Bodies of History in Anglophone Writing on Partition

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Nadeem Aslam

School of Humanities and Social Sciences

University of Strathclyde

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Abstract

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Nadeem Aslam

Partition archives have grown over the decades to include multiple types of evidentiary material which documents the division of India and its broader human consequences. This material is diverse and varied, covering historical, political and personalised accounts of the event. Partition can no longer be discussed without considering the impact of history and memory on its re-presentation. Ramifications of the event still play out today, as many continue to make sense of the unprecedented levels of violence, mass migration and death it caused.

This project aims to better understand Partition by examining ways in which creative efforts communicate its experiences. By taking a literary approach, fiction and oral histories are analysed as types of *texts* which employ creative practice to convey different kinds of 'truth' about Partition. This research also considers ways in which the politics of memory, history and trauma have shaped representations of the division of India in present times. Literary works and oral history projects on Partition present alternative investigations that work within the remits of what is known about its history to provide creative explorations of experience. By engaging with such explorations, this thesis provides a deeper and more critical engagement with how 'alternative' narratives are put to work.

Moving beyond Partition as an event of catastrophic proportions, this study also discusses the existential crisis and inter-generational effects of Partition to provide a more holistic and nuanced understanding of its legacy.

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CONTENTS

Introduction

The 1947 Indian Partition was a seismic event that altered both public and private life throughout South Asia. The British rule in India came to an end in 1947 after they drew up the Radcliffe Line, demarcating the new national borders of India and Pakistan. The Indian subcontinent was sectioned largely along religious lines to create a Hindu majority India and a Muslim majority Pakistan. In 1971, Pakistan was also divided, and the independent nation of Bangladesh was formed.

The reasons for Partition have been thoroughly discussed by academics, historians, and politicians since 1947. For many, policies of the colonial British were to blame. For others, the stubbornness, ambitions and belligerence of Hindu, Muslim and Sikh leaders were the cause. Regardless of the reasons, Partition changed the fabric of the Indian subcontinent and resulted in unprecedented levels of extreme violence. Although the exact number of deaths caused by Partition will never be known, the well-known social scientist and historian, Ian Talbot, estimates it to be around one million (Talbot 420). However, according to South Asian scholars like Kavita Daiya, the number is much higher and is estimated to be around two million (Daiya 6). Approximately 18 million people were forced to migrate (Talbot 420) and up to 150,000 women were killed, assaulted and tortured (Daiya 6). Families were left dislocated, destitute and abandoned, as mass violence engulfed the region. As a result, Partition is a significant event in the history of the Indian subcontinent, and its controversial legacy continues to mark the lives and memories of South Asians. Many survivors of Partition and their descendants, as well as those who live with the trauma of its legacy, continue to struggle with the reasoning behind its occurrence.

Many books on Partition focus on the Punjab, and little work has been undertaken to evaluate the effects of the event on all the communities that experienced Partition

(Raychaudhuri, *Narrating* 4). As a result, there exists an unbalanced account of the division of India. Experiences of survivors in areas such as Sindh and Bengal have not been discussed at length in academic work, nor do many novelists, artists and filmmakers bridge this gap using their respective fields (Raychaudhuri, *Narrating* 4). To capture the voices of all the communities involved is an extremely difficult task, especially now that many Partition survivors are elderly or have died. In an attempt to convey the human dimension of Partition, which is often overlooked in politically motivated and official accounts, Yasmin Khan's *The Great Partition* (2017) moves away from a focus on high-level politics to the lived experience of those who witnessed the division of India. Her work provides a more holistic representation of the event by recounting the history of Partition and by representing its complexity, which she achieves by weaving individual and collective perspectives into the narration. By exploring the lived experience, Khan details the confusion, brutality, and conflicting identities that surfaced after Partition when the British decided to 'quit' India, and often uses narrative agency as a device to connect historical facts with individual experience.

Khan first published *The Great Partition* in 2007, and her 2017 new edition contains a preface in which she begins by 'looking back' at Partition, comparing the refugee crisis created by the Syrian war which began in 2011, with those displaced in 1947. Her view remains that the individual stories of refugees are as important as their collective stories (Khan xx), to reiterate the significance of collecting and disseminating different types of histories and 'truths' to achieve a better understanding of an event and its experience. Discussing Partition in the context of current events, Khan's preface acknowledges that much more work has been undertaken on Partition since she wrote her book in 2007. She mentions the establishment of a Partition Museum, digital archives and the collection of oral testimonies, as projects which have helped to "inform a more holistic understanding of what took place, with all its multiple differences and individual subjectivities" (Khan xxiv).

Much of this recent work Khan acknowledges was produced through a concerted effort to re-engage with Partition history, triggered by the 70th anniversary of the event. Documentaries, podcasts, and oral history projects were some of the ways individual voices and stories of survivors were made known to larger audiences. Oral history testimonies, in particular, provided an insight into the lived experiences of marginalised groups that had been overlooked in politically motivated historical versions of the division of India. Oral historians and digital archives of Partition have, therefore, been successful at collecting voices from a generation that is slowly dying out. As will be discussed later in this thesis, this recording of personal experiences has led to an expansion of the alternate archive on Partition and provides a more nuanced understanding of the event, at both individual and collective level.

Another recent work on Partition is the edited collection, *Partition and the Practice of Memory* (2018) by Churnjeet Mahn and Anne Murphy. Written to coincide with the 70th anniversary of Partition (Mahn and Murphy 8), the book contains a volume of essays which approach the complex way in which memories of Partition are upheld, shaped and propagated along the borders of India and Pakistan, and that of India and Bangladesh. As many memories of Partition are perpetuated by commemorations of the event, the edited collection of essays also explores memory formation and the silencing and subverting of memory, which often occurs through cultural practice and the narratives disseminated through heritage sites (Mahn and Murphy 5). Much like the work carried out by Mahn on the Creative Interruptions Project – an Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) funded project that brought together university researchers and external collaborators to explore the role of creative practice in different communities, and the use of creative practice and intervention to challenge the exclusion of marginalised people, the edited collection by Mahn and Murphy makes a valuable contribution to academic scholarship on Partition. It expands current

understanding surrounding memory as a form of culture that is connected to commemorative practice and cultural representations of Partition.

Partition and the Practice of Memory also explores the connection between the archive and the literary, drawing attention to the ongoing expansion of the alternate archives which employ memory practice. In expanding current understanding of the role of memory in the production of alternative histories, this thesis takes a literary approach by considering oral testimonies and literary fiction as types of *texts* which take creative approaches to telling different kinds of 'truth' about history. By analysing the creative practice of storytelling in fiction and oral testimonies through literary analysis, this thesis explores the way representations of different 'truths' work and why. Oral testimonies and literary fiction on Partition are alternative to more conventional histories, as they embody the lived and individual experience. These alternative histories are as valuable as 'real' historical accounts which are often politically motivated. The value of alternative Partition stories is connected to the idea that they find themselves bound to a historical event – they do not dramatically reimagine the events of Partition, but work within the remits of what we know about Partition history to produce creative explorations of embodied feelings and experiences.

The overall point of this thesis is that literary analysis can uncover how different kinds of 'truth' and its representation works in fiction and oral testimonies, when they are approached as types of *texts* that employ creative practice. The individual experiences of Partition have become known due to the collecting and disseminating of oral testimonies by digital archives and oral history projects. These experiences have informed cultural representations of the event, as well as fiction and film, in which characters are connected to historical pasts. This research supports the idea that all Partition discourses, approached critically and as complementary to one another, can broaden our understanding of the

division of India. The main argument of this thesis is that oral histories, fiction and cultural representations of Partition present valuable 'truths', as they inhibit the past, and this thesis explores how these 'truths' are put to work in present times. Both public narrative and private memory play a role in how the division of India is represented. Fiction, film and art capture different histories, and they must all be examined to evaluate the influence of public discourse on personal recollection and cultural representation.

Both films and literature are creative expressions of human experience that employ agency through narration. Although both can represent the past, their goal remains to create "sublimity in human imagination and understanding" (Ramrao 150). Film, like literature, is often bound to actual historical events, and filmmakers negotiate memory to reconstruct history based on their interpretation. Great literary classics like *Jane Eyre* (1847) and *The Great Gatsby* (1925) have been successfully adapted into films, providing a visual adaptation of literary works for viewers. Although these classics may not be grounded in a historical past, they are examples of how authors and filmmakers exercise creative practice and narrative agency to convey particular meanings. In the same way, producers of films related to Partition such as Train to Pakistan (1998), which is an adaptation of *Train to Pakistan* by Khushwant Singh and Earth (1998), which is an adaptation of Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice Candy Man* (1988), reuse and recreate memories of the past to provide meaning according to the director's interpretation of it. Literature complements cinematic production by providing it with screen content, while cinema can, at times, influence the compositional techniques of literature which is visible in dialogue delivery, arrangement and narration (Ilgam and Osmukhina 380). Films have the ability to narrate human plight and experiences in great detail. Like fiction, they create 'alternative' histories and 'truths', which can formulate and guide public sentiment towards a reconstruction and reinterpretation of the past. Although film production expands the 'alternative' archive by representing 'new' cultural

representations of Partition, the focus of this thesis is to discuss literary works and oral testimonies, as well as official accounts, to emphasise the important role different histories and their varied representations play in providing a better understanding of the legacy of Partition ("Cinema and Its Impact").

STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

This thesis is divided into four chapters. The first of these is called 'Existing Approaches to Writing on Partition and Memory', which provides an overview of some of the dominant paradigms used to create 'alternative' investigations of Partition and its impact across generations. The reason why this is important for a literary understanding of Partition is because the novels and oral testimonies discussed in this thesis are embedded in historical accounts. By presenting an overview on existing Partition literature, the historical context of the 1947 division and how it connects to the 'alternative' ways in which Partition is represented will be discussed.

