs, the traditional Sikh warrior class, worship swords and other weapons, in line with Guru Gobind Singh's teachings.[31] Furthermore, the *ardas*, a supplicatory prayer recited at the end of daily prayers and before the start of a significant undertaking, also starts with "remembering the sword," a meditative process that starts with the inspirational material reality of the sword and encourages contemplation beyond the physical sword and upon the formless, infinite being of God.[32] Durga's feats and the deeds of her sword become interchangeable,[33] and "[t]he means for the restoration of an ethical order is the sword."[34] Moreover, like Durga, the sword "was to be invoked only in self-defense and as a last resort," making both the sword and, by implication, Durga symbols of self-respect and freedom in Sikhism.[35] While it is also this connection between the sword and the way to freedom under tremendous odds that is behind Neelkanth's extensive focus on Balwinder's sword, we must also situate this representation in terms of Hindutva attempts to appropriate Sikhs for a cause that has little to do with freedom or justice.

What reinforces these points is the preface, where Neelkanth lays the ground for the rest of the text and where his own motives emerge. In it, Neelkanth praises Vallabhbhai Patel's "foresight and courage" in dealing with the Indo-Hyderabad dispute, which was resolved in 1948 through the invasion of Hyderabad by the Indian army. That the political approach and language of Patel, the Deputy Prime Minister of India, contributed to the systematic persecution and killings of Muslims and others, many of whom were fighting against feudal and communal oppression in Hyderabad, does not appear to bother Neelkanth. In fact, Neelkanth's admiration for this communal statesman marks Neelkanth himself as communal. Further, he points out that "today Hyderabadi Muslims are ashamed of the past anti-national violence perpetrated by the Razakars."[36] Such a statement considers all Hyderabadi Muslims *today* complicit in the guilt of the Razakars, who were active and influential only in Hyderabad and specifically between 1946 and 1948. It holds all Hyderabadi Muslims, from the 1940s till today, accountable for the actions of the Razakars and suggests that there is a need for them to explicitly denounce the Razakars in order to establish their loyalty to the nation.[37] The ahistorical, deceptive sense of a homogeneous Muslim community with a single, fixed political outlook is reinforced. No allowance is made for

differences in political opinion stemming from diversity of sect, class, caste, gender, sexuality, language, or region. As I have shown above with reference to Sikhs, such a collapsing of a large demographic of people into one group with a uniform and singular identity, which can then become politically useful as a symbol of good or evil, is a strategy Hindu nationalists use not only to deal with Muslims, but also in the way they relate with Sikhs and other minority communities such as Buddhists, Jains, Christians, etc.

Neelkanth writes that "[t]he Razakars are finished. But who knows, some leftover Razakars may have become active again—having changed their name and guise! They may be boring holes in the court of republican values again!"[38] He stresses the need to "investigate" whether or not there are still active Razakars around, "if only in the context of bomb explosions! If only in the context of terrorist activities!"[39] The repeated use of exclamation marks at the ends of these sentences conveys an unmistakable sense of urgency and is intended to encourage watchfulness and even fear of Muslims among Hindus. Neelkanth emphasizes that bigotry has not ended and that it is challenging humanitarian values across the world, "its thousand [snake] hoods raised."[40] At first glance, Neelkanth's concerns with terrorism seem unremarkable, given the recent context of the attack by terrorists on the Indian Parliament in 2001 as well as the many incidents of past as well as ongoing militant violence that pepper the fraught history of Kashmir, yet another much disputed erstwhile princely state. However, his warnings to his readers to remain alert for the signs of bigotry take on an entirely new hue when we consider the specific context of Razakars, Hyderabad, and Muslims in which he situates his writing in 2005. In a country where there is already widespread persecution of Muslims, the most horrifying example in recent history being the genocide in Gujarat in 2002, Neelkanth's comments in 2005 become another source of justification for the violence that Hindutva organizations promote and perpetrate against Muslims. Indeed, because Neelkanth holds all Muslims guilty for Razakar violence, thereby effecting a smooth narrative fusion between the terms "Razakar" and "Muslim," so that both become synonymous in his writing, every Muslim becomes a justified target for surveillance and persecution.

Thus, to preface a literary narrative containing a martial representation of a Sikh woman who protects Hindu women from Muslim Razakars with an implicit call for the need to watch Muslims in a climate of rapid Hindutva expansion is tantamount to pointing out to Sikhs their instrumental function as those who will lead Hindutva oppression. Let me clarify that I am not suggesting that there is no possibility of there being plural, fluid notions of community in which Sikhs and Hindus flourish side by side. My concern is that the kind of Sikhism Hindutva promotes seeks to erase any ambivalence that Sikhs may profess towards Hindutva and aims to instead use them as weapons in an aggressive, expansionist

cause that is not in the interests of any kind of democratic or egalitarian thought. What is significant is the fact that this move to incorporate minority groups into one singularly defined Hindu nationalist identity attempts to engulf everyone into the service of an ideology that has no claim to fighting the kind of oppression it claims Hindus are suffering. This Hindutva strategy amounts to the misappropriation of the teachings of Sikh Gurus engaged in fighting a kind of state repression that does not exist today. To suggest that a confrontation of Sikhs and Hindus against Muslims that is comparable to the conflicts that arose in the later Mughal period (or even during Partition) exists today in India, and that Sikhs need to contribute to the cause of Hindutva and fight some imagined specter of "Muslim tyranny" is, quite simply, a total fabrication which tries to fraudulently manipulate Sikh history, an attempt that many Sikhs are actively resisting. Indeed, there is little threat of Hindus or Sikhs getting wiped out by Muslims who are, as Tapan Basu et al. note, "in real life a minority, grossly under-represented in the bureaucratic, military, professional and business elites."[41]

The insidious manner in which Hindutva ideology functions to create these myths is also visible in the dedication of *Razakar*. Out of many Hyderabadi heroes such as Ailamma, Doddi Komarayya, Acchamamba, Raj Bahadur Gour, and Makhdoom Mohiuddin, who also fought against the Razakars, Neelkanth chooses Shoebullah Khan, a radical journalist slain by the Razakars. The dedication on the title page informs us that the book is a tribute to

> the bright pillar of keen national consciousness . . . the immortal journalist martyr Mr. Shoebullah Khan, who was murdered in broad daylight on August 20 [*sic*], 1948 by fundamentalist *Razakars*, and who has been completely forgotten by state as well as national governments.[42]

While these words appear at first glance to attest to Neelkanth's secular credentials, it is an attempt to appropriate the figure of a communist journalist who boldly challenged the Razakars in his writings. Enraged by Khan's refusal to stop his public criticism, the Razakars sought to prove that the pen was not mightier than the sword by chopping his hands off. Not only does Khan's terribly violent and symbolically meaningful death serve as fertile ground for Neelkanth's literary talents as a writer, it also suits his purpose of reminding his readers how dangerous and cruel the Razakars were and, therefore, because he conflates the two, how violent and menacing *all* Muslims can be.

Khan's death is also a better platform for Neelkanth because it markedly differs from the relatively unremarkable deaths of Ailamma and Makhdoom Mohiuddin. However, the fact that Neelkanth ignores Doddi Komarayya's equally violent death during the Telangana struggle and dedicates *Razakar* solely to Khan also points to the BJP's attempts to manufacture an identity for Muslims that would be tolerable in a foreseeable

Hindu nation.[43] The essential aspect of this proposed "Muslim" identity is, in line with Hindutva ideology, the disavowal of any other identity (religious, linguistic, cultural, historical) over the nation.[44] It is this attempt to expand the influence of the right-wing by feigning a secular identity through the strategic recuperation of a Muslim figure that is seen in the tone of Neelkanth's dedication, which fits in well with the attention the BJP has showered on Khan as a nationalist hero from Andhra Pradesh. For example, on August 21, 2012, a day before his sixty-fourth death anniversary, the state BJP honored Khan in Hyderabad as a nationalist martyr who died for the sake of the freedom of the Indian nation.[45] By a simple, seemingly innocuous slippage, the struggle of Hyderabadis to end princely rule as well as get rid of the Razakars is reinterpreted as the struggle to defend the Indian (read Hindu) nation against "Muslim tyrants."

Neelkanth considers *Razakar* an attempt to peep into history through the novelistic medium. Once again, this intention to create a literary memorial of Partition appears to make sense in light of the official silences on the subject,[46] until we take into account the context in which Neelkanth writes, and quite possibly, the readership that he addresses. He writes that his novel "is a challenge to the appeasing policy of governments . . . in which the guilty escape scot-free and law-abiding gentlemen, common folk are continuously suffering."[47] Neelkanth's tellingly familiar reference to the "appeasing policy" of governments replicates the exact words of the BJP and the RSS in their permanent refrain against successive non-BJP governments, such as the last UPA government (2004–2014) and their supposedly biased policies with regard to Muslims.[48]

This idea of appeasement of Muslims in India, which is explicit and implicit in Neelkanth's choice of words and context, is followed by his view that

> [g]overnance is, after all, always carried out through hard punishment. . . . For an administration that has justice and discipline, assertiveness and foresight like that of Sardar Patel are requisites. History never forgives those who ignore the good of the nation as a result of their own weakness. Razakars have no religion; consequently, the first duty of any good administration is to harshly crush their hoods of ill-intention. The age of Razakars was a nightmare that has passed. What must be ensured is that it is never repeated.[49]

It is clear from the context of Razakar violence in "Durga" that Neelkanth's ideas of good governance and the "good of the nation" revolve around the central tenet of Hindutva: national security and territorial integrity, which are, as I have explained above, seen to be incompatible in Hindutva politics with the interests of Muslims. Both the security and territorial integrity of the nation can only be ensured by the ideal govern-

ment, whose contours are delineated in two ways. First, the glowing references to Patel suggest that Neelkanth condones aggressive state strategies such as armed invasion and the subsequent crushing of minority demographics in order to fulfill this agenda. Second, the prescription of hard punishment for perpetrators and criticism of "polite protection" in present-day politics are implicitly directed against all Hyderabadi Muslims through his reference to Razakars, who are, as I have shown above, depicted as representative of all Muslims.[50] Thus, through a narrative blurring of the crucial difference between Razakars, a paramilitary group active in late 1940s Hyderabad, and Muslims, who were then and today a part of subcontinental society and polity, the maintenance of national security is portrayed as integrally involving the repression of Muslims. This as well as the need to "harshly crush" present-day Razakars expose the Hindutva stance outlined thus by Tanika Sarkar:

> revenge must be taken on present-day Muslims both for historical wrongs and for the future danger they embody. . . . For the Muslim of today embodies all past offences and future threats that have been allegedly committed and could be committed. Therefore, revenge may be taken on any Muslim anywhere for anything that any Muslim could do or had done.[51]

And Neelkanth's preface indeed encourages the perception that Razakars represent all Hyderabadi Muslims at all times, past or present. Therefore, according to Neelkanth, it logically follows that if history is not to judge us (read Hindus/Indians) harshly, we must hold responsible all present-day Hyderabadi Muslims for the Razakars' actions and make them bear the consequences for what the Razakars did more than sixty years ago. To suggest the ineffaceability of the crimes perpetrated by Razakars, Neelkanth quotes a Hyderabadi Muslim professor whom he does not name: "The history of the Razakars is an *indelible* blot on the forehead of Hyderabadi Muslims."[52]

The central contradiction in these statements is that although Neelkanth professes secular thoughts such as "Razakars have no religion," he also goes on to profess his adoration and uncritical approval for Patel and his approach to the Indo-Hyderabad dispute, which culminated in India invading Hyderabad. The many rapes and murders of Muslims that happened as a result of the invasion were actively hushed up by Patel and other prominent figures such as Nehru.

In addition to this, what makes Neelkanth's suggestive fearmongering even more troubling is that there is ample evidence to suggest that there is nothing spontaneous about communal riots in India; narrative constructions of Muslims, particularly Muslim men, as innately and spontaneously violent and dangerous contribute a great deal to the atmosphere in which riots are prone to occur. Indeed, these narratives have become part of the elaborate preparations that go into riots. Most major commu-

nal riots in the past thirty years exhibit this trend,[53] but we need only take as an example the Gujarat riots of 2002, where official estimates suggest that nine hundred people were killed, and unofficial assessments suggest that this number may be anywhere between 2,000 and 5,000.[54] Sarkar points out that the Gujarati press had invented the rape and murder of eighty Hindu women traveling on the Sabarmati Express at Godhra railway station.[55] Details such as the chopping off of women's breasts, a trope that goes back to the reality of Partition violence, were also fabricated. Sarkar points out that the falsity of such "news" was established by the fact that even the Gujarat police, which was notorious for its involvement in the violence, denied any such rape or murder of the women traveling on the Sabarmati Express.[56] In spite of this, such narratives created a situation where the impalement, disembowelment, rape, gang rape, torture, burning alive, and burying alive of Muslim infants, children, and women were considered justified.[57] The public acts of sadism that constituted the violence in Gujarat were not only unprecedented, but they were of such magnitude that Sarkar is forced to conclude that "we have exceeded the achievements of Nazi terror, Bosnian atrocities, our own partition violence—if not in scale or numbers, then in the intensity of torture, the sheer opulence and exuberance in forms of cruelty."[58]

Furthermore, many scholars besides Sarkar, such as Paola Bacchetta, Anja Kovacs, and Amrita Basu, have explained how, in addition to narratives that precede or fan riots, Hindutva organizations school their adolescent cadres, both boys and girls, in historical narratives of Muslim tyranny and violence against Hindus and Hindu women. In such a volatile situation, where narratives of historic wrongs, real or imagined, can feed such terrible violence, Neelkanth's tone in the preface to *Razakar* appears more and more politically interested, ideologically motivated, and terribly dangerous.

It is this careful construction of Partition narratives, such as Razakar violence, that emerges with particular force when we scrutinize how Neelkanth's representation of Durga situates itself in terms of Hindutva discourse. Kovacs and Sarkar believe that the position of Durga in Hindu nationalism was firmly established with the canonical novel *Anandamath* (1881–1882) by Bengali writer Bankimchandra Chattopadhyaya (1838–1894).[59] It was with *Anandamath* that the two concepts "Hindu" and "national" were united into one, singular, compelling icon of the Mother goddess, which incorporates the *avatar* of Durga.[60] And it is this interchangeability of "Hindu" and "national" (*rashtriya*) that RSS ideologues such as M. S. Golwalkar considered central to their conception of nation, nationality, and citizenship.

It is this nation Mother as Durga that is deployed as both inspiration and role model by Hindu nationalist organizations, such as the RSS and (to a greater extent) the Rashtriya Sevika Samiti (National Committee of Women Volunteers; Samiti), both of whom construct Muslim men as

inherently violent. Furthermore, "the violence ascribed to them can only be expelled when the latter [Muslim men] are neutralised."[61] In addition to this, "Muslimness" (contained in Muslim men) is associated with the collective memory of violence against Hindus, as well as the notion of "justice," which can and must be achieved through revenge. This collective memory is a cherry-picked narrative of reconstructed histories that spans not only "Muslim invasions" but also centrally showcases the "vivisection" of Bharat Mata (Mother India) during Partition and the rapes of Hindu women in this period. Bacchetta points out that "the 'original' violence is always essentialised, and out of it is extracted the notion of 'Muslimness.'"[62] Each subsequent Hindu-Muslim conflict is constructed in "a chain of substitution as metaphorically related to the so-called original violence."[63] This inflation is consistently present in Hindutva ideology today and is compounded when sister affiliates of Hindutva organizations construct their feminine selves as dependent on the male Hindu nationalist's discursive construction of Muslim men as "demonic, threatening, and in particular, threatening to Hindu women."[64] In turn, Hindu nationalist discourse depends on this construction of Hindu femininity, which is "fabricated as essentially vulnerable" to attacks by Muslim men.[65]

The contribution of Bankim's Durga-as-Motherland characterization can be seen in the name, ideology, and operations of the Durga Vahini (Durga's Army), the women's wing of the VHP. Founded, significantly, in the aftermath of the enthusiastic participation of Hindu nationalist women during the Babri Mosque demolition in 1992, this organization aims to institutionally channel the energy of their many fifteen to thirty-five-year-old "Durgas."[66] While their declared intentions of providing relief to young women in need and setting up centers to assist them appear to be worthy causes, these are little more than active recruiting strategies for the VHP's violent political ideology.[67]

Put differently, any claim to the appropriation of Durga as radical and empowering for women in Hindu nationalist discourses or writings such as Neelkanth's "Durga" is completely undermined when we note the material conditions of women in India today. Goddesses are the products of the feminization of attributes such as righteousness, justice, wealth, and learning, and do not represent any real, practically applicable status of women.[68] So while India has many goddesses, the sex-ratio is alarmingly unequal and points to other gender-related problems such as female feticide, female infanticide, lower life expectancy for girls and women, trafficking, domestic violence, and dowry deaths. In fact, the 2014 annual report of the National Crime Records Bureau notes that crime against women increased in 2013 by no less than 26.7 percent when compared to the number of crimes in 2012.[69] These figures throw into particularly sharp relief any attempts to prove that the worship of goddesses is connected to the real status of Indian women. Furthermore, the promo-

tion by organizations such as the Durga Vahini of the notion that the veneration of goddesses corresponds to the high status that Hindu women are supposed to have enjoyed in the Vedic period has been effectively refuted by scholars.[70]

What is significant is that unlike the men's organizations' appropriation of Durga as "an iconographic representation of the current or future state of Bharat Mata meant primarily to arouse the nation's virile sons,"[71] the goddess has agency and a wide spectrum of behaviors, ranging from docile and domesticated to fierce and chaotic in the narratives of the Samiti and the Durga Vahini.[72] However, many members maintain that even though there is compassion and kindness in Durga's nature, these can be "no longer administered; in fact, it is explicitly argued that, in the face of 'evil', it is important not to show compassion anymore."[73] And it is to protect the people whom the Hindutva right-wing deems "Hindu" that their inner Durga emerges. It is in this context that we must read Neelkanth's narrative choice of gendering the attempted appropriation of Sikhs into the Hindutva fold through the characterization of Balwinder as Durga.

The way Neelkanth manipulates goddess narratives as well as Partition narratives in conjunction with one another is another Hindutva strategy, similar to the assertion by the VHP's Krishna Sharma that it was the Muslim "lack of respect" for women that caused (Hindu) women to commit suicide during Partition. The Samiti's Asha Sharma also valorizes the self-immolation of women during Partition riots as an instance of *sati*.[74] Indeed, gendered Partition violence is used again and again by Hindu nationalist women to justify current violence against Muslims[75] and is the most immediate referent for recent violence against Muslims.[76] In this, then, Neelkanth is not alone, as he solders memories of Partition in "Durga" onto his carefully crafted fear of the Muslim Other in the preface.

Furthermore, the always present external threat discourages any discussion on patriarchy within Hindu communities in the light of maintaining "unity."[77] In Neelkanth's writing, it is the singularly defined image of women as homemakers and caregivers that emerges as ideal and desirable to the Hindutva project. In this way, in Hindutva texts such as Neelkanth's "Durga," the powerful goddess is just a temporary *avatar*, to be employed when women—not only Hindu, but also, through their attempted appropriation, Sikh—are required to be violent and to be abandoned as soon as the Razakars have fled. This is why we are told that after the Razakars run away, Balwinder holds on to the sword, alert for any signs of the Razakars' return; but as the other women weep, her eyes also become moist and she too weeps. Her tears signify the ebbing away of Balwinder's fierce *avatar* as Durga as well as her assertive role as an independent woman. Balwinder is back to being a woman, a fact which is signified by the tears that she sheds out of relief that she has managed to

avert certain catastrophe. In the words of one Samiti leader, "[t]he tender-hearted woman becomes bold and aggressive, if time demands"[78] and then returns to her "feminine" qualities when that time is past.