Chapter One also discusses cultural and collective memory and historiography as a truth, interrogating the truth value ascribed to memory. Academics like Hayden White (1996) criticise history when it is framed as truth, and question the effect of the narrative mode of historical discourse. In light of this, the chapter questions history as truth and the use of this 'truth' by historians and politicians in renegotiating the past and in defining which 'truth' is dispensed in present times and for what effect. This chapter will refer to the work of Andreas Huyssen (1995) who explores the palimpsestic nature of history, to further support the idea that history is malleable in the hands of anyone trying to represent it. If history is no longer

the canon through which authenticity is conferred, then it constantly alters in accordance with why it is recalled or (re)presented and for whom. The idea that it is perhaps being used to anchor certain versions of the past for particular benefits is also explored in this chapter. Furthermore, the relationship between memory and trauma will be assessed to consider the role of heritage centres, commemorative practices and memorialisation in shaping representations of the past in the present. Memorialisation is essentially a structuring of memory. The resulting structure, instead of acting as a reconciliatory or restorative tool, can become a tool of fundamental politics, sustaining a particular narrative. The reason behind questioning history as truth, supported by the works of White and Huyssen, is to outline the malleable nature of history and memory that make up historical accounts of the past. This chapter argues that historical accounts of the past are connected to a structuring of memory that presents types of truth, much like alternative investigations of Partition which also present 'truths', while inhibiting the past.

When approaching alternative histories presented through fiction and oral testimonies as types of *texts* that use creative practice, literary analysis can be applied to them to uncover how different kinds of truth are put to work. Both oral histories and fiction can challenge official and elitist version of Partition, though they are often regarded as too personalised and unauthentic. However, this chapter will outline that any version of history can be contested and critiqued, arguing that oral histories provide an alternative and nuanced intervention that present another kind of truth from which to better understand Partition and its legacy. Oral testimony is an effective tool to capture the voices of marginalised groups, and the instances of silence or the unwillingness to speak or recall during an interview, can also be read as discourse. The impact of trauma brought about by Partition on the lives of women and marginalised groups, as well as the silence around their experiences, will be discussed to

show that oral testimonies are as valuable as ‘real’ accounts, and that they create explorations of embodied feelings and experiences which inform discourses on Partition.

Chapter Two is entitled ‘At the Margins of Experience: Bodies of Violence and Memory in the Works of Bapsi Sidhwa’. The chapter is a discussion on the literary works of Sidhwa, namely, her highly acclaimed novel *Ice Candy Man* (1988) - a seminal piece on Partition that captures the human dimension of the division of India, and her short story, “Defend Yourself Against Me” (2013) - a modern-day account of the effects of Partition in the diaspora. This chapter explores how a collection of tropes and metaphors denoting different kinds of margins are simultaneously deployed, in order to generate a text interested in seeing the main events of Partition through the perspective of people who are variously designated to the periphery. Presenting the main narrator as a child, characters as Parsee (a religious minority originally from Persia that reside in India), the fact that the violence takes place in fringe spaces, and the diaspora short story being located geographically and temporally at the ‘fringe’ of Partition, are all examples of perspectives from the periphery that Sidhwa utilises. Therefore, this telling of Partition continually thinks of decentring and displacement in its literal and figurate organisation.

The main focus of Chapter Two is the experience of individuals who appear to be ‘victims’ of history, rather than agents. Their embodied feelings and experiences are relayed in fiction which expand our understanding of Partition. Literary fiction uses creative approaches to telling different kinds of ‘truth’ about history through storytelling, and this chapter outlines fiction as a valuable alternative to conventional history. The stories in the works of Sidhwa are connected to actual historical events and are not dramatically reimagined. Her work is in fact, working within existing knowledge to creatively explore the individual experience. A literary analysis of personalised emotions and experiences will be

undertaken in this chapter by discussing how Sidhwa presents the relationship that existed between different communities at the time of Partition, and how she captures the voices of marginalised groups and ordinary people. By examining how she presents her characters, this chapter will discuss how creative practice is put to work in conveying the violence, heroism and rehabilitation associated with Partition. Violence against women, as well as their recovery, rehabilitation and identity struggle are all embedded in historical fact. Analysing how Sidhwa conveys various types of 'truth' about historical events using fiction, through the lens of those designated to the periphery, will shed light on the difference in representation of marginalised groups in official historical accounts and 'alternative' representations in fiction.

The second section of Chapter Two will analyse Sidhwa's short story, "Defend Yourself Against Me" (2013), which is located geographically and temporally at the 'fringe' of Partition and explores the intergenerational effects of the events of 1947. It will analyse the use of storytelling in reflecting the sentiments held by different religious groups who live side by side in present times and explore the extent to which their lives have been shaped by events of the past. Sidhwa uses storytelling to convey different kinds of truth about history in her work, and a literary analysis of how her representations work and why, and to what extent these representations present an alternative to conventional histories on Partition will be discussed. Partition remains unresolved, and an analysis of Sidhwa's short story will examine if and how literary works can encourage reconciliatory dialogue and understanding across generations.

Chapter Three is entitled 'Asylums and Mental Health in Partition Fiction' and will examine the extent to which fictional works capture and explore the 'madness' associated with Partition. The violence and confusion caused by Partition due to political decisions is often referred to as a kind of collective 'madness'. This is to separate the horror of what

happened from the everyday reality of people. This chapter will discuss the ‘madness’ metaphor which is used to describe the actions of those involved in the violence of Partition, and of those responsible for the division of India at political level. The main focus of this chapter is to consider texts that provide literary representations of mental illness. This takes the figurate trope of collective ‘madness’ further through that creative multiplication of what ‘madness’ signifies. By presenting a brief history of psychiatry, this chapter will also approach the institution of the asylum as a colonial construct. Considering the view that the medicalisation of mental illness comes with colonial medicine, mental illness is discussed as a point of colonial administration and management.

This chapter takes a literary approach by analysing two fictional works related to mental health and Partition, namely, the satirical short story “Toba Tek Singh” (1955) by Saadat Hasan Manto and *The Unsafe Asylum* (2018) by Anirudh Kala. These fictional works are texts which present alternative kinds of ‘truth’ on Partition in relation to mental health. As both the fictional works are linked to events that actually occurred in the past, they present a reading of Partition which details the individual experience, as well as the psychological impact of the event at individual level. Manto’s work was published shortly after Partition, while Kala’s work is a recent publication. In between, there has been very little literary or academic work which explores the impact of Partition on mental health. Nor was there, until more recently, an adequate response from the field of psychiatry after Partition to discuss and manage the trauma experienced by survivors.

This chapter examines ways in which Manto uses fiction to question reasons behind the division of India, highlighting those who benefitted from it. Kala’s recent literary work is a set of interwoven stories which will be analysed to explore how fiction explores the effects of the psychological impact of Partition and its intergenerational trauma. As Kala is a

psychiatrist, this chapter will discuss his fictional work as a response from the field of psychiatry to Partition and its consequences. By discussing the history of psychiatric care in India, the institutionalisation of mental health, and by carrying out a reading of literary works that explore madness and mental health, this chapter will examine the effects of Partition on South Asian communities at a psychological level, whilst discussing how these effects continue to affect Indians and Pakistanis living in South Asia and in the diaspora.

Chapter Four is entitled 'Oral Histories of Partition after 1984'. This chapter will discuss oral histories of Partition and the intervention they make by exploring first-hand accounts of personal experiences. The purpose of this chapter is to delve deeper into the alternate archive, mainly focusing on existing oral histories and providing close analysis of oral history extracts, using literary techniques. This chapter will discuss the kinds of metaphors and tropes that recur across different oral histories and consider if these are similar to the ones that appear in literary fiction. In this chapter, oral history will be approached as a type of *text* that provides an alternative to conventional histories on Partition, and one that conveys different kinds of 'truth' through storytelling and narrative agency. This chapter argues that oral testimonies are as valuable as 'real' historical accounts, for they are embedded in a historical past to create explorations of feelings and experiences.

To mark the 70th anniversary of Partition, oral historians engaged in many more projects which collected and disseminated the voices of Partition survivors. This chapter discusses some of these projects, evaluating the value they add to the body of scholarship on Partition, and exploring the kinds of 'truth' oral history projects represent and why. Prior to that, a discussion on existing seminal oral projects will be carried out to examine how effective oral testimonies are in providing vivid accounts of real events and in expanding the alternative archive of Partition. Much like fiction, oral history can provide deeper insights

into the gendered experience of Partition, sexual violence and stories of dislocated ordinary people, which are often overlooked in national histories. Therefore, this chapter will consider oral history projects as platforms that provide people with the opportunity to share experiences which would have otherwise never been heard.

The memorialisation of Partition and the emergence of digital archive projects will also be discussed in Chapter Four. Memorialisation can be a political act which shapes collective memory in the image of national ideology. As a result, the role of the Partition Museum established in India will be examined. This will shed light on what narratives are perpetuated by the museum and to what extent it acts as a reconciliatory space where dialogue and tolerance are encouraged. A discussion on the role of the digital archive in preserving the historical and cultural legacies of India and Pakistan will then follow. This discussion will analyse whether digital archives preserve different types of Partition narratives objectively or if they propagate traditional nationalistic discourses. Accessing Partition's digital archives provides an opportunity for people to learn about the division of India from an array of sources, promoting dialogue and a sharing of experiences. Cross-border dialogue can help ease tensions between India and Pakistan, and the role of digital archives in this regard will be discussed.

Chapter Four will also explore the relationship between material culture and history, emphasising how material objects are connected to memories of the past. Objects which have their own histories can often trigger forgotten memories. Oral testimonies connected to objects carried by those who migrated during Partition will be examined to convey the significance material objects have to displaced communities. The final part of the chapter will discuss how Partition is remembered in oral histories after the 70th anniversary of the event. It will refer to recent works that feature survivor testimonies, including accounts of those now residing in the diaspora. A conclusion will then bring together all the bodies of history

explored in this thesis, discuss their value and contribution to the body of knowledge on Partition and provide a closing analysis.

Chapter One: Existing Approaches to Writing on Memory and Partition

> The summer of 1947 was not like other Indian summers. Even the weather had a different feel in India that year. It was hotter than usual, and drier and dustier. And the summer was longer. No one could remember when the monsoon had been so late. For weeks, the sparse clouds cast only shadows. There was no rain. People began to say that God was punishing them for their sins.
>
> Some of them had good reason to feel that they had sinned. The summer before, communal riots, precipitated by reports of the proposed division of the country into a Hindu India and a Muslim Pakistan, had broken out in Calcutta, and within a few months the death toll had mounted to several thousand. Muslims said the Hindus had planned and started the killing. According to the Hindus, the Muslims were to blame. The fact is, both sides killed. Both shot and stabbed and speared and clubbed.
>
> Both tortured. Both raped. […]
>
> The riots had become a rout. By the summer of 1947, when the creation of the new state of Pakistan was formally announced, ten million people—Muslims and Hindus and Sikhs—were in flight. By the time the monsoon broke, almost a million of them were dead, and all of northern India was either in arms, in terror, or in hiding. The only remaining oases of peace were a scatter of little villages lost in the remote reaches of the frontier (Singh 8).

Creative responses to Partition are part of an 'alternative' archive which differ from official accounts. This archive is able to reveal unknown or overlooked aspects about important historical events, and in doing so, increases modern-day understanding of the past.

The subject of history can no longer rely upon research grounded exclusively on writings from the official archive but must also include ‘alternative’ sources. This chapter provides an overview of some of the dominant paradigms used to create ‘alternative’ investigations of Partition and their impact across generations. This is important for a literary understanding of Partition because the ‘alternative’ versions discussed in this thesis are embedded in historical accounts. By working through the different approaches to representing Partition in writing, how the alternative archive, namely the creative practice of storytelling in oral histories and fiction, draws on a range of discursive types of knowledge and knowing (some of which are history-based) will be explored.

There is no singular narrative that exists on Partition, and studies have evolved over the last seventy-four years to include not only governmental accounts, but also versions recovered from oral testimony. Oral history testimonies are dependent upon accessing narratives of memory, trauma, and history to articulate their position. At this intersection, one discovers the complexities that continue to confront representations of Partition and its legacy in present times, wherein neither the scholars of British India, nor scholars of Indian nationalism, and not even historians of Pakistan have been able to find a definite and compelling place for Partition in the larger historical narrative of the subcontinent (Gilmartin 1068). The 1947 Partition of India resulted in the creation of two nations. Colonial India gained independence from the British Raj, and India and Pakistan came into being as two separate nations. The events leading up to Partition included mass violence which did not end once Partition had occurred. People who once lived side by side turned on one another, as communal violence erupted. Huge numbers of people moved between the newly demarcated borders. This movement and dislocation affected between 12 and 14 million people, caused approximately one million deaths, the rape and abduction of approximately 75,000 women and led to an unprecedented trauma with effects that would continue well into the future

(Butalia, *The Other Side* 3). Muslims, Sikhs, and Hindus all enacted atrocities against each other and the gendered aspect of violence featured rape, torture and forced conversions. What made Partition's cross-border migration unique was the timescale in which it occurred. After the British had decided to dismantle its Indian Empire, Lord Mountbatten advanced the pre-set timetable for the transfer of power from June 1948 to June 1947. This was a decision agreed upon by representatives of the British Raj, the Indian National Congress, The Muslim League, and representatives of the Sikh community (Wolpert 154-55). Although the historical focus on the causes of the event concentrates on major figures such as Lord Mountbatten, Jawaharlal Nehru, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, and Mahatma Gandhi amongst others, there is much that is still overlooked in Partition discourse.

To understand alternative investigations on Partition, their purpose and why they are put to work, one must consider the division of India in relation to cultural and collective memory, history as truth, and trauma. This critical approach supports discussions on how history, memory and trauma act as tools which shape the present-day and future understanding of historical events by negotiating representations of the past. Works such as *Witnessing Partition: Memory, History, Fiction* (2019) by Tarun Saint, deal with the relationship between memory and Partition, and explore how memories of the event affect the way one remembers and (re)presents it. Saint criticises literary works by Attia Hosain, Intizar Hussain and Bhisham Sahni, as well as others, for their lack of engagement with the memory of the founding trauma. Saint's argument outlines history's failure to report the complex, and at times, uncertain history of Partition, arguing that how and what one remembers "has a bearing on the question of representing the historical trauma of 1947 in literature" (Saint, *Witnessing* 143). For Saint, the alternative representations presented by oral narratives "offer an important perspective on history, which enriches the discipline" (Saint, *Witnessing* 144). This research considers these perspectives, and in critiquing memory, trauma and the truth

value ascribed to historical accounts, regards them as factors which can shape collective memory.

Other notable works on memory and Partition include Debali Mookerjea-Leonard's *Literature, Gender, and the Trauma of Partition* (2017), in which she discusses the underlying trauma of Partition and national and regional memory in the newly formed states of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. Departing from Saint's view that literary narratives need to address traumatic violence with greater compassion and understanding, as exhibited in the literary works of Saadat Hasan Manto, Mookerjea-Leonard examines the uncertainty created through mass displacement after Partition, by discussing how violence, relocation and disorientation affect the newly formed states of India and Pakistan. Memory, much like trauma, has an active role in the construction of the past, as it is recalled in the present. Through oral history projects, therefore, memories of past events can be recovered and examined to provide another avenue from which to evaluate the politics that govern the legacies of Partition.

In support of Vazira Zamindar's views in *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia: Refugees, Boundaries, Histories* (2007), and of Amritjit Singh, Nalini Iyer and Rahul Gairola's *Revisiting India's Partition: New Essays on Memory, Culture, and Politics* (2016), that Partition still continues to play out in the present, this research explores its long-lasting effects and inter-generational trauma. Zamindar refers to these effects as the *long Partition*, and literary works continue to explore it by capturing the effects of Partition trauma and by (re)examining the ongoing political, economic, cultural, and psychological effects of the event. An exploration of this *long Partition* is also carried out in *Revisiting India's Partition*, in which essays on memory, culture and politics make an insightful contribution, representing aspects of current academic thought on Partition and how it

continues to affect the present. Expanding on earlier works by scholars such as, Kamla Bhasin and Ritu Menon (1998), Partha Chatterjee (1999), Urvashi Butalia (2000) and Ayesha Jalal (2013), among others, the volume utilises critical theory to discuss how various novels and films represent the division of India. The range of essays explore the growing scope of scholarly inquiry into the afterlife of Partition through discussions on new texts, territories and unexplored archives. Using the interpretative lens of the *long Partition*, these essays demonstrate the 'messy' identities of the descendants of Partition survivors and participants. By shedding light on nuances surrounding collective and individual memories and new art forms, marginalised voices are re-centred. The collection also presents historical accounts of areas that have received considerably little scholarly attention, such as Sindh and Kashmir.

Moreover, the collection of essays in the book examine how South Asians continue to deal with their complex identities at home and in the diaspora. What is outlined is how identity is constantly being shaped, as the *long Partition* continues to affect the lives of people in the present day. This is characterised by the South Asian context of the global war on terrorism and the extremism caused by it, the Kashmir conflict and the ongoing border clashes between India and Pakistan. Attacks on the Indian parliament in 2001, the Mumbai attacks of 2008 and the ongoing violence in Kashmir also embody the global tensions between the West and Islam, which is another discussion that branches out from exploring the connection between memory and history, and its relationship to shaping religious identity. The essays in *Revisiting India's Partition*, map different versions of Partition and urge readership to rethink ways in which Partition studies are looked at by pointing out neglected fields of inquiry. This is further achieved by presenting a discussion of the legacy of decolonisation - traversing beyond the familiar narratives which mostly discuss the Punjab. This new focus unearths a more profound understanding and exploration of how South Asians at home and abroad engage with collective memory and its complexities. Essays in

the collection also discuss the relationship between cultural memory and democracy, as well as female silence in Partition texts, to evidence and discuss the impact of the *long Partition*.

Partition produced a long-lasting trauma which is discussed in literary works that focus on and are informed by Partition memoirs and their testimonial purpose. According to the highly acclaimed Pakistani historian Ayesha Jalal, Partition is "a defining moment that is neither beginning nor end" (qtd. in Singh et al xvii). Its effects travel beyond 1947, requiring us to broaden our understanding of the event. Partition remains unsolved, characterised by anger and resentment many communities throughout India, Pakistan and Bangladesh still harbour towards one another due to past events (Singh et al xix). Moreover, "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" (Singh et all xix).

Partition did not rectify issues related to political rights and minority representation. This remains clear from the ongoing tensions between India and Pakistan, especially over the issue of Kashmir, and from the lack of inclusion of marginalised voices into Partition discourses (although this has been addressed more in recent times through oral history projects). Expanding on earlier work by Gyanendra Pandey and feminist readings of Partition, the essays in *Revisiting India's Partition*, guide us "toward new understanding, healing, and reconciliation", so that a more nuanced understanding of the division of India can be reached" (Singh et al xxvi). By highlighting the importance of accessing the voices of women, religious minorities, and marginalised groups, Partition is discussed as a dynamic and changing occurrence in history, with a continued influence on the lives of the people of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

In the aftermath of Partition, many people found it challenging to reconfigure their identities. Fixed notions of identity had become blurred due to forced migration and a re-

ordering of political boundaries along religious lines. The quest for an identity in the newly formed nations is a topic explored in fictional works by authors such as Saadat Hasan Manto and Bapsi Sidhwa. For some, the need to define their identity exists even today, both in South Asia and in the diaspora. In the immediate aftermath of Partition, both governments and religious institutions expected individuals of their nation to adopt or conform to certain national and religious identities, shedding away the past, which till now had offered constancy and grounding. This re-construction of identity brought about by governmental pressure, led to an existential crisis, heightened further by a traumatic past. Identity, therefore, became a complex concept and one which became difficult to negotiate. Hindus who could not escape Pakistan, Muslims who could not reach Pakistan, and women who were abducted and tortured by the enemy are examples of situations in which individuals had to renegotiate their identities to survive the political condition that was imposed upon them.

Sudipta Kaviraj, in *The Imaginary Institution of India* (2010), uses the term "fuzzy communities" to describe syncretic societies which are not defined by set rules. Such communities are not bound by territorial boundaries and lack enumeration. For Kaviraj, both community and nation are fuzzy constructs that shapeshift irrespective of ethnicity, religion, and language. As a nation comes into being, 'fuzzy communities' can be formed, especially in regions that share the same language and culture. In relation to Partition, the demands of a collective identity by the newly formed nations, would at some point confront the inexact 'fuzzied' identity that exists at the regional level. As a result, the collective 'we', becomes the imaginary national identity that the nation calls for, as individuals struggle to reconcile between 'fuzzy' identities and national expectations. By analysing the lives of characters in fictional works and participants of oral history interviews in later chapters, the challenges and confusion felt by these 'fuzzy communities' in both India and Pakistan become clear. Oral histories and character portrayals in fictional works, therefore, provide an invaluable

contribution to research on Partition and identity, as they offer an alternate lens from which to understand the different participants of Partition, the challenges they faced and their lived experience.