The myth of Durga as *Mahishasuramardini* is frequently used by these Hindu nationalist women, such as those of the Vahini, to justify their role in the devastating communal violence that occurred in Bombay in 1992–1993 and in Gujarat in 2002.[79] Flavia Agnes has shown how Shiv Sena women, driven by a temporary shift in the Hindutva image of the traditional, ideal woman to that of Durga as *Mahishasuramardini*, participated in and facilitated communal violence in Bombay.[80] In the riots of 1992, in which a thousand people died,[81] women mobilized by the Shiv Sena slept on the streets to prevent army trucks and fire engines from entering areas to put out fires or rescue Muslim hostages.[82] They also blocked the arrests of several Shiv Sena leaders, looted stores, and attacked Muslim women.[83] The sharpest indictment of their participation in the post-demolition riots must come for the fact that they tore off other women's clothes to facilitate rape.[84] In connection with the horrific riots in Gujarat in 2002, violence escalated dramatically in the Naroda Patiya area of Ahmedabad when BJP MLA Maya Kodnani—a Sevika (Samiti member) from a well-established family of RSS workers who were displaced from Sindh during Partition—arrived on the scene. Ninety-seven Muslim men, women, and children were killed in this massacre alone.[85] Kodnani was sentenced to twenty-eight years in jail in August 2012, but was released on bail in July 2014.

Thus, Hindu nationalist women's presence is not limited to their being symbolic figures. With an active leadership, hierarchical organizational structure, and constantly reiterated ideology, it is the women's organizations, which uphold Durga as an ideal, that have caused the presence of Hindu nationalist women to develop and flourish at the grassroots level both in India as well as many countries abroad.[86] These Durgas, then, unlike the Durga imagined by Guru Gobind Singh, fight for a misplaced sense of justice. Far from saving the world, they appropriate a powerful myth and threaten to destroy any semblance of India's secular, democratic fabric. And it is ultimately in the service of this ideology that Neelkanth represents Balwinder Kaur as Durga. While his text highlights the power of Durga to protect and defend the women of Jampanna Gate, the appropriated agency he accords to the Sikh woman becomes questionable in light of his Hindutva convictions, which, as I have shown, are represented in his preface.

In light of this problematic representation of Durga in Hindutva texts, ideology, and practice, we must take into account the crucial questions Rajeswari Sunder Rajan asks about women's agency and the way it is understood and deployed, often uncritically, in questionable or unconsidered ways and towards questionable and dangerous ends.[87] In highlighting these questions and underscoring a particularly interested repre-

sentation of a Sikh woman, I have demonstrated in this essay how the representation of Partition narratives is complexly manipulated by writers such as Neelkanth, who effectively infuses his retrospective gaze with shades of his divisive and patriarchal present-day Hindutva understanding of nationhood, citizenship, and belonging. In elaborating upon these points, I have outlined how narratives of Partition violence from Hyderabad are being used as the rationale for present-day militant Hindu nationalism by Neelkanth, who betrays one of Hindutva's most persistent and pernicious practices: its relentless persecution of Muslims.

NOTES

1. P. Sundarayya, *Telangana People's Struggle and Its Lessons* (Calcutta: Communist Party of India [Marxist], 1972), 8.
2. Raj Bahadur Gour, "Hyderabad People's Revolt Against Nizam's Autocracy: A Diary of the Struggle," in *Glorious Telengana Armed Struggle*, by Raj Bahadur Gour et al. (New Delhi: Communist Party of India, 1973), 66, 70; Wilfred Cantwell Smith, "Hyderabad: Muslim Tragedy," in *Hyderabad: After the Fall*, ed. Omar Khalidi (Wichita: Hyderabad Historical Society, 1988), 19; K. M. Munshi, *The End of an Era: Hyderabad Memories* (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1957), 1, 137.
3. Nizam's Government, *Hyderabad's Relations with the Dominion of India* (Hyderabad: Government Press, 1948), 1.
4. Ibid., 11.
5. Wilfred Cantwell Smith, "Hyderabad: Muslim Tragedy," in *Hyderabad: After the Fall*, ed. Omar Khalidi (Wichita: Hyderabad Historical Society, 1988), 20–1; P. Sundarayya, *Telangana People's Struggle* (Calcutta: Communist Party of India [Marxist], 1972), 9; Sunderlal Committee, "The Sunderlal Committee Report on the Massacre of Muslims," in *The Destruction of Hyderabad*, by A. G. Noorani (New Delhi: Tulika, 2013), 373.
6. Sunderlal Committee, "Sunderlal Committee Report," 373.
7. However, Hyderabad city has seen a growing interest in retrieving this history, as talks and seminars at various locations, such as the University of Hyderabad, the English and Foreign Languages University [EFLU], and the Anveshi Research Centre for Women's Studies can attest.
8. Kishorilal Vyas, "Neelkanth," *Razakar* (New Delhi: National Publishing House, 2005), 8–9. All translations are mine.
9. Zakia Pathak and Saswati Sengupta, "Resisting Women," in *Women and the Hindu Right: A Collection of Essays*, ed. Tanika Sarkar and Urvashi Butalia (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1995), 288.
10. Ibid.
11. Although this analysis is beyond the scope of this essay, the cultural and religious status of Durga as *Mahishasuramardini* (Slayer of Mahishasura) becomes very problematic also when we remember the association of the demons or *asuras* with Dalit and *adivasi* communities. See Jotiba Phule's seminal text *Slavery* (1873) for a dismantling of Brahminical sacred texts from the standpoint of the *asuras*.
12. Nikky-Guninder Kaur Singh, *The Feminine Principle in the Sikh Vision of the Transcendent* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 127; Nidar Singh Nihang and Parmjit Singh, *In the Master's Presence: The Sikhs of Hazoor Sahib*, Vol. I (London: Kashi House, 2008), 198.
13. Nikky-Guninder Singh, *The Feminine Principle in the Sikh Vision of the Transcendent* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 127.
14. Ibid., 128–29.
15. Ibid., 123, and Nidar Singh Nihang and Parmjit Singh, *In the Master's Presence: The Sikhs of Hazoor Sahib*, Vol. I (London: Kashi House, 2008), 122.

16. Another obvious connection—that Neelkanth does not recognize—between Hyderabad, Sikhs, and Durga is that of the position of honor given to Durga as Chandi or Kali and the worship of weapons at Takht Sachkhand Shri Hazoor Abchalnagar Sahib, the gurudwara complex at Nanded (present-day Maharashtra; erstwhile Hyderabad state) built to commemorate the spot where Guru Gobind Singh breathed his last in 1708. For more, see Nidar Singh Nihang and Parmjit Singh's *In the Master's Presence: The Sikhs of Hazoor Sahib*, Vol. I (London: Kashi House, 2008).

17. Christine Moliner, "The Boa and Its Petty Enemy: Contemporary Relationships between Hindu Nationalists and the Sikhs," in *Cultural Entrenchment of Hindutva: Local Mediations and Forms of Convergence*, ed. Daniela Berti et al. (London: Routledge, 2011), 312; see also *Panthic.org*, ed. Ratinder Singh and Navjot Singh, accessed July 23, 2015, http://panthic.org/.

18. Christine Moliner, "The Boa and Its Petty Enemy: Contemporary Relationships between Hindu Nationalists and the Sikhs," in *Cultural Entrenchment of Hindutva: Local Mediations and Forms of Convergence*, ed. Daniela Berti et al. (London: Routledge, 2011), 307; cf. V. D. Savarkar, *Hindutva: Who Is a Hindu?* (New Delhi: Hindi Sahitya Sadan, 1923/2003), 39, 41, 54–55, 108; M. S. Golwalkar, *Bunch of Thoughts* (Bangalore: Vikrama Prakashan, 1968), 67, 105; Tapan Basu et al., *Khaki Shorts and Saffron Flags: A Critique of the Hindu Right* (Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 1993), 4.

19. Christine Moliner, "The Boa and Its Petty Enemy: Contemporary Relationships between Hindu Nationalists and the Sikhs," in *Cultural Entrenchment of Hindutva: Local Mediations and Forms of Convergence*, ed. Daniela Berti et al. (London: Routledge, 2011), 313–14.

20. Veena Das, *Critical Events: An Anthropological Perspective on Contemporary India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995), 118–22. This martial self-representation of Sikhs and its manipulation in Hindutva ideology is connected not only to the military history of Sikhism or Sikh militants' discourse in the 1980s (see Das, *Critical Events*, 121–34) but also eventually to the post-1858 definition of Sikhs by the British as one of the "martial races" of the country. See A. H. Bingley's *Sikhs* (Patiala: Department of Languages, 1899/1970) and Lieutenant-General George MacMunn's *The Martial Races of India* (London: S. Low, Marston and Co., 1933).

21. Jyoti Grewal, *Betrayed by the State: The Anti-Sikh Pogrom of 1984* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2007), 2.

22. Jarnail Singh, *I Accuse: The Anti-Sikh Violence of 1984* (Viking: New Delhi, 2009), 30.

23. Christine Moliner, "The Boa and Its Petty Enemy: Contemporary Relationships between Hindu Nationalists and the Sikhs," in *Cultural Entrenchment of Hindutva: Local Mediations and Forms of Convergence*, ed. Daniela Berti et al. (London: Routledge, 2011), 308.

24. Ibid., 317–18; Sarabjit Pandher, "RSS Enlisting Activists in Rural Punjab," *The Hindu*, June 14, 2000, http://www.thehindu.com/2000/06/15/stories/1415220g.htm (accessed July 28, 2015). See Moliner's essay also to understand how the Sangat distorts Sikh scriptures and cultural heritage as well as how individual and secular and religious organizations resist these activities. Besides the voices highlighted by Moliner, there are citizens' groups who have joined together to reconstruct pre-Partition cross-community bonds between Sikhs, Hindus, and Muslims in Punjab. For example, rural Sikhs and Hindus have recently "repaired, rebuilt or built from scratch" two hundred mosques across Punjab that were damaged during Partition (Chander Suta Dogra, "Shades of the Old Punjab," *OutlookIndia.com*, August 20, 2012, http://www.outlookindia.com/article/shades-of-the-old-punjab/265962 (Accessed July 27, 2015). These ongoing efforts to rebuild communities rent asunder by Partition are steps towards jointly getting over the trauma of Partition and focusing on reconstructing crumbling pre-Partition communities, interactions, and alliances.

25. Sarabjit Pandher, "RSS Enlisting Activists in Rural Punjab," *The Hindu*, June 14, 2000, http://www.thehindu.com/2000/06/15/stories/1415220g.htm (accessed July 28, 2015).

26. Quoted in Pandher, "RSS."
27. Christine Moliner, "The Boa and Its Petty Enemy: Contemporary Relationships between Hindu Nationalists and the Sikhs," in *Cultural Entrenchment of Hindutva: Local Mediations and Forms of Convergence*, ed. Daniela Berti et al. (London: Routledge, 2011), 315.
28. See Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India* (New Durham: Duke University Press, 1998/2000), 153–71, and Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin, *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition* (Delhi: Kali for Women, 1998), 45–60.
29. And there are other examples of this attempted mobilization through narratives in Neelkanth's "novel": the idea that Sikhs are the sword arm of Hindus is emphasized; an old Hindu practice of dedicating the eldest son of each family to Sikhism is sought to be revived so that each Hindu family has a Sikh bodyguard, as it were (128); and Hindus are criticized for not learning "the language of the 'sword'" from the Sikhs (134).
30. Kishorilal Vyas Neelkanth. *Razakar* (New Delhi: National Publishing House, 2005), 8.
31. Nidar Singh Nihang and Parmjit Singh, *In the Master's Presence: The Sikhs of Hazoor Sahib*, Vol. I (London: Kashi House, 2008), 24, 27, 35–36; cf. 36–42.
32. Nikky-Guninder Singh, *The Feminine Principle in the Sikh Vision of the Transcendent* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 143.
33. Ibid., 146.
34. Ibid., 147.
35. Ibid., 147–48.
36. Kishorilal Vyas Neelkanth. *Razakar* (New Delhi: National Publishing House, 2005), xii.
37. This is in general connected to the question of the loyalty of Indian Muslims, whose faith is considered "alien" because it was born outside the territorial boundaries of the nation. For more on this point, see V. D. Savarkar, *Hindutva: Who Is a Hindu?* (New Delhi: Hindi Sahitya Sadan, 1923/2003), 39, 41, 54–55, 108; M. S. Golwalkar, *Bunch of Thoughts* (Bangalore: Vikrama Prakashan, 1968), 127, 133, 321. See also Gyanendra Pandey's critique of Savarkar and his notion of nation as a territorial entity in his "Which of us are Hindus?" in *Hindus and Others: The Question of Identity in India Today*," ed. Gyanendra Pandey (New Delhi: Viking, 1993), 252.
38. Kishorilal Vyas Neelkanth. *Razakar*, (New Delhi: National Publishing House, 2005), xii–xiii.
39. Ibid., xiii.
40. Ibid.
41. Tapan Basu et al., *Khaki Shorts and Saffron Flags: A Critique of the Hindu Right* (Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 1993), 113.
42. Kishorilal Vyas Neelkanth. *Razakar* (New Delhi: National Publishing House, 2005), dedication page.
43. This is also why the BJP has puppet Muslim politicians as well as a Minority Morcha (Minority Front), which gestures towards Hindutva as "expansionist and adaptable," "(selectively) incorporative of various 'progressive' elements in the political interests of enlarging its appeal to women, lower castes and, even, other minority communities" (Rajeswari Sunder Rajan, "Is the Hindu Goddess a Feminist?" *Economic and Political Weekly* 33.44 [1998]: 38, http://www.jstor.org/stable/4407322 [Accessed July 30, 2015]).
44. V. D. Savarkar, *Hindutva: Who Is a Hindu?* (New Delhi: Hindi Sahitya Sadan, 1923/2003113, 139; M. S. Golwalkar, *Bunch of Thoughts* (Bangalore: Vikrama Prakashan, 1968), 127, 133, 321.
45. Sakshi TV, *BJP Paid Grand Tribute Journalist Shoaibullah Khan*, YouTube video, 00:33, August 21, 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qFz3Iybp5kY.
46. Anjali Gera Roy and Nandi Bhatia, eds., *Partitioned Lives: Narratives of Home, Displacement, and Resettlement* (New Delhi: Dorling Kindersley, 2008), xiv.

47. Kishorilal Vyas Neelkanth. *Razakar* (New Delhi: National Publishing House, 2005), xiii.

48. Tapan Basu et al., *Khaki Shorts and Saffron Flags: A Critique of the Hindu Right* (Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 1993), 37; cf. "UP Government Appeasing Minorities: BJP," *Outlook India*, accessed September 15, 2012, URL not available.

49. Kishorilal Vyas Neelkanth. *Razakar* (New Delhi: National Publishing House, 2005), xiii–xiv.

50. Indeed, with the exception of Inayat Khan, an elderly clerk who is kind to the lonely Rama, there is not a single Muslim in "Durga" who is not a Razakar. And nothing more is said about Inayat Khan; he does not influence the action or the plot. This feature separates Neelkanth's "Durga" from other examples of Partition literature. In fact, the exclusive Hinduness of the locality that Neelkanth celebrates as a "little India" is carefully constructed through sacred symbols that require no explanation for Hindu readers. Thus (in agreement with Benedict Anderson), the Hindu nation, which is still not realized in truth, is imagined in and through reading. The contribution of the peculiar genre ambiguity of "Durga" to this literary imagining lies in the fact that it represents the idyllic nation in a compact form devoid of internal complications or contradictions. In the space of a few pages, Neelkanth creates a microcosm of the Hindu nation whose blissful sense of community is only threatened by the outsider; this, predictably, is "the Muslim."

51. Tanika Sarkar, "Semiotics of Terror: Muslim Children and Women in Hindu Rashtra," *Economic and Political Weekly* 47.44 (2002): 2874, http://www.epw.in/commentary/semiotics-terror.html (Accessed July 27, 2015).

52. Kishorilal Vyas Neelkanth. *Razakar* (New Delhi: National Publishing House, 2005), xii, emphasis mine. By not naming this source, Neelkanth makes it impossible for his readers to verify the information that he gives to them.

53. Tapan Basu et al., *Khaki Shorts and Saffron Flags: A Critique of the Hindu Right* (Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 1993), 102–6; S. Anitha et al., "Interviews with Women," in *Women and the Hindu Right*, 332.

54. People's Union for Democratic Rights, 'Maaro! Kaapo! Baalo!' *State, Society, and Communalism in Gujarat* (Delhi, 2002), http://www.pudr.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/maro_kapo_balo.pdf (Accessed July 26, 2015).

55. Tanika Sarkar, "Semiotics of Terror: Muslim Children and Women in Hindu Rashtra," *Economic and Political Weekly* 47.44 (2002): 2875.

56. Ibid.

57. Ibid. Living in Gujarat in 2002, I found very significant the repeated bi-weekly telecast in March of the film *Gadar: Ek Prem Katha* (Mutiny: A Love Story; 2001), which is marked by its virulent anti-Pakistani and by extension anti-Muslim hate speech. That a film based on Partition, representing Muslim men in an unredeemable light, was shown repeatedly during the Gujarat violence is a chilling reminder of two things: the timely use of Partition narratives by Hindutva groups to justify violence against Muslims and the elaborate methods of dissemination of Hindutva propaganda against Muslims during the 2002 pogrom.

58. Ibid., 2872.

59. *Anandamath* marks the birth of a new Hindu goddess who was equated with the Hindu nation (see Tanika Sarkar, "Birth of a Goddess: 'Vande Mataram', 'Anandamath', and Hindu Nationhood," *Economic and Political Weekly* 41.37 (2006), 3959, http://www.epw.in/special-articles/birth-goddess.html (Accessed July 22, 2015) and in whom "both Hindu and Nation were imagined through acts of opposition against the Muslim" (ibid., 3969). The narrative constructs Durga as "the mother as she *would be*" (Bankimchandra Chatterjee, *The Abbey of Bliss* [*Anandamath*], trans. Nares Chandra Sen-Gupta (Calcutta: Padmini Mohan Neogi, 1881-2/undated), 41) when all her devotees, her children, worship her by killing all Muslims in India, who are held responsible (through the same narrative blurring that Neelkanth too employs) for the tyranny of certain Muslim rulers.

60. Tanika Sarkar, "Birth of a Goddess, 'Vande Mataram,' 'Anandamath,' and Hindu Nationhood," *Economic and Political Weekly* 41.37 (2006), 3959, http://www.epw.in/special-articles/birth-goddess.html (Accessed July 22, 2015), 3969.

61. Paola Bacchetta, "'All Our Goddesses are Armed': Religion, Resistance and Revenge in the Life of a Militant Hindu Nationalist Woman," in *Against All Odds: Essays on Women, Religion and Development from India and Pakistan*, ed. Kamla Bhasin et al. (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1994), 149.

62. Ibid.

63. Ibid.

64. Ibid., 134.

65. Ibid., 148.

66. Anja Kovacs, "You Don't Understand, We Are at War! Refashioning Durga in the Service of Hindu Nationalism," *Contemporary South Asia* 13.4 (2004): 376, http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09584930500070597#.VbpTL_mqqko; (Accessed July 22, 2015) cf. Vishva Hindu Parishad, "Durga Vahini," *Vishva Hindu Parishad*, 2010, http://vhp.org/vhp-glance/youth/durga-vahini (Accessed June 23, 2015).