It is also important to unpack the idea of community and identity in relation to Partition, as these constructs are shaped by both memory and history. In *The Social Space of Language: Vernacular Culture in British Colonial Punjab* (2010), Farina Mir discusses the complex nature of community and identity as she exhibits the example of Punjabi *qisse* – a genre of epics and romances which unite communities through language. Despite the Punjabi language and its literature being denied state recognition and support by the British Raj, the tradition of *qisse* flourished. Mir's inquiry shows how identity and community can be framed by stories. These stories, which unite people through language, provide an alternative set of identities and communities in comparison to nationalistic and religious ones. Her work also interrogates cultural formation and what constitutes ideas of belonging. Identity is a dynamic entity, and Mir's study discusses how identity formation can be influenced and shaped by alternate discourses which are not governed by borders and territories, such as *qisse* that appear in the vernacular. Whether identity construction can be imposed by a nation's shaping of collective memory or not, memory and history can be negotiated at various levels to create a cultural anamnesis, resulting in the initiation and adoption of a particular way of thought.

Gyanendra Pandey in *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism and History in India* (2001) discusses how the character of the violence of Partition was unprecedented, and how few had envisaged the *bloodbath* that followed it. Pandey states:

> …what all this has left behind is an extraordinary love-hate relationship: on the one hand, deep resentment and animosity, and the most militant of nationalisms –

> Pakistani against Indian, and Indian against Pakistani, now backed up by nuclear weapons; on the other, a considerable sense of nostalgia, frequently articulated in the view that this was a partition of siblings that should never have occurred – or, again, in the call to imagine what a united Indian-Pakistani cricket team might have achieved! (Pandey, *Remembering* 2)

As is evident from Pandey's sentiment, Partition also produced lament, nostalgia, and a sense of loss for many of its participants. For such people, Partition was a mistake and an unnecessary rupturing of a nation. The violence of 1947 created new borders and within them, new subjects. Individuals, families, and communities found themselves in different settings in which they had to "rebuild faith and trust and hope and to conceive new histories", and as a result, new memories (Pandey, *Remembering* 16). This process of re-creating themselves included negotiating the memory of violence that was vivid in their minds. Deliberate forgetting and avoiding was, therefore, a part of re-making oneself in the altered settings people found themselves in, where state nationalism and rising religious orthodoxy had effaced India's syncretic religious history. Sidhwa's *Ice Candy Man* (1988) features characters who assume new identities after Partition, illustrating ways in which nationalism can shape identity by negotiating the politics of history, memory, and trauma in people's lives. When nationalism is built upon a violent past that expects individuals to re-make themselves within the imposition of recently demarcated boundaries, the role that memory-history plays in identity (re)construction is significant.

Many existing works on Partition concern themselves with the political practices of the imperial British, or of Nehru and Jinnah. Works by writers such as Jalal, Anita Inder Singh, Daniel Gilmartin and Mushirul Hasan tackle the many aspects of Partition and the

multi-faceted violence that is attributed to it. These works, however, remain occupied with the political outcomes of Partition and less with the human dimension of it. It is in the 1980's and 1990's, that we see a shift in perception as Partition discourses moved towards discussing how political mobilisation affected both the social and economic spheres. Partition research has, therefore, evolved in phases - the first is governmental, the second is historical analysis, and then discourses from the 'alternative' archive, represented through women's narratives, oral history, and social and cultural history. Pandey's *Remembering Partition* offers a different insight into Partition, as he examines the relationship between violence and community, and how this relationship constructs the history of a society. By outlining Partition violence as a component in the construction of nations, Pandey brings into question the use of history and collective memory in forming nations, outlining it as "a history of contending politics and contending subject position" (Pandey, *Remembering* 18). Even by Pandey's own admission, Partition history is problematic and not truly indicative of the history of the people who lived through its experience. For him, "procedures of collective 'memory', are enough to wipe out all signs of dissonance and homogenise all recollections of the past" (Pandey, *Remembering* 193). The relationship between memory and literary studies, therefore, is an important one. It explores personal memory and experience, ensuring that human suffering engages with the political, as well as the historical. Furthermore, applying a critical approach to question the role of memory, trauma, and its retelling in the construction of history and identity, unpacks ideas about truth value and authenticity by exploring the legitimacy of altered/rewritten histories of Partition.

Oral histories, as part of the 'alternative' archive on Partition, are a creative response which challenge existing orthodoxies, by providing a different paradigm from which to access the individual experience of Partition. This can be seen in the work of scholars such as

Butalia, who in *The Other Side of Silence*, emphasises that ongoing work on women's narratives is crucial to scholarship on Partition. For Butalia:

> Looking at women's narratives and testimonies, and placing them alongside, or indeed against, the official discourses of history, has offered feminist historians a new and different way of looking at history. How does 'history' look when seen through the eyes of women? How does it evolve, in narratives and testimonies, when women talk to women? (Butalia, *The Other Side* 21)

Stories of gendered violence involving rape, abduction, mutilation, killing and forced conversions make a poignant intervention in Partition discourses. In *Ice Candy Man*, accounts of gendered trauma and violence offer an alternative version of Partition, starkly different to the stories of bravery, heroism and liberation that support nationalist discourses. Through character analysis in literary works, and by analysing oral testimonies of women, the impact of trauma on the lives of women during and after Partition becomes evident. Such analyses illustrate the repressive anamnesis that gave way to a culture of social amnesia amongst women who had been subjected to suffering. The tendency to forget or 'not remember' is understandable as individuals were reluctant to re-live horrors of the past, or to burden their future with memories that stood to define them. Forgetting the violence and suffering brought about by Partition, helped survivors to negotiate their newly constructed identities. However, it must be noted that painful memories and deliberate forgetting, forged silence and an unwillingness to speak in women who resisted recalling their violent past.

Attempts to recover the stories of women who experienced Partition, stem from the fact that women have often been marginalised and underrepresented in the many historical

accounts. At times, they are referred to as hard facts, and in most cases, presented as silent onlookers or bodies upon which the violence of Partition was inscribed and manifested. In Parvinder Mehta's essay, "A Will to Say or Unsay: Female Silences and Discursive Interventions in Partition Narratives" (2016) in *Revisiting India's Partition,* the relationship between silence and discourse is addressed. Traumatic history-laden narratives of violence, rape, and the abduction of women, do not address the non-narrated discourses of silence, nor silence as a discourse with the power to communicate. Tributes of male patriotism, independence and male bravery are numerous, but less veneration is granted to tales of loss, nostalgia, and gendered violence. The emergence of marginalised accounts in recent times, which may previously have been repressed by shame, underscore grand narratives of Partition. Although many historians, like Pandey, who in explaining the historical events of Partition, point out the need to address the silence of unspoken participants - namely women, few have risen to it. Pandey himself asserts that history needs deeper analysis for us to move away from a nationalism we readily accept without question. Butalia in her work questions why history is silent on the suffering of so many and interrogates ""the patriarchal underpinning of history as a discipline" and challenges feminists to retrieve female agency in a predominantly male-centred discourse" (qtd. in Mehta, "A Will to Say" 37). Scholars such as Menon, Bhasin and Paulomi Chakraborty have all turned to female representations of Partition, not only to make sense of the gendered violence that Partition produced, but also to uncover the complex relationship that women had with their families, community, nation, and state.

The narrative of silence, whether a refusal or surrendering of articulation, or repressive force (Mehta, "A Will to Say" 38) pushed upon one through national control or agency, must be acknowledged in relation to Partition. Mehta in her essay, reasserts Trinh T. Minh-ha's view, who states that "silence as a will not to say or will to unsay and as a

language of its own has barely been explored" (Minh-ha 415). The idea that silence is a language, carries with it a will to say or a will to unsay, brought about by absence, non-utterance, or enforced silence. Many narratives of Partition seem reluctant to give voice to women or to un-silence them. As a result, silent women are framed into a confined space and subjected to patriarchal assumption. Works such as Menon's edited volume *No Woman's Land: Women from Pakistan, India & Bangladesh Write on the Partition of India* (2004), discuss the dislocation of women during Partition – both across the border of India and Pakistan, as well as in Bangladesh. By presenting a collection of essays and personal accounts of women who migrated across new national borders, Menon offers an alternative to the post-independence political history, represented through statistical data, regarding migrated numbers, death tolls, rape, and abduction which centrist narratives report.

Menon's edited volume relays non-fictional accounts of the cross-border experiences of women whose lives were changed by the effects of Partition. Although the text echoes many historical facts about women during Partition which are mentioned in Butalia's *The Other Side of Silence*, it also documents the response of women to Partition, providing detailed accounts of the challenges they faced in their daily lives. Menon's work captures the testimonies of female survivors who challenge the depiction of women as a silent, non-participating group that is often overlooked in official male-dominated historical narratives. The work also challenges official and elitist versions which aim to fashion the historical trajectory to promote collective memory and identity. Menon's own essay, along with the accounts of Sara Suleri, Ismat Chughtai, Manikuntala Sen, Shehla Shibli, Meghna Guhathakurta, discuss the idea of a contested nationhood, the role of writers during community violence and political turmoil, the heroism of ordinary people during Partition, the lives of Lahore's intelligentsia, the turmoil of migration in Bengal, and the role of women in refugee camps established by government. By providing these accounts, Menon's work

serves as a detailed primary material which documents the role of women as they struggled within and across national borders that aimed to define them.

Female victims viewed through silent otherness is an area that still requires further research to broaden the corpus on Partition. A study of memory, trauma, social amnesia, and history, in relation to Partition, must be applied to its narratives to provide a better understanding of its representations in the present, and to recognise how the 'alternative' archive expands our understanding of the human experience by presenting different kinds of 'truth', compared to conventional histories. When evaluating women's experiences in particular, the effects of trauma on memory are significant. Violence, trauma and dislocation all play a part in identity construction. When considering this, as well as the overlay between history, memory and trauma, one can begin to understand present-day politics and post-Partition communities better. Official history provides perspectives and important information about Partition, but it fails to adequately convey details of how the event actually affected the lives of people. This section has demonstrated that the history of Partition can be represented in multiple ways, and that the creative practice employed by alternative investigations (oral history and fiction), can provide valuable truths about the division of India and its impact on those who experienced it.