67. See, for example, S. Anitha et al., "Interviews with Women." In *Women and the Hindu Right: A Collection of Essays*, edited by Tanika Sarkar and Urvashi Butalia (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1995): 329–35 for the VHP women activists' deeply problematic patriarchal positions on arranged marriage, domestic violence, and divorce. Indeed, the sister organizations of the BJP, the RSS, and the VHP intensively promote the wifely and maternal ideal espoused by sacred Vedic texts. These positions validate Rajan's point that the recuperation of radical goddesses such as Durga by Hindutva organizations (or writers such as Neelkanth) becomes problematic when we take into account two things: the way this radicalism is invoked, evoked, and deployed (against the interests of Muslim women) (Rajeswari Sunder Rajan. "Is the Hindu Goddess a Feminist?" *Economic and Political Weekly* 33.44 (1998): 34–38. http://www.jstor.org/stable/4407322 (Accessed July 30, 2015). 34), and the fact that the prominence of goddesses in India does not necessarily represent the material and historical conditions in which the goddesses are worshipped (ibid., 35; Zakia Pathak and Saswati Sengupta. "Resisting Women," in *Women and the Hindu Right: A Collection of Essays*, edited by Tanika Sarkar and Urvashi Butalia, (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1995), 287.

68. Rajeswari Sunder Rajan. "Is the Hindu Goddess a Feminist?" *Economic and Political Weekly* 33.44 (1998): 35 http://www.jstor.org/stable/4407322 (Accessed July 30, 2015).

69. This rise remains worrying even after we make allowances for the increased reporting of crimes against women since the terrible Delhi bus gang rape of December 16, 2012. National Crime Records Bureau, *Crime in India: 2013*, 79 (see also 79–88), http://ncrb.gov.in/index.htm (Accessed July 25, 2015).

70. See Kumkum Roy, "'Where Women Are Worshipped There the Gods Rejoice': The Mirage of the Ancestress of the Hindu Woman," in *Women and the Hindu Right: A Collection of Essays*, edited by Tanika Sarkar and Urvashi Butalia (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1995), 10–28 and Uma Chakravarti, "Whatever Happened to the Vedic Dasi? Orientalism, Nationalism and a Script for the Past," in *Recasting Women: Essays in Colonial History*, ed. Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1989), 27–88.

71. Anja Kovacs, "You Don't Understand, We Are at War! Refashioning Durga in the Service of Hindu Nationalism," *Contemporary South Asia* 13.4 (2004): 376, http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09584930500070597#.VbpTL_mqqko; (Accessed July 22, 2015) 377.

72. Ibid., 376; Paola Bacchetta, "All Our Goddesses Are Armed': Religion, Resistance and Revenge in the Life of a Militant Hindu Nationalist Woman," in *Against All Odds: Essays on Women, Religion and Development from India and Pakistan*, edited by Kamla Bhasin, Ritu Menon, and Nighat Said Khan (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1994), 136.

73. Anja Kovacs, "You Don't Understand, We Are at War! Refashioning Durga in the Service of Hindu Nationalism," *Contemporary South Asia* 13.4 (2004): 376, http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09584930500070597#.VbpTL_mqqko (Accessed July 22, 2015).

74. Anitha et al., "Interviews with Women," in *Women and the Hindu Right: A Collection of Essays*, edited by Tanika Sarkar and Urvashi Butalia (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1995), 331.

75. Paola Bacchetta, "'All Our Goddesses are Armed': Religion, Resistance and Revenge in the Life of a Militant Hindu Nationalist Woman." In *Against All Odds: Essays on Women, Religion and Development from India and Pakistan*, edited by Kamla Bhasin, Ritu Menon, and Nighat Said Khan (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1994), 150.

76. Ibid., *Gender in the Hindu Nation: RSS Women as Ideologues* (New Delhi: Women Unlimited, 2004), 6.

77. Kumkum Roy, "'Where Women Are Worshipped, There the Gods Rejoice': The Mirage of the Ancestress of the Hindu Woman." In *Women and the Hindu Right: A Collection of Essays*, edited by Tanika Sarkar and Urvashi Butalia (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1995), 12.

78. Quoted in Kovacs, Anja Kovacs, "You don't Understand, We are at War! Refashioning Durga in the Service of Hindu Nationalism," *Contemporary South Asia* 13.4 (2004): 376, http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09584930500070597#.VbpTL_mqqko (Accessed July 22, 2015), 376.

79. Ibid., 374.

80. See Flavia Agnes, "Redefining the Agenda of the Women's Movement within a Secular Framework," in *Women and the Hindu Right: A Collection of Essays*, edited by Tanika Sarkar and Urvashi Butalia (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1995), 150. The same expedient shift can also be seen among the RSS. For more on this aspect, see Amrita Basu, "Feminism Inverted: The Gendered Imagery and Real Women of Hindu Nationalism," in *Women and the Hindu Right: A Collection of Essays*, edited by Tanika Sarkar and Urvashi Butalia (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1995), 158–80.

81. Sikata Banerjee, "Hindu Nationalism and the Construction of Woman: The Shiv Sena Organises Women in Bombay," in *Women and the Hindu Right: A Collection of Essays*, edited by Tanika Sarkar and Urvashi Butalia (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1995), 218.

82. Ibid., 216; and Flavia Agnes, "Redefining the Agenda of the Women's Movement within a Secular Framework," in *Women and the Hindu Right: A Collection of Essays*, edited by Tanika Sarkar and Urvashi Butalia (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1995), 150.

83. Ibid.

84. Gabriele Dietrich, "Women and Religious Identities in India after Ayodhya," *Against All Odds*: *Essays on Women, Religion and Development from India and Pakistan*, edited by Kamla Bhasin, Ritu Menon, and Nighat Said Khan (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1994), 42.

85. Rohit Bhan, "Naroda Patiya Riots: Former Minister Maya Kodnani Gets 28 Years in Jail," *NDTV*, August 31, 2012, accessed July 21, 2015, http://www.ndtv.com/cheat-sheet/naroda-patiya-riots-former-minister-maya-kodnani-gets-28-years-in-jail-498254; "Gujarat Riots: BJP's Maya Kodnani Jailed for 28 Years," *BBC News.co.uk*, August 31, 2012, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-19432982 (Accessed July 21, 2015).

86. Amrita Basu, "Women's Activism and the Vicissitudes of Hindu Nationalism," *Journal of Women's History* 10, 4 (1999): 105, http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/jowh/summary/v010/10.4.basu.html (Accessed July 21,2015); Anja Kovacs, "You Don't Understand, We Are at War! Refashioning Durga in the Service of Hindu Nationalism," *Contemporary South Asia* 13.4 (2004): 376, http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09584930500070597#.VbpTL_mqqko (Accessed July 22, 2015) 381; Paola Bacchetta, "All Our Goddesses Are Armed': Religion, Resistance and Revenge in the Life of a Militant Hindu Nationalist Woman," in *Against All Odds: Essays on Women, Religion and Devel-*

opment from India and Pakistan, edited by Kamla Bhasin, Ritu Menon, and Nighat Said Khan (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1994), 135.

87. Rajeswari Sunder Rajan, "Is the Hindu Goddess a Feminist?" *Economic and Political Weekly* 33.44 (1998): 34–38. http://www.jstor.org/stable/4407322 (Accessed July 30, 2015).

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NINETEEN

Partition's Others

The View from South India

Nalini Iyer

It is commonplace in both everyday conversations as well as in Partition scholarship for people to note that Southern India was untouched by Partition violence. For example, J. N. Dixit and Gyanendra Pandey[1] in their books make this observation, and this notion is also at the heart of Balachandra Rajan's novel *The Dark Dancer*.[2] At the same time, recent Partition studies (Pandey, Butalia, Daiya, Sarkar) have underscored how that experience of violence and upheaval have been central to the formation of an Indian sense of citizenship and belonging. For example, in *Violent Belongings: Partition, Gender, and National Culture in Postcolonial India*, Kavita Daiya argues that Partition has shaped the discourse of citizenship and belonging in South Asia and its diaspora since 1947. She writes, "The Partition constitutes a field of transformation and a discourse that became the condition of possibility for the gendered ethnicization of citizenship and belonging in postcolonial South Asia."[3] Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali Zamindar has noted in her study, *The Long Partition*, that the dislocation of peoples and the "making of refugees as a governmental category . . . that new nations and the borders between them were made."[4] Daiya's and Zamindar's studies and those of others who have explored the impact of Partition generate some important questions: if Southern India did not experience Partition violence directly, then how does the discourse of Partition shape citizenship and belonging for those in Southern India? If Partition is not the major constituent of national identity in South India, then how is nation imagined by people in the

South. I propose that it is necessary to interrogate the assumption that South India was unaffected by Partition violence, and that the assumptions about citizenship and Partition distinguish between those who were directly impacted by the violence and those who witnessed the events at a distance through newspaper reports and stories that circulated in the communities. This essay argues that writers from Southern India—R. K. Narayan, Lalithambika Antherjanam, and Balachandra Rajan—write about Partition from the perspective of those who witnessed the violence and the upheaval indirectly and at a distance. Their Partition fiction offers an empathetic understanding of the suffering of those in the Punjab and Bengal. They also propose a different understanding of nation, minority rights, and belonging in the South where questions of caste and language were more urgent political concerns than Partition and its accompanying turmoil. In engaging the Partition experience, these novelists attempt to articulate an imagined nation that is more secular while also accounting for distinctly regional perceptions, and at the same time, they express anxiety about the loss of the secular ideal because of the communal violence of Partition.