HISTORY AND MEMORY

> Readers of histories and novels can hardly fail to be struck by their similarities. There are many histories that could pass for novels, and many novels that could pass for histories, considered in purely formal (or, I should say, formalist) terms. Viewed simply as verbal artefacts, histories and novels are indistinguishable from one another.

> We cannot easily distinguish between them on formal grounds unless we approach them with specific preconceptions about the kinds of truths that each is supposed to deal in. But the aim of the writer of a novel must be the same as that of the writer of a history. (White, *The Fictions* 121-122)

White challenges the view of historians that historical writing is an entirely scientific endeavour. He questions the effectiveness of the narrative mode of historical discourse and whether it is ideological in nature, or just a neutral discursive form - an ornamental device that carries no true and fixed message. In **"**Storytelling: Historical and Ideological" (1996), White discounts historical accounts cast in narrative form. He rejects the positivistic perception of historical narration, taking the view that historical narratives are not neutral. For White, there is a clear ideological influence which contradicts historians' view that describes historical discourse as scientific. He indicates that historical events are prone to dramatisation – transforming history into a spectacle with larger-than-life characters, akin to a theatrical production. Thus, rendering it as a theological and not scientific mode of discourse (Hayden, "Storytelling" 61-62). If historical discourse is to be a scientific enterprise, it must be made into an object for analysis. White claims that historians, having reached different conclusions when working with the same dataset, indicate that ideological considerations can influence outcome. Other commentators, while not going as far as White in refuting the traditional view that is held by historians, state that historians do have license to interpret and translate historical events based on their own perception of the facts. Taking such a standpoint allows for an alternative reading of Partition history, as many existing volumes dedicate their text to reinforcing the major tropes of migration, death, rape, and religious violence associated with the event.

White's questioning of history as a truth value, throws into doubt the reason behind the emergence of many historical accounts of Partition. He also asserts that historical narratives of Partition, which are supposed to offer a real account of the event, may too be subject to ideological influence - and thus, in need of critique. Homi Bhabha in "DissemiNation" in *Nation and Narration* (1990) also challenges earlier views of historicism that fix national history to a past distinguished by a pivotal moment or event – an occurrence people refer to when retracing components of national identity. He argues that historicist narratives are characterised by everyday events, instead of the advent of the epochal (Bhabha 293). Bhabha interrogates the paradox that connects everyday life and epochal time. For him, people in a community or within a nation function in everyday time, yet they retrieve or anchor their identities in epochal discourses. According to Bhabha, the nation is an unstable concept and the site of contesting temporalities, whose populations come out of subaltern temporalities (Bhabha 308). As a result, histories of the nation remain fragmented, due to the divide between official versions and the accounts that contest them.

Narratives characterised by everyday life which are underpinned by an important historical event are not representative of all the members of a nation. This viewpoint resists elitist ideas of what constitutes the nation. For Bhabha, forgetting is deliberately caused in order to guide collective thought towards a nation's narrative. This can lead to certain events being written out of history in the name of nationalism and a (re)structuring of collective memory and identity. Drawing upon Whites' notion of history as storytelling, and Radhika Mohanram's idea that memory and forgetting are constant forces in the construction of the past, Partition novels can be analysed to shed light on the relationship between memory, trauma and history. This will provide a deeper comprehension of modern-day identity construction along the borders of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh and the repressiveness of history that shapes it. Moreover, it is not only historical discourse that can affect and guide

public memory and identity. Heritage conservation and the memorialisation of urban spaces also work at shaping collective memory. The result is an ever-changing past which we perceive in the present to make sense of the future. When examining memory and forgetting as tools that construct the past, history must be regarded as a fluid narrative, warranting scrutiny and critique.

In "The Spectres of Democracy/The Gender of Spectres" (2016), Mohanram elaborates on the role of both memory and forgetting in forging historical pasts. Elaborating on Daniel Bell's assertion in *Memory Trauma and World Politics: Reflections on The Relationship Between Past and Present* (2006), that contemporary global politics is influenced by the historical memory of trauma and of forgetting, she explores Partition trauma through Jacques Derrida's notion of the ghost and hauntology. For Derrida, mourning and memory are interlinked. Mourning evokes memories of the past, and memory can be recalled through mourning. Derrida asserts that the present is never stationary, and that the ghost metaphor unbalances linear time. Mohanram reasserts Derrida's view that "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" (Mohanram 5). Derrida's S*pecters of Marx* is significant for Mohanram because:

> "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". (Mohanram 5)

Mohanram, therefore, is less concerned with the loss experienced by women during Partition, and more with how the ghost metaphor can help provide a nuanced understanding of gender construction in India (Mohanram 5). She focuses on women to "reveal how their treatment in the hands of history makes them a metaphor for all victims of the Indian partition" (Mohanram 5). Forgetting can be a means of guiding dominant national narratives which use the ghost of the past to disrupt historical pasts, the present and the future. Forgotten memories of violence, rape, abduction, loss, death and destruction are all linked to history. But ghosts of the past are what allow us to make sense of modern-day democracy and its future. Derrida's ghosts contest the influence history and systems of power have on the present. Partition, therefore, must not be scrutinised as an isolated event in history, but more so as a momentum that continues to affect the way we construct the past in the present, while shaping the future.

It can be said that the ghost metaphor is responsible for constructing the image of the stranger in Sara Ahmed's *Strange Encounters* (2013). She presents "post-coloniality as a failed historicity: a historicity that admits of its own failure in grasping that which has been, as the impossibility of grasping the present" (Ahmed 10). Discourses of this failed historicity are totalising and unable to fully unpack the complexities that are created by the array of individual colonial pasts. She also contests the idea that strangers are unknown to us, instead suggesting that they are a creation of our social environment. Her work discusses stranger fetishism, emphasising how the framing of strangers as origins of danger or difference must be re-evaluated. Ahmed critiques ontology's connection between subjects and the stranger *other*. For her, perceiving *strangeness* in people is a result of viewing them as strangers from the onset, thus, eradicating the possibility for friendship and interaction. Drawing on the works of Derrida, Ahmed considers the opportunity for an ethical encounter – one which could result in the assimilation of the 'other' through common empathy, when considering a stranger as a possible friend from the beginning.

When traumatic pasts produce ghosts of the past in the present, they can result in communities and nations being viewed as strange and other. For the people of both Pakistan and India, memory and history shape the way each perceives the other in modern times. Thus, ghosts of the past, much like memory and history, act as agents that can alter and guide collective memory and identity in South Asia. In relation to Partition studies, Ahmed's view provides a critical standpoint from which the stranger or other can be viewed in the present. Democracies in both Pakistan and India have rendered each other strange, by initiating a collective memory of the past which affects present-day politics and guides contemporary identity. Nationalist discourses which are history-laden, propagate the strangeness of the other and can lead to a stranger fetish – one which embodies the other in centrist narratives. The versions of history which represent national historiography must, therefore, be re-examined and evaluated after due consideration of works by academics like White (2019), Ahmed (2013) and Bhabha (1990). By doing so, an intervention is made that reveals the complex nature of history and its representation, especially in relation to modern-day democracy, identity, history-memory and otherness.

When both community and individual memory are shaped to create communal memories by nationalist movements, traumatic pasts and their effects can be re-negotiated. This can produce a shared identity over time and an environment which fosters a culture of forgetting. Memories can, therefore, suffer a forced amnesia built to side-line and forget traumatic pasts. The initiation of social amnesia – forgetting on part of society, often to separate itself from a less favourable past, can be seen in many official narratives on Partition. These versions rewrite and re-present their version of Partition history and overlook the histories of those who resist official discourses. However, national narratives can never be singular and must be inclusive of the narratives of all the people who experienced Partition and their difference. One way of challenging the official and nationalist memories of the

division of India is through family memory. Memories and nostalgic sentiment passed down from generation to generation can have a powerful effect on how one remembers the past. Family memory can not only create a sense of longing for a ruptured homeland, but also an alternate history that brings to life the human dimension of Partition. It is of great significance, therefore, that oral history projects continue to expand the corpus on Partition by recovering the stories of ordinary people whose memories have been repressed by a culture of forgetting. Understanding the trauma of Partition today is as important as it was in the years after 1947. The inter-generational effects of the division of India are constantly at play in both India and Pakistan. For this reason, a deeper understanding of trauma remains crucial if the legacy of Partition is to be better evaluated. As mentioned earlier, Mohanram's essay explores ways in which critical theory can broaden the understanding of historical trauma – one which is usually realist and preoccupied with elaborating fixed linear events. This version of historical trauma is the historicism Homi Bhabha criticises in "DissemiNation". Mohanram also questions the extent to which the role memories of struggle and sacrifice play in national memories used to justify political democracy. Trauma and its memory, therefore, are often used in the shaping of historical discourses for a desired outcome.

In *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (2016), Cathy Caruth argues that history is not a linear and simple model of systematic experience – especially in relation to the act and understanding of trauma. She asserts that a wide array of discourses speak through traumatic occurrence, emphasising that knowing and not knowing are embedded in trauma rhetoric. Trauma sufferers remember and forget in order to construct or deconstruct individual and collective memory. Caruth's work discusses the connection between individual and collective trauma and how literary discourse articulates it. She points to the emergence of history from the gap between turning away from the traumatic

experience and turning back towards it, as it recedes beyond the grasp of understanding. For Caruth, it is this very lack of understanding of that which the subject longs for, that creates the impetus of a new beginning. This formulation by Caruth seems problematic, for the lack of established framework designed to manage trauma reactively and proactively is what makes comprehending trauma somewhat difficult. For psychologists and psychiatrists, tracing the effects of trauma on history is complex. An example of such a challenge would be the real problem of refugees flooding into Europe from war-torn lands in modern times, without being able to influence how events will unfold. Managing the trauma suffered by such groups and providing hope for a better future is connected to the way trauma shapes the way they remember their history. The lack of curative action in Caruth's formulation is perhaps what makes it a viable tool to analyse. Her methodology may help predict how traumatic events shape cultural and political transformations that enable or disable the future of the past and examine literary development as a contingency of emerging history.

History can no longer be regarded as authentic and fixed, for it is shaped by factors such as the influence of trauma. Memory must, therefore, also be scrutinised, as it influences the construction of history. In his book *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and The Politics of Memory* (2003), Andreas Huyssen discusses the crisis of history and the validity of historical memory. The boundary "between past and present used to be stronger and more stable than it appears to be today" (Huyssen, *Present Pasts* 1). Consequently, the past affects the present significantly, and untold pasts continue to interrupt the present day. History once presented a powerful narrative which substantiated the constancy of the "past in its pastness" (Huyssen, *Present Pasts* 1). Historical pasts were traced in the present through an analysis of historical architecture and monuments which occupied built up urban spaces. Thus, nations were anchored by history in the "narrative of historical time" (Huyssen, *Present Pasts* 2). The crisis of history that Huyssen discusses is exemplified when considering history's

relationship to memory. Memory is not held down by historical time and it remains fluid. Historically, literature and poetry tackled memory in order to offer hope for a better future, or to lay bare the *ghosts* of the past that still affect the present. Nation states in the nineteenth century organised national pasts in order to provide meaning to the present and hope for the future. This is no longer the case.

Huyssen discusses the disturbance of history as objective and scientific, memory as subjective and personal, and ultimately, history as truth or validation (Huyssen, *Present Pasts* 2). Taking this into consideration and to support the views of writers such as White and Bhabha, our perception and understanding of the past is distorted and leads to a crisis in our vision for the future. Industrialisation and modernity resulted in the shedding, and in some ways, the destruction of the past. This destruction of earlier ways of living and of perceiving the world, led to a forgetting, and thus, organised elements of collective memory. The intense movement towards change and an alternative future, gave rise to lamentations of a world lost under the feet of industrialisation. Huyssen mentions Nietzsche's view of the nineteenth century being a hypertrophy of history, and then introduces his own hypertrophy of memory which he feels the world is suffering from today. Memory, by Huyssen's standards, is an elusive subject difficult to define and anchor, but also a topic that has been exhausted in academic circles, especially when considering its relationship to history (Huyssen, *Present Pasts* 2).

Yet, there remains scope to examine history's role in negotiating contemporary memory culture in Partition studies. Grand narratives of Partition that continue to retell stories of the colonial Raj, influential figures such as Nehru and Jinnah, and the accounts of brutality, rape and murder are all products of history's relationship with the politics of memory, forgetting and remembering. Memory, like history, was always linked to the essential and canonical, and later became "associated with the ideas of experience and its

loss" (Huyssen, *Present Pasts* 3). Today, memory is linked to the present and a way of re-presenting the past in the present. Histories of nations, community traditions, values and family are all weakened by cultural globalisation which deny histories of their political and geographical groundings. These groundings can at any time be deleted, overlooked, marginalised and forgotten. In some cases, they can also be manipulated and negotiated to serve nationalist agenda, forces of globalisation and regional practises. The analysis of memory has altered the way time, space and history are viewed. Huyssen believes that memory discourses have aided in the way history and its impact on the present is understood. Arguments against historiography are manifold and contest the very enterprise of history as fact and truth (Huyssen, *Present Pasts* 3). However, personal narratives of suffering and achievement have much to offer academic scholarship, albeit that memory can be unreliable. Nietzsche's analogy of 'creative forgetting' may act as an antidote for the unreliability of memory, but what is remembered or forgotten can be selective. Selective memory then also offers no solution to a world under threat from social amnesia (Huyssen, *Present Pasts* 6).

Huyssen reiterates that looking to the future for solutions is also problematic, as any such vision of the future has been influenced by forces of globalisation. The solution lies in addressing the problems of today by understanding both past and future – achievable through engagement with memory discourses which offer grounding to hopes for the future. In this regard, the palimpsestic nature of literary works related to Partition can be used to explore the arrangement of time and space, as well as cultural, religious and political ideas. Although Huyssen feels that memory discourse overly focuses on personal testimonies, he appreciates that examining memory requires an engagement with historical trauma (Huyssen, *Present Pasts* 8). This is crucial when investigating Partition communities who endured suffering, because the examining of trauma is legitimised when individuals, communities and nations attempt to come to terms with a violent past.

To what extent trauma is best dealt with by human rights activism, truth commissions, judicial proceedings and artistic creativity is difficult to measure, as trauma must be examined within its geographic, social, cultural and religious context. For the victims of Partition, especially women, trauma was not dealt with in the public sphere, nor through commemorative practice and memorials. As will be discussed in later chapters, this was due to the cultural shame associated with being raped and abducted. This is one of the key reasons why women's narratives and oral history accounts still have a poignant intervention to make, as many experiences of women have been unknown till now. As generations pass, increasingly more women have shared their stories and have provided a personalised version of events, providing further clarity and details concerning the gendered experience of Partition. As a result, Partition studies today include discussions on territorial borders, community and personal experiences and inter-generational trauma. This is a move away from earlier focuses which concentrated on violence and migration.

By adding oral history testimony, as well as notable works on the theories of memory and trauma, the array of source material on Partition has diversified. An example of extending earlier models of understanding on memory and trauma is Ananya Jahanara Kabir's *Partition's Post-Amnesias: 1947, 1971 and Modern South Asia* (2013). Kabir discusses ways in which affect and narrative act as converging influences which consider literary works in terms of the feelings they evoke – urging for alternative methodologies to be considered when examining Partition narratives. Archival accounts contain gaps which literature attempts to fill, and although fiction plays an important role in relaying that which is missing from official archives, it can also lose sight of the way in which authenticity is negotiated in Partition discourses. This point made by Kabir is highlighted by Mohanram in her essay when she states:

> 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. (Mohanram 11)

Kabir's work draws attention to how societies confront their history - a confronting that includes dealing with Derrida's notion of the ghost(s) which are forever present in the past. Memory has a fluid nature and cannot truly recover the past completely. Kabir believes that linear temporality is distorted and calls for a change in the ways that we approach Partition history.

Memory and trauma today play pivotal roles in propagating nationalist agendas. Ahmed's notion of the stranger fetish is in some ways an outcome of societies' failure to halt the process of anamnesis. This lack of recollection and reflection on an "inability to live in peace with difference and otherness" (Huyssen, *Present Pasts* 13) is one of the causes of the constant tensions between India and Pakistan, especially over Kashmir. If anamnesis is superimposed on a nation by governments and political forces, the need to unpack historical events in relation to memory become ever more crucial. Since Partition, both India and Pakistan have invested heavily in the sub-plots that feed into their memory narrative. National heritage centres, museums, monuments, celebrations of independence, Partition novels and films, all evoke memories of a past being lived in the present and shaping the future. The post-Partition worlds of both India and Pakistan are being musealised to play a part in the memory discourse that affects them. Pulling the past into the present, either by interrupting urban spaces with monumental history-laden architecture, or through literary and

film works which allow one to relive the past, is deeply connected to the "structuring of memory and temporality today" (Huyssen, *Present Pasts* 15). This structuring uses memory as a political tool to support fundamentalist politics and nationalism in both the nations. Restorative measures to conserve heritage sites muddy the ways in which effects of Partition can be examined. Heritage sites and memorialisation is the recalling of selective memories used for a particular set of imperatives in contemporary times. Such acts can be institutionalised, and a recycling of the past begins, thus reinforcing the fluid nature of memory. Zamindar's notion of the *long Partition* clearly applies here, as commemorative practice of heritage conservation continues to negotiate narratives of the past to shape ideologies in the present.

A focus on memory discourses in relation to borders, migrations, diasporas and displacement also require discussion in Partition studies. In the aftermath of decolonisation, a new kind of memory discourse emerged to address various "social movements and their search for alternative and revisionist histories" (Huyssen, *Present Pasts* 12). Fuelled also by the Holocaust debate of the 1980's, memory discourses triggered many rememberings, characterised by public commemorations, television programs, conferences, museum openings and speeches by influential figures (Huyssen, *Present Pasts* 12). This was also the case with Partition in 2017 when its 70th anniversary was celebrated. The release of the film *Viceroy* coincided with the anniversary date and provided an account of the last days of Mountbatten's Raj in India. The film was met with mixed reviews, and many accuse it of displaying a biased history, detached from the experiences of many who lived through 1947. Although many pieces of art, literary works, and films have aimed to represent different aspects of Partition and what it meant to different people, one must question the validity of various Partition memory discourses and the reason behind their production. Considering Holocaust memory and more recent genocidal politics in Rwanda, Kosovo and Bosnia,

Partition narratives can draw similarities with the cross-border movement, brutality, and systematic rape these communities suffered. Whether or not these events have mobilised a new type of guilt which hopes to deconstruct and unpick the multi-layered histories of Partition is yet to be ascertained. Nevertheless, many representations are still guilty of exoticizing earlier narratives that venerate the British Raj and fail to discuss gendered violence. Holocaust discourses may not be a "universal trope for historical trauma" (Huyssen, *Present Pasts* 13), but they do lend context for understanding aspects of Partition trauma, emphasising the importance of exploring memory and its diverse representation.

South Asia may have never been a utopia before Partition, but it was an area clearly demarcated and held together by stable boundaries within which the flow of time was regular. After Partition, the same area became marked by Mountbatten's divide, a hasty circumscribing which threw into disarray the plight of a nation. Huyssen believes that "one of modernity's permanent laments concerns the loss of a better past" (Huyssen, *Present Pasts* 24) and it is not surprising to find many who reminisce about an undivided India. Yet for many, memories of Partition evoke images of mass destruction, killing and displacement, as well as the indescribable atrocities and repression brought about by the trial of decolonisation. These memories along with the ongoing tension between India and Pakistan in the modern-day, look upon a global future that provides no confidence for betterment or stability. Memories of 'home', interrupted by violence and struggle, force one into forgetting, as the psyche tries not to contaminate nostalgia and comfort with thoughts that stir traumatic memories. This study, therefore, takes the stance that memory at every level should be represented to further our understanding of Partition and its participants. As Butalia states in her work, "There is no way we can begin to understand what partition was about, unless we look at how people remember it" (Butalia, *The Other Side* 13). Individual, generational, public, cultural, and national memories all have a place amongst the narratives on Partition,

and to heighten our understanding of such a complex event, all such memories need to be heard and examined.