We must first interrogate this assumption that Partition made no impact on the South because Hyderabad, a princely state ruled by the Muslim Nizam, saw "police action" in September 1948 when the Indian state hearing of reprisals from Muslim militants (Razakars) against Hindus invaded Hyderabad.[5] The Nizam's forces were defeated and Hyderabad was incorporated into India. After hearing about possible mass murder and rape of Muslims, Nehru sent a multi-faith investigative group headed by Pandit Sunderlal, a Congress Party leader. Sunderlal's report noted that the Indian army and local police had colluded in rural areas of Hyderabad State to commit mass murders and other atrocities. Sunderlal's report concluded that somewhere between 27,000 and 40,000 people died. This report was not published and these details remain quite unknown to most Indians. Thus, there persists the assumption that the South was untouched by Partition.[6]

So, it would be more accurate to state that Hyderabad's experience with Partition was not recognized as such because the Indian state saw this as "police action" against a recalcitrant Nawab. Since the Indian state was reeling from the events of 1947, there was a focused attempt to manage reportage of communal violence to prevent sparking another ethnic conflagration.[7]

A second example of the South's encounter with Partition was the place of Sindhi refugees,[8] many of whom resettled in cities like Hyderabad, Bangalore, and Chennai and established businesses, community centers, and religious shrines in these cities. The experiences of Sindhis with dislocation and adaptation have become part of the culture of the South especially in the cities.[9] Although Sindhis have made significant economic contributions and have adapted in their new locations, they are

identified as North Indians and thus perpetually viewed as foreign in the South. It is this foreignness rather than the stories of their displacement during Partition that shape perceptions of Sindhis in the South.

A third point to note is that while Partition violence and dislocation are a significant part of the discourse of Muslim communities across India, Muslims in Kerala, the Mapillas, were relatively unaffected by the Partition violence. In *Remembering Partition,* Gyanendra Pandey writes, "In many parts of the new domains of India and Pakistan, being a Sikh or a Hindu (on one side) or a Muslim (on the other) had become virtually synonymous with being a refugee and a foreign national. . . . The Meos of Mewat, the Moumins of UP and Bihar, the Mapillas of Malabar—all became simply Muslims and, for a while, nothing else."[10] Although specific regional Muslim identities were erased post-Partition in India, Yoginder Sikand[11] writes that few Kerala Muslims migrated to Pakistan during Partition, and he attributes this to a different historical and social model for Muslims in Kerala. Although the Mapillas participated in the Khilafat movement and there was violence against Hindus in 1921 during what is referred to as the "Mapillah/Moplah Rebellion," Partition did not have an impact on Kerala Muslims in terms of national identity and citizenship in the same way that it did for Muslims in Punjab or Bengal. The preceding examples of Hyderabad, of Sindhi immigrants, and of Mapillas demonstrate that because of the scale and horror of the violence in the northwestern and northeastern borders of India, the discourse of Partition has overlooked the impact of Partition on people in the South. Yet, writers in the South were acutely aware of the political upheaval of Partition and used their fiction to express empathy, to condemn violence, and to interrogate the impact of Partition on discourses of citizenship and belonging.

To further the discussion of Partition experiences and the South, this essay examines three different works: R. K. Narayan's *Waiting for the Mahatma*, Lalithambika Antherjanam's short story "A Leaf in the Whirlwind," and Balachandra Rajan's novel *The Dark Dancer*.[12] These writers, all of whom were Hindus, produced works which demonstrate that Partition did have a profound impact on people in the South as they conceptualized citizenship and belonging in a newly emergent nation. Their responses ranged from empathy with the victims to horror at the events and extended into a larger analysis of what it meant to be Partition's Other. These writers recognized the impossibilities of a homogeneous Indian citizenship and articulated that while there were religious commonalities among people across India, the differences of language, geography, gender, and culture raised the specter of recurring violence. At the same time, each writer also articulates a vision for a secular nation that would overcome the sectarian violence of Partition and also account for the regional concerns of the South. In the following pages, I explore the writings of R. K. Narayan, Lalithambika Antherjanam, and Balachandra Rajan to examine how each author narrates the darkness of Partition and

the resulting anxieties for those who were assumed to be untouched by Partition.

Published in 1955, Narayan's *Waiting for the Mahatma* focuses on the political awakening of a young man, Sriram, from Malgudi, Narayan's fictional small town in Southern India. Sriram is politically naïve and quite immature when he meets Bharati, a young Tamil woman, totally dedicated to Gandhi and his cause. Gandhi's nationalism and his impact on Sriram are profound and Sriram's primary motivation in following Gandhi is to win Bharati's hand in marriage. Apart from the obvious symbolic nature of "Bharati" as the young, emergent, India, the novel also notes that Gandhi and his message were not particularly welcomed in Malgudi. Chief among Gandhi's critics is Sriram's grandmother, who finds Gandhi's focus on eradicating untouchablity quite challenging as it threatens her way of life. While Granny can be easily read as representing the last bastion of caste priorities, through her concerns Narayan articulates a central tension in Tamil Nadu politics at this time between the Indian National Congress and the Justice Party of E. V. R. Periyar.[13] For Tamil people, the concerns about emerging nationalism and minority representation hinged on caste representation and also resistance to what is seen as the hegemony of North Indian (Aryan) culture on South Indian Dravidian culture. This caste- and region-based resistance to the Congress party and its politics has influenced electoral politics in Tamil Nadu since the 1920s.[14] Hence Sriram's growth into an awareness of nationalist and Gandhian politics is framed against the backdrop of this regional political debate. During the Quit India movement, Sriram ends up in jail and is labeled a common criminal instead of a political prisoner. Consequently, he does not get released from prison until after independence has arrived. As a prisoner, the naïve Sriram is even less informed of the happenings in the world beyond the jail and his town. When he is released, he seeks out Bharati and Gandhi and upon her invitation travels to New Delhi in January 1948.

It is in this final section of the novel that Narayan addresses Partition. Sriram is traveling from Madras to New Delhi on the Grand Trunk Express and, as is common in a lot of Partition narratives, the train becomes the site of sharply articulating communal identity framed by fear and the need to survive. During the journey, Sriram finds himself alienated from the culture as the train travels North. Narayan presents this as Sriram's inability to speak Hindi and to be understood by anyone outside of South India. In the middle of the journey, two men board Sriram's compartment and ask him a question. He does not understand them and responds in a mix of Tamil and English to their query. The men are menacing and step forward in a threatening way, and suddenly one of them pulls Sriram's earlobe and notices the piercings done to many Brahmin male children at the time. Using the piercing to identify Sriram as a Hindu, the men leave him alone.[15] Only after they have left does Sriram piece together that his

experience is linked to that of others who had been similarly subjected to proving their religious identity on trains. Partition stories also consistently demonstrate that men were made to drop their clothing and reveal if they were circumcised to confirm their religious identity, so Sriram's earlobe piercing experience is anomalous and perhaps reveals a certain coyness on sexual and bodily depictions for Narayan. When Sriram arrives in New Delhi, he is greeted by a worn out and distraught Bharati. As she takes him to her home with Gandhi at a refugee camp, they are greeted by children who call her mother, and she tells Sriram that these children had become orphans in the Partition riots. She informs him of Gandhi's deep grief at the rioting, his work in Calcutta among riot victims as Independence arrives, and his concern over the plight of women who were abducted or raped:

> I have seen with my own eyes aggressive rowdy-looking men taking a vow of non-violence and a vow to protect the opposite faction—don't ask what community they were: what one community did in one part of the country brought suffering on the same community in another part of the country. . . . It's no use discussing whether this community committed greater horrors or the other one.[16]

She tells him that Gandhi has forbidden references to religion and has renamed the children with religiously neutral names. Sriram is quite overwhelmed by her narrative and is clearly unaware of the scale of violence. He is horrified when Bharati notes that in accordance with Mahatma's wishes, she was willing to commit suicide should she have become a potential victim of sexual violence while working in the riot-torn areas.

While Narayan uses this exchange to present the horrors of Partition, it is clear that people from the South varied vastly in their understanding of the political situation. Whereas many like Sriram received their information secondhand, there were a few like Bharati who were actively involved in mitigating the situation. As a new national sensibility emerges, the novel makes clear that there is a chasm between the South and New Delhi. Gandhi's assassination at the end of the novel emphasizes the ambiguity. Narayan's narration of the Partition in this final section of the novel is less interested in examining the violence or the psychological and social impact on those who were dislocated, attacked, or lost their kin. The two men on the train remain nameless menaces, and the orphans make a cameo appearance to allow Bharati to continue to educate Sriram on Gandhian ideals. Narayan does recognize that a bewildered Sriram who has no ability to communicate in Hindi will remain a perpetual outsider in the mainstream nationalist discourse. Although the ending is ambiguous, the novel which was published just as the language issues were heating up in the South underscores that a large part of the country would always be understood as needing tutoring on nationalism,

citizenship, and identity. The novel expresses deep cynicism about Gandhian nationalism and the possibility for a secular national vision to thrive. Although Sriram and Bharati presumably marry and raise the orphans and continue Gandhi's work, the novel's ending underscores the fragility of the new secular nation and seems to suggest that for the people of the South, there is no possibility of shaping the narrative of nation, just an unquestioning capitulation to its dominance.

Lalithambika Antherjanam (1909–1985) presents a very different response to Partition. As a fiction writer and an essayist, she has written extensively about women, gender, and caste before and after Indian independence with a particular emphasis on the Namboodiri community in Kerala. Although her early writing was focused primarily on the issues facing Namboodiri women such as seclusion, child marriage, property rights, and motherhood, she also wrote about national issues. Her story "A Leaf in the Whirlwind" (1948) is one of the first to address Partition from the perspective of a South Indian who was witnessing the events that were occurring along the Indian border with Pakistan. She lived far away from these borders and heard of the events through newspaper and radio reports as the newly formed nation was grappling with political independence and the accompanying bloodshed of Partition. In her essay "A Woman Writer's Reply," she explains that the Punjabi woman, Jyoti, the protagonist of "A Leaf in the Whirlwind" is one of her favorites

> because she is drawn completely from the imagination. I had not visited Punjab when I wrote the story, nor had I met any refugees. I read in the newspaper one day that a certain number of women who had been raped would be handed over at the border in exchange for the same number from the other side. When I went to bed that night, I thought of this bit of news and the identity of one of the women refugees who had endured such unimaginable sorrow took shape in my mind. I got up at once and wrote the story. The image of this girl, who reflects the distress of one caught in a terrible dilemma of womanhood, is very dear to me, for it was my imagination that created her.[17]

Antherjanam's imaginative recreation of the Partition experiences of a Punjabi woman precedes the work of feminist scholars of the 1980s who began rethinking Partition history from women's perspectives.