Neither local nor nationalist memories can be underpinned or given an absolute truth value. However, by looking through both a personalised and political lens at changing nationhood and identity objectively, much more is revealed. Archival history as a site of preservation does play a role in preserving memory. However, what must not be overlooked is that archival history also forgets to include all the stories and facts concerning an event or period in the past. Memory, therefore, has become a cultural and political obsession negotiating mythic pasts to blur the lines between mythology and reality. This is evident in India and Pakistan, as governments continue to orchestrate a collective memory supported by a repressive amnesia to create modern-day identities, which support nationalist and political agendas. As a result, a memory culture of amnesia has come into being, and although critics may question the unwillingness or inability of some to remember, it seems that memory and forgetting are "being transformed under cultural pressures" (Huyssen, *Present Pasts* 17). These pressures are affected by the internet, media, politics and mass consumerism. Huyssen discusses how memories are imagined in their origin, and as a result, are easy to forget. To elaborate, he draws attention to the Freudian analogy that memory is a form of forgetting and forgetting is a type of memory which is hidden. In relation to Partition, this relationship is as difficult to decode, as attempting to decipher what actually triggered people to turn on each other violently during Partition. To remember and forget requires a deeper appreciation of one's culture, social make-up, and religion. The fear of forgetting is countered today through memorialisation strategy, when public media memory addresses the fear by marketing pasts that never existed. Re-presentations, replications, and a copy culture all mark the past as a palimpsest which can be made over and rewritten. This making over and marketing of memory draws on Theodor Adorno's idea that "commodification equals forgetting", and the

production of a generation affected by marketing-induced amnesia (qtd. in "Present Pasts" Huyssen 31).

The past has started to fade, and with it, certain levels of authenticity and validation. It is for this reason that scholarship on Partition must push forward to provide more clarity on a catastrophic event that affected so many lives. As forces of globalisation and nationalist narratives interact with memories, the latter begins to recede further into history, and at times, even into myth. Understanding memory and the waning of it in relation to Partition, ensures an unpacking of the emergence of heritage centres, Partition museums and of political nationalism. Huyssen's *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia* (1995) refers to "generational memories on the wane due to the passing of time and the continuing speed of technological modernisation" (Huyssen, *Twilight Memories* 3). This provides a framework from which the status of memory in South Asia today can be viewed. Political, aesthetic and historical expression has gained fervour through the resurgence of memorialisation and monumentalisation. The obsession with site memory and temporal dimensions has also joined hands with memory forgetting, memory repression and memory displacement. It is important to mention here that this study is not stating that memories tend to fade naturally with the passing of time, but is questioning the use of this passing of time and memory degeneration by government forces in shaping the past and collective memory. It is in this passing of time that those in power (re)present memories that serve popular, political, and national agenda by influencing literary works, aesthetic modes of expression, the media and by encouraging memory repression. Cultural amnesia is as much natural as it is imposed, and critical literary work provides a deeper intervention by questioning institutional structures that are designed to organise identities and nations based upon pasts which are misrepresented by making use of their palimpsestic nature.

Memory in relation to Partition must be critiqued in all its forms. It is memory and the shaping of it that can influence the ways in which Partition is represented in present times. Memory, though criticised as fluid and ambiguous at times, is a method for accessing the past. Personal memories, which are often relayed in oral history interviews and inform fictional works, convey different kinds of truth about the past. Oral histories and fiction employ the creative practise of storytelling to explore embodied feeling and experiences of historical events they are bound to. They do not dramatically re-imagine the past but work within the confines of what is already known. Oral history presents an alternative to conformist history by narrowing the gap conventional history creates when it is written. Stories representing the general mass, as well as of those deemed insignificant are overlooked and left out – exacerbating disparities in the overall picture. When the experience of the masses is absent from the numerous historical accounts of an event, its representation remains incomplete. Oral histories, therefore, aim to fill the voids left by dominant and official narratives. By compiling many personal histories from different groups, oral historians can present a more comprehensive representation of Partition and of those who witnessed it. Oral history provides a deeper understanding of the actual event and allows listeners and readers with the opportunity to engage with the vivid details of personalised experience first-hand. At times, these experiences are extremely different from the accounts that many have become familiar with. History is not only written by the victors but can now also be rewritten by ordinary people who resist nationalist versions in order to claim and ‘take back’ their own histories.

Leopold von Ranke, a German historian, stated that there are three kinds of history – the event itself whose details were forever lost, the reconstruction of the event, achieved only through research and verification, and history which is found in books - a ploy used by those in power to steer sentiment and support particular views (Kofi-Adu). Ranke felt that history

should be neutral and only present facts without interpretation, since people in power used history as a device to locate stories which would then be recorded to achieve a desired outcome. This is the case throughout the world today, especially in many post-traumatic societies where governments have used suffering experienced in the past to propagate agendas in the present. Many histories are re-written and re-presented to coincide with nationalist or religious beliefs, and in doing so, the actual version becomes difficult to recover. In discussing the reconstruction of the event as a type of history, Ranke believes that this is achieved through in-depth research and verification that uses accurate and measured sources, thereby "showing the past as it had actually been….establishing the facts as correctly as possible, but also placing them in their contemporary context in such a way that the past would come to life again" (Gilbert 394). In the past, such a pursuit was difficult, as reliable sources were difficult to access. However, oral history projects in present times, especially in relation to Partition, satisfy Ranke's categorisation of history, for oral histories are one of the most effective ways of reconstructing histories of the division of India. Although one must not negate the complexities that affect oral history accounts, such as the inaccuracy of recalling and questionable validity of truth, the event is reconstructed by those who lived through it. Eye-witness accounts, therefore, provide an alternate version of history which is often starkly different from the heavily influenced official versions found today. Popular culture and films also shape our ideas of the past and provide accepted notions of truth. Truth, therefore, is malleable in the hands of those who negotiate history to reconstruct historical pasts. Oral history too provides an opportunity to reconstruct a tragic event like Partition. However, this reconstruction is not (for the most part) influenced by political motives, but by the relationship of memory, trauma and lived experiences. Although critics outline its subjective approach as a flaw, they also need to appreciate the amount of verifiable first-hand information such accounts contribute to studies of Partition.

Partition was a traumatic event that resulted in many atrocities. It left many wounds which have not healed till today. Due to the impact of these wounds, few people were willing to share their experiences. Re-living the trauma was not bearable, especially for women who came from cultures where shame and honour were of paramount importance. As a result, women couldn't share stories of their suffering. This culture of silence further widened the gap that dominant historical accounts of Partition had already created. Literary works did attempt to uncover the suffering experienced by many during Partition, yet, these accounts often focused mainly on the destructive side of Partition and nothing more. Literary tales of heroism, rehabilitation and of hope for a better future were seldom seen. Instead, it became common to find literary texts that revisited the tropes of rape, murder, communal violence and abduction; and in doing so, perpetuated the trauma to greater heights. Khushwant Singh, Saadat Hasan Manto, Bapsi Sidhwa, as well as others, are novelists who attempt to bring the humane side of Partition to the fore. Like scholars such as Rajmohan Gandhi and Mushirul Hasan, they explore the humanity exhibited during Partition by relaying examples of communities rescuing each other and of women being kept safe by a different religious group, instead of focusing purely on the violence and brutality associated with the division of India.

Those who advocate conventional forms of history still level criticism at the soft and subjective approach oral history takes. As far as the criticism of oral history is concerned in general, information obtained in interviews is deemed subjective and believed to create inaccuracies. Such accounts are considered to lack authority because they are not aligned with the dominant and broader narratives that exist. Thus, they create an alternative and, at times, unverified history. Another complaint levelled at oral history is that personal collective memories are constantly being reshaped by selective amnesia, thus rendering such accounts ambiguous. Although the merits of oral history can be questioned by voicing such

complaints, similar criticism can also be aimed at conventional history. Conventional histories are written in such a way that they can be shaped to feed into dominant nationalist discourses, in turn, creating a cultural amnesia which recalls only that past which supports the agenda of political and nationalist ideology. Moreover, conventional historians operate under restrictions that influence their version of history. Societal pressures, nationalist obligations and political pressure are just some of the forces that have shaped the writing of history. As a result, history in general, contains elements of subjectivity, so if subjectivity is the chief complaint levelled at oral history, then so-called "real" history needs to be scrutinised in the same way.

Though it is not an aim of this study to identify how political agendas have influenced history, it is crucial to outline the important intervention oral history can make to studies of Partition. Subjectivity calls for a detailed analysis, as it is this which can uncover the many untold stories of Partition. It plays a crucial role in furthering our understanding of what happened. Stories that document how different religious groups assisted one another in reaching the other side, as well as tales of the recovery of women, exemplify this. Data collection methods from oral history testimonies, however, need to be more transparent and oral historians need to apply honesty in documenting the procedures utilised in interviews. A robust method of the verification of facts needs to be ensured to decipher what corroborates verified accounts and what does not. Furthermore, the interviewer's own sentiments should not influence either interviewee selection or the questions asked, nor should interviewers manipulate interviewees by shaping and guiding their responses. To elaborate on the intervention that oral history projects make, Chapter Four will discuss recent oral history projects that delve deeper into the human experience of Partition, providing 'alternative' investigations on Partition.

LITERARY RESPONSES TO PARTITION

Literary representations of Partition can provide a deeper understanding of the effects of Partition at individual level and act as testimonial evidence for the violence it caused. Fiction also demonstrates narrative agency on the part of authors who write stories based on their interpretation of the past. This agency often challenges hegemonic and state-endorsed representations of the division of India, offering 'alternate' accounts of the past. Many fictional accounts are informed by an author's first-hand experience of Partition or by oral history narratives that convey in detail the human plight of the event. In presenting alternative versions of Partition history, fiction also has the ability to provide a voice to marginalised people, thus, adding experience and feeling to fixed statistical representations reported in many historical accounts. Fiction can provide a counter-narrative that allows "for the voicing of alternative perspectives and a reckoning with some of the more unpalatable and even grotesque aspects of the Partition experience and its aftermath" (Saint, "Witnessing" 2). As fiction is often embedded in the historical past, it works within the parameters of existing knowledge to convey feelings and details related to the lived experience. In relation to the division of India, there have been many fictional works published on Partition since 1947 in languages native to the Indian subcontinent and in English. Key literary texts on Partition in English have covered themes such as violence (both sexual and non-sexual), migration, dislocation and displacement, female subjugation and identity struggle, as well as others. The minutiae of violence depicted in fiction also conveys the trauma that many survivors endured. By narrating the unforgettable experiences and consequences of Partition, especially amongst marginalised communities, authors have been able to demonstrate how Partition led to a renegotiating and restructuring of individual and collective identities and histories (Chetty).

One of the earliest works on Partition that explores individual tragedy and delves into detailing the psychological effects of Partition is Saadat Hasan Manto's "Toba Tek Singh" (1955). Initially published in Urdu but later translated into English, the short story employs satire to criticise the politicians responsible for Partition, while charting the impact of Partition on the lives of inmates in an asylum. "Toba Tek Singh" uses the madness of inmates to criticise the madness of those living in the world outside. It is important to note that Manto's fictional work is bound to a historical event that took place in 1950, in which there was an exchange of mental patients between India and Pakistan. Manto explores the feelings and experiences of inmates involved in such an exchange in his short story, while using satire to contest the reasons for Partition. The main character Bishen Singh struggles to locate his identity after the division of India, and Manto details this struggle to symbolise the dislocation and displacement of Partition refugees. "Toba Tek Singh" is an extremely significant piece of Partition literature because it deals directly with mental health and the psychological effects caused in the Indian subcontinent after Partition. Manto's personal experience of mental illness and hospitalisation informs and shapes his narrative, as he uses narrative agency to question the politics of Partition, while bringing to light the trauma of displacement.

Another seminal work on Partition is *Train to Pakistan* by Khushwant Singh. Published in 1956, it is the first novel in English that engages with the division of India and explores the human impact of the event in the Punjab. The story is set in the frontier village of Mano Majra whose inhabitants awake one day to extreme violence and carnage. The trope of violence explored in the novel details how Sikhs and Muslims who lived side-by-side for generations turned on one another. The realism and level of detail applied to acts of violence is powerful and distinct, for it conveys the human aspect of Partition vividly. Singh was a trained lawyer and practised law in the Lahore High Court until Partition. His experience of

Partition is first-hand, positioning him to write a compelling account of Partition which is bound to an actual history he lived through. Singh was aware of the violence around him in 1947, and in particular, about the train killings (referring to blood trains carrying the dead bodies of refugees between India and Pakistan) that he writes about, which occurred on the Punjab border. Living through this violent history "must have prompted him to write fiction, for he probably found fiction to be a better medium than history to reflect on contemporary realities" (Roy 34). *Train to Pakistan* has become one of the most popular Partition novels over the decades, receiving acclaim from numerous novelists and critics who regard it as a seminal Partition text (Roy 33).

Like *Train to Pakistan*, Manohar Malgonkar's *A Bend in the Ganges*, published in 1964, is another literary work on Partition embedded in history that describes actual political events and their social impact. The beginning and ending of the novel are marked by contrasting slogans. This is expressive of the fire of freedom ablaze in Indian hearts and the contrasting fires burning all over the country (Sharma 223-26). The novel explores the reasons behind Partition, while examining the nationalist movement in India. Malgonkar employs a double-hero strategy in the novel by symbolising the opposing ideologies of revolutionary terrorism and non-violence. Malgonkar uses Debi Dayal – a revolutionary terrorist and Gian Talwar – a follower of Mahatma Gandhi's 'non-violence' approach, to explore the possibility of Hindu and Muslim co-existence, and to see if the 'non-violence' approach to life could be adhered to practically. Malgonkar explores how the outcome of the relationship between Indian nationalism and colonial imperialism led to Indian communities turning on one another. Non-violence was replaced with extreme communal violence. Malgonkar explores how violence was used as a political strategy by the nation and describes the morphing of revolutionary terrorism and communal violence (Malgonkar 49).

Clear Light of Day by Anita Desai, published in 1980, depicts life in Delhi after Partition. This is yet another important work built upon the history and politics that surround Partition, in which Desai voices several interesting perspectives by implementing the stream of consciousness technique. This strategy makes readers aware of multiple issues that are being dealt with through the moving consciousness of characters, while not confronting them directly. The novel emphasises on the importance and value of a family structure, represented by the story of the Das family which disintegrates several times, only to come back together. The novel is arranged in four sections that do not follow a chronological order. Each section explores the trails of the family in different time periods, beginning in the 1970's, which is the novel's present. The second section takes readers back to 1947 and describes the relationship between the Das and Ali family, amidst the political and religious uproar brought about by Partition. The third section is set further back in history and describes the childhoods of the Das children. Several childhood incidents and events are conveyed, the impacts of which are prevalent in the present-day minds and lives of the characters. The final section of the novel returns to the present day, wherein the submerged memory of love and togetherness leads to reconciliation. The role of memory and its power to shape personalities, insecurities and fears is clearly evident throughout the novel and Desai demonstrates how memory plays a vital role in the formation of modern-day opinions, identity, family ties and relationships.

One of the most well-known works on the theme of Partition is Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, published in 1981. The novel reads like an allegory of the legacy of Partition, creating a commentary addressing its reality (Hashmat), as it chronicles the coming-of-age of 1001 children born in the first hour of India's independence. Rushdie uses magic realism in his novel to demonstrate the harsh truths and realities of the post-Partition world. His narrative weaves together history and tragedy to enhance the experience of the

reader, while making them acutely aware of the wider implications of India's independence. The plot focuses on Shiva and Saleem, two boys who are born closest to the midnight of independence and who have been accidentally exchanged at birth. Saleem narrates how each of the children born within the first hour of the midnight of the day of independence have magical powers. Saleem is telepathic and knows what is in the hearts and minds of people. By humanising the history of Partition (Enjeti), the novel relays the quest for self-conscious (re)construction, as Saleem struggles to unify the millions of voices and faces in his mind. Burdened with a legacy from which he is absent, Saleem is representative of India as a nation which has been newly born, and yet firmly rooted in a history of which it is no longer part of. The non-linear shifting of time that the novel follows throughout its narration (Hashmat), while using historical facts, removes the historical events from their context and isolates them to be re-examined. Thus, in this manner, Rushdie scrutinises the construct of the 'nation'. while offering an alternative perspective of the birth of India as an independent state and what it signifies.

Published in 1988, Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice Candy Man* is another seminal work on Partition. It is one of the finer examples of narrating Partition history from the margins, as it not only narrates the lives and experiences of marginalised groups, but does so from the perspective of a marginalised narrator. Herself a Pakistani Parsee, Sidhwa presents the story from the perspective of a Parsee child, distancing the narrative away from the dominant, adult, male and official representation of Partition. Sidhwa takes this stance in order to appear objective in her account of the past. To what extent she succeeds will be discussed in Chapter Two, where an analysis of her acclaimed novel and a short story is undertaken.

Also published in 1988 is *The Shadow Lines* by Amitav Ghosh which discusses important tropes related to Partition within the lives of ordinary people. Using memory as the driving force, an unknown narrator tells the stories of his families, while constantly moving

back and forth in time between 1939 and the mid 1970's. The ingenious, although challenging, narrative style chosen by the author is significant in that it represents the fluid, and at times, unreliable nature of memory. Against the backdrop of political upheaval and economical struggle in pre- and post-Partition India, and through the character representation of Tha'mma, Ila and Tridip, the narrator explores the constructs of home, borders, nationalism and identity. Challenging the set definitions of 'us' and 'them', Ghosh probes deep anxieties and confusions faced by witnesses of the violence that engulfed India before and after its division. Ghosh also uses memory as an enabling and productive force which is also traumatic and disabling (Kaul 125) at the same time. Such an engagement with memory frames the novel as an alternative account of Partition history.

Mukul Kesavan's *Looking Through Glass* (1995) presents an intriguing narrative which is set amidst the turbulent events of 1947. Whilst testing his telescopic lens, the unnamed Hindu narrator has an accident and time-travels back to 1942. In the past, he stays with a Muslim family and begins a comical journey on which he joins a rebellion against the failing British Raj. During the rebellion, he is wounded, but later recovers during a wrestling match. His experiences in 1947 include witnessing the Hindu-Muslim riots which resulted in unprecedented levels of violence and death. Kesavan uses the unnamed narrator's experience to illustrate the tragedy of Partition, using political history, fantasy, realism, as well as unconventional sexual comedy to represent aspects of the past. He also uses the image and meaning of the cameraman as a metaphor to disrupt identifying factors of what a cameraman, the photograph and the subject denote. This metaphor calls to attention the need to do away with the historical impulse to arrange events in a developmental sequence, and to investigate the embedded past in the present (Challakere 574).

Describing the story of two women who are at odds in order to please their Oxford-educated landowner husband, Shauna Singh Baldwin's first novel, *What the Body*

Remembers (1999) is another well-known story from a Sikh and female perspective. The novel describes the anti-imperialist sentiment that began increasing up to the division of India and narrates the story of Satya and Roop who are both married to Sardarji – a man who possesses mixed allegiance to both India and the British. The fictional narrative, which borrows from actual historical events, is an important example of how meanings of violence can be reconstructed, and how memory can be shaped in a given cultural domain. Narrating the life-changing events that affect the movement, relocation and identity of people before and after Partition, the novel investigates the "gendered process of Sikh subjectification, and particularly on the ways in which men and women are enjoined to "remember" community through narrative and embodied acts" (Misri 4). Baldwin's work is a prime example of alternative modes of historical narration in which she remembers her homeland, presenting a female interpretation of the past.

Chaman Nahal's *Azadi* is a Partition-related novel originally written in 1975 and translated in 2001. It is another literary perspective that engages with the atrocities and violence that Partition caused, not just at political level, but at the social, cultural and individual levels. As a refugee of Partition himself, Nahal's work is informed by first-hand experiences of the brutality and displacement experienced by many in 1947. Acknowledging the autobiographical nature of the novel, Nahal calls it "…a hymn to one's land of birth, rather than a realistic novel of the Partition" (Nahal 10). Bharatender Sheoran, in his "Tyranny of Partition: A Retrospective Analyses of Chaman Nahal's *Azadi*", states that "…the purpose in the novel is to present the most comprehensive account of the Partition" (Sheoran 175). Although any claim of objectivity from an autobiographical account is questionable, *Azadi* represents a realistic account in which the writer's own experiences can be located in the lives of his characters, Lala Kashiram and Arun.

The above-mentioned