She writes of Jyoti, a woman in a refugee camp in the Punjab border, who had been raped and then exchanged along with other women as part of a state-sponsored effort to repatriate rape victims of Partition. Jyoti is brought to a refugee camp on the Indian side of Punjab where she is surrounded by women who have all endured unspeakable horrors and loss. Each woman copes with her traumas differently. Jyoti is neither silent nor passive. Her name, which means "light," suggests symbolically the character's agency despite the attempts of the state and social workers to commandeer her body after its violation. As the exchange occurs,

Jyoti angrily asks, "Are you taking us from one prison to another, then?"[18] Jyoti comes from a wealthy family and we learn that she was abducted and raped repeatedly. She struggles with post-traumatic stress; not only does she relive the rape in her mind, but she also struggles with an unwanted pregnancy. As her pregnancy advances, she thinks of different ways in which she could end her life. She refuses food or drink, and a doctor is brought in to coax her to eat. She angrily asks the doctor if he is capable of killing her unborn, unwanted child. The narrative notes that the doctor was the "disciple of the great Indian teacher of Ahimsa"[19] and is taken aback by the question. By referencing Gandhi in this passage, Antherjanam criticizes both the futility of the philosophy of Ahimsa embraced by Gandhians but also parallels Jyoti's suicidal starvation to Gandhi's satyagraha. While Gandhi's political strategy emphasized the moral imperative of freedom for Indians, Jyoti's hunger strike comes from the desperation of a woman who had her autonomy denied first by her rapists and then by the state. The doctor responseds to Jyoti: "A terrible whirlwind blows through our unfortunate motherland now from all directions. But Bharat is sure to survive, and you are a woman of Bharat aren't you?"[20] The doctor's abstract philosophizing of nationalism stands in stark contrast to the material and bodily consequences of that abstract nationalism that is borne by women in this refugee camp. In this powerful exchange, Antherjanam juxtaposes binaries male/female, abstract nationalism/material realities of Partition to expose the gendered and violent nature of the Partition experience. Antherjanam concludes this exchange between the doctor and Jyoti by noting that Jyoti drank some milk. She writes, "Either the doctor's words had moved her, or she had reached the limits of despair and now wanted to live."[21] Like Narayan, Antherjanam evokes the symbolic woman as nation through the portrayal of Jyoti but unlike Narayan's Bharati who had a theoretical plan for what to do if she were sexually violated, Jyoti portrays a raped but courageous woman who endures against all odds.

Later in the narrative, Jyoti births her son alone in a field near the camp. As the infant lies howling, she endures a phenomenal struggle between her desire to let the child simply die or to embrace it and nurture it into life. The story concludes,

> The young mother gathered her son in her arms and hugged him. She kissed his icy forehead over and over again till it became warm. Her lifeblood flowed to the child as milk.
>
> The mother walked toward the camp holding her little one to her breast. The stars smiled down on her as if they had found the answer to a difficult question.[22]

As Jyoti chooses life for herself and her newborn son, the narration notes that the cosmos had found an answer to a difficult question. Ambiguity surrounds both the question and the response in this passage—is the

question about life and death? About citizenship? Will Jyoti raise her son or will she abandon him? What will be the future of that child born of bloodshed and religious hostility? Antherjanam poignantly imagines through Jyoti the plight of thousands of women who had been raped and abducted during Partition riots. Not for them large questions of nationalism and ahimsa but the everyday realities of survival. In imaginatively embracing the complexities of nationalism and citizenship while also recreating for her readers, others like her who had not been directly impacted by Partition, the material realities of other ethnic groups, Antherjanam's writing also compels individuals to think beyond the ethnic and communal and to embrace the national. Her story claims sisterly commonality among all Indian women negotiated through what for Antherjanam are biological and essential impulses of life and motherhood that transcend socially constructed discourses of nation, citizenship, and belonging. The Others—Punjabis, refugees, Partition victims—are now Us because we (women) all share bonds of motherhood. This, then, is also a reframing of the discourse of Mother India popular in nationalist discourse of the time. Mother India is not an idealized Goddess, a transcendent symbol of the nation.[23] For Partition survivors like Jyoti, traumatic motherhood seals an alliance with other Indian women and forges the bonds of troubled citizenship. Antherjanam's story not only creates empathy for refugee women like Jyoti, but by articulating the shared bonds of motherhood and sisterhood, she offers an alternative to the Othering of women in the dominant discourses of nationalism and Partition. Unlike Narayan who portrays the South as left out of nationalist conversations, Antherjanam presents a way to embrace national oneness through the sisterhood of women.

Balachandra Rajan's novel *The Dark Dancer* (1958) has been largely overlooked in studies of Partition literature. Rajan's novel is the only extensive treatment of the Partition which explores the dilemmas of South Indians grappling with Partition. His protagonist, a Tamil Brahmin named Krishnan, is a recently returned England-educated civil servant who is unwittingly drawn into the Partition because of his romantic dilemmas. Caught between his westernized education and his Brahmin upbringing, the cynical Krishnan acquiesces to an arranged marriage to please his mother. Although he deliberately chooses Kamala to challenge his mother's beliefs in priests and horoscopes, he discovers that Kamala overturns his preconceived notions of South Indian women. The idealistic Kamala is an ardent Gandhian nationalist and draws Krishnan into satyagraha and emerging politics. Rajan's characters, Krishnan and Kamala, in many ways mirror Sriram and Bharati from Narayan's novel, but the critical difference is that Krishnan has lived in Britain for a significant period and is, consequently, unaware of the scope and intensity of the anticolonial movement. Upon his return, Krishnan becomes a civil servant in New Delhi, and he experiences the independence of India and

Pakistan from a profoundly bureaucratic perspective—How do papers, files, and people involved in the British Indian Civil Service transition into two bureaucracies at once hostile and similar to one another?

Krishnan grows increasingly skeptical about Indian independence, but as a South Indian civil servant, he is fairly cocooned from the violence and the hardships of others. Despite being in Delhi, he experiences Partition at a distance created both by his regional identity as well as his class. Unlike his Sikh colleague, Pratap Singh, he does not have to agonize over his relatives' safety. When Pratap Singh worries about his family's fate, he says, "I'm a Government servant, I've a discipline to keep. . . . You wouldn't guess it from all the mass marches and pacific protests, but down in many of us there's a core of desperation waiting to explode whenever the pressure is turned off."[24] When Krishnan responds to this with "I've felt some of it myself,"[25] Singh retorts, "Thanks for sympathizing, but you don't know. You couldn't possibly unless it happened to you. You're a South Indian, you're two thousand miles away from it, your people aren't on the invasion route, your land isn't torn by this kind of dissension."[26] Although both Singh and Krishnan are safely ensconced in a civil service office, this exchange sharply articulates that to understand Partition, one has to experience it directly and that empathy alone is not enough. It will always be a poor substitute for experiences. Although both Krishnan and Singh are citizens of the new nation, there is a distinction to be made between "your land" and "my land" from Singh's perspective. Krishnan will never belong unless he feels the same loss as Singh.

Krishnan is neither an ardent nationalist nor an enthusiastic Anglophile. He is torn between both perspectives and, at first, maintains a cynical distance. Rajan represents Krishnan's dilemma through his romantic troubles. As the newlywed Krishnan settles into marital routine, his former lover, an English woman, Cynthia, comes back into his life. Ironically, it had been Cynthia, an Indophile and an apologist for the British Empire, who had educated him about colonial resistance and Jallianwallah Bagh. As an Indian student in Britain, Krishnan's understanding of nationalist politics was sketchy at best. Like Narayan's Sriram, Krishnan too is a naïve South Indian and both male protagonists are schooled by women. Narayan's Bharati channels Gandhi's views somewhat uncritically to Sriram, whereas Krishnan learns about nationalism from both his wife and Cynthia. While Cynthia narrates recent historical events to educate Krishnan, Kamala educates by action. With the return of Cynthia who comes to India to witness independence, Krishnan quickly enters an adulterous relationship and abandons his wife. Krishnan's choice may be read as the educated elite rejecting homegrown nationalism for an English understanding of nationalist resistance as spectacle. He scandalizes his family and his colleagues by his actions, but the tumult in the nation begins to eclipse his actions.

Kamala surprises him as she refuses to be victimized by his actions and become a burden on her family. Following her Gandhian ideals, she goes to a refugee camp in the Punjab border to serve the many who have been displaced and brutalized by Partition. Krishnan, recognizing his errors, follows her to the refugee camp trying to woo her back. It is in that journey to the border that Krishnan experiences Partition directly. As he boards a crowded train, Rajan's narrative embraces one of the common elements in Partition narratives, the train journey between two nations splintered by religion where religious identity can be life threatening and where passing is necessary for survival. Krishnan's dramatic encounter in the train bathroom with a Muslim passing as Hindu and with a Sikh man on a murderous rampage to avenge his family's losses by murdering Muslims is transformative. He witnesses brutality and experiences his own primal survival instincts. Once he recognizes that he is capable of killing for survival and that he is not shielded by his superior intellect or his westernized education, Krishnan understands that citizenship and belonging are more than philosophical constructs—they are identities formed in violence and a man is called upon to prove his masculinity by saving himself and his kin by any means possible. When Krishnan seems horrified by the murder of the Muslim, the Sikh asks him, "Whose side are you on, anyway, you South Indian weasel?"[27] Krishnan retorts, "I'm an Indian. . . . It may sound stupid, but I'm on the side of India."[28] The Sikh angrily remarks, "You think I'm not Indian! . . . You think we haven't paid for being Indian? The thousands that are dead and the millions that are homeless. The rich land abandoned and the lives we've left behind. That's been our sacrifice for making India. What have *you* done that gives you the right to talk?"[29] While Krishnan might have had a closer experience of the Partition violence on the train, the Sikh makes it amply clear that unless one has sacrificed for one's country, there is no claim for citizenship. There is a difference between witnessing and experiencing and those who witness only will never be full-fledged citizens of the new nation born of bloodshed and profound sacrifice.

Krishnan's education does not end on the train. After he arrives in the refugee camp, ironically named Shantipur, he learns more about those who have survived—the diseases, the abysmal living conditions, the rupturing of families, and the sacrifices of those who volunteer to minister to the refugees. He too is drawn into serving the community. As Krishnan serves beside Kamala, he embraces a Gandhian approach to serving those in need side by side with his wife. Their relationship as a couple is subsumed by their service to the nation and its most vulnerable citizens. Once again the Krishnan-Kamala story parallels that of Sriram and Bharati with each couple reframing marriage as a social commitment to the vulnerable and not a private, domestic arrangement. While there are plot similarities between Narayan and Rajan's portrayals of the South Indian male's understanding of nationalism and belonging, Rajan's protagonist

evolves from naïveté and Anglophilia to a more nuanced and passionate understanding of nation. Narayan's depiction of Sriram remains static—Sriram experiences great events but is never transformed by them. Thus, Narayan presents a more cynical view of the ability of people in the South to embrace a national identity that transcends regional politics.

Krishnan is confronted by Partition violence once more when he and Kamala are out for a walk and try to save a young girl who is being pursued by men who seek to avenge deaths and abductions of women in their own community. It is significant that the narrative does not identify either the girl or her attackers by their religion. They are simply part of a repeated narrative that is no longer about religious or ethnic identity but about asserting rights and revenge mediated by women's bodies. When Kamala steps forward to stop the men and is stabbed in the process, we see her act and eventually her sacrifice in a way that Krishnan never does. When Krishnan tries to save Kamala from the communal violence that surrounds the camp, he is unsuccessful. Kamala, whom Rajan elevates to the ideal Indian woman who nurtures and serves, dies in the attack and leaves Krishnan deeply stricken. Kamala's death finally puts Krishnan on equal footing with the Sikhs, Hindus, and Muslims of the Punjab who had sacrificed land and kin to claim citizenship. He is no longer the distant South Indian who views Partition from the safety of his office or home, but one who has been baptized in blood, so to speak, into the new nation.

Rajan's narrative challenges the assumption that Southern Indians were distanced from the violence that shattered Northern India. Krishnan and Kamala represent the empathy of southern people as well as their transformation by shared experience. The violence, for Rajan, is larger than regional identities. His symbol of the "dark dancer" evoking Shiva as Nataraja performing the cosmic dance of destruction and rebirth becomes symbolic of the idea of India. The old (imperial India) is being destroyed while the new is being birthed. While the dance is devastating in its power, its result is powerful and new. However, Rajan's vision of Partition and nation are expressed in deeply Hindu terms with the idealized Indian woman, Kamala, sacrificed for the greater good is quite problematic. His vision of the new India is both Hindu and patriarchal in its expression. If Antherjanam transcended communal differences by forging bonds of sisterhood for women through their shared experiences of violence, Rajan's narrative offers shared bonds of violence and loss as the narrative of nation in which regional and communal identities are superseded by a profoundly Hindu and masculine symbology.

Narayan, Antherjanam, and Rajan all wrote within the first decade of independence and Partition when the raw narratives and images circulated across India and Pakistan. As writers rooted within South Indian cultures and aware of the distinct preoccupations of South Indian politics regarding caste and language, their works express anxiety about how the

experience of Partition was shaping ideas of citizenship and belonging in a new nation. Were those in the South to be perpetual outsiders in the nation? Narayan expresses ambivalence about the nationalist narrative as a whole and is cynical about the South being granted full citizenship; Antherjanam reclaims a secular nation by claiming bonds of universal sisterhood and motherhood, and Rajan depicts a South Indian woman as martyr in Partition violence to claim a space in the discourse of citizenship and belonging for those from the South. These novels offer a corrective to the assertion that the South was unaffected by Partition; yet, these narratives also run the risk of appropriating Partition narratives to forge claims of belonging for those who knew Partition violence from a distance.

While this book engages the idea of the "Long Partition" and how to interpret and/or unearth overlooked experiences, this essay insists that Partition discourse while not absent in the South is still secondary to other concerns of caste and language. At the same time, as the impact of Partition on citizenship and belonging extends beyond the happenings of 1947 and continues to influence politics in India, those events impact the South differently. For example, when North India—particularly New Delhi, Chandigarh, and Amritsar—grappled with the invasion of the Golden Temple by the Indian army, the assassination of Mrs. Gandhi, the Sikh separatism and militancy, and the violence against Sikhs that evoked memories of Partition, in Tamil Nadu the people were enraged by the treatment of Tamils in Jaffna and supported the Tamil Tigers. As Sri Lanka reeled from the effects of that civil war in 1982–1983, Tamil Nadu grappled with a shared sense of ethnicity with the Tamils of Sri Lanka. Many Tamils supported Eelam and the partition of Sri Lanka for a Tamil homeland. The impact of India's intervention in Sri Lanka was shockingly felt with the assassination in 1991 of Rajiv Gandhi by a suicide bomber. So any discussions of the Long Partition must account for the South's complex relationship to both the narrative of the nation and the role of Partition in shaping that narrative.

NOTES

1. J. N. Dixit, *India-Pakistan in War and Peace* (New York: Routledge, 2003); Gyanendra Pandey, *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism, and History in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). Understandably most Partition studies focus on the events in the borderlands whether East or West. However, when these studies such as Bhaskar Sarkar's study of cinema (Bhaskar Sarkar, *Mourning the Nation: Indian Cinema in the Wake of Partition*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2009) or Kavita Daiya's study or literature (Kavita Daiya, *Violent Belongings: Partition, Gender, and National Culture in Postcolonial India,* Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008) or Gyan Pandey's examination of Partition historiography make the move from the particulars of Partition experience to examinations of nation and belonging, the assumption is that the events in the borderlands influence the whole nation-state. For example, then Sarkar can make a case for mourning and national identity through a

study of Bengali cinema. But regional cinema in the South does not focus intensely on mourning through Partition experiences. Tamil cinema, for example, is much more focused on caste and class issues than it is on mourning the trauma of Partition. Films like Mani Ratnam's *Roja* (1992) are exceptions rather than the norm. Time and time again, the Southern states (Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka) have expressed contrary and different understandings and anxieties about nationalism. While their articulations have been largely secular, they have had significant concerns over language and caste issues. The argument in this essay is not intended to reify an "us" versus "them" rhetoric common for nearly eight decades in the South but to note that any examination of the Long Partition and/or nationalism must account for the contestations to the same from the South.

2. Balachandra Rajan, *The Dark Dancer* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1958).

3. Kavita Daiya, *Violent Belongings: Partition, Gender, and National Belonging in Post-colonial India* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008), 5

4. Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali Zamindar, *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 3.

5. See Nazia Akhtar's essay in this volume for a detailed discussion of Hyderabad and Partition.

6. Mike Thomson, "Hyderabad 1948: India's hidden massacre" September 24, 2013, http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-24159594 (Accessed August 27, 2015).

7. See Mira Debs, "Using Cultural Trauma: Gandhi's Assassination, partition and secular nationalism in post-independence India." *Nations and Nationalism*, 19, 4 (2013): 635–53.

8. For a substantive examination of the Sindhi experience with Partition, see Rita Kothari's *The Burden of Refuge: Partition Experiences of the Sindhis of Gujarat* (New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2007); and Nandita Bhavnani's essay in this volume.

9. See "Catholic in Outlook," *The Hindu*, April 3, 2003, for a description of Sindhi culture in Chennai.

10. Gyanendra Pandey, *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism, and History in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 132.

11. Yoginder Sikand, "Muslims in Kerala and Elsewhere: Accounting for the Difference," countercurrents.org, June 30, 2007, http://www.countercurrents.org/sikand300607.htm (Accessed August 27, 2015).

12. R. K. Narayan, *Waiting for the Mahatma* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955); Lalithambika Antherjanam, "A Leaf in the Whirlwind," in *Cast Me Out if You Will: Stories and Memoir*, trans. Gita Krishnankutty (New York: Feminist Press, 1997), 79–88; Balachandra Rajan, *The Dark Dancer* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1958).

13. Early in his career, Narayan worked briefly for a newspaper called *The Justice* which promoted the rights of non-Brahmins; Narayan's commitment to this cause as a Brahmin is indicative of his awareness of the regional political situation. E.V.R. Periyar and the Justice Party were both critical of the North Indian orientation of the Congress and sought to reformulate political and nationalist discourse around Tamil cultural identity and the eradication of caste-based discrimination.

14. For a discussion of Tamil nationalism, see Marguerite Ross Barnett's *The Politics of Cultural Nationalism in South India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976) and Eugene Irschik's *Politics and Social Conflict in South India: The Non-Brahmin Movement and Tamil Separatism, 1916–1929* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969).

15. Saadat Hasan Manto writes of the sexual violence experienced by men in his very brief short story "Mishtake" with none of the coyness of Narayan. See *Memories of Madness: Stories of 1947* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2002): 457

16. R. K. Narayan, *Waiting for the Mahatma* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), 244.

17. Lalithambika Antherjanam, "A Woman Writer's Reply," *Cast Me Out if You Will: stories and Memoir*, trans. Gita Krishnankutty (New York: Feminist Press, 1997), 154–55.

18. Lalithambika Antherjanam, "A Leaf in the Whirlwind," *Cast Me Out if You Will: Stories and Memoir*, trans. Gita Krishnankutty. (New York: Feminist Press, 1997): 79.

19. Ibid., 81.
20. Ibid., 81.
21. Ibid., 81–82.
22. Ibid., 87.
23. For a detailed discussion of Mother India, see Sumathi Ramaswamy's *The Goddess and the Nation: Mapping Mother India* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010).
24. Balachandra Rajan, *The Dark Dancer* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1958): 76
25. Ibid., 76.
26. Ibid., 76.
27. Ibid., 199.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.

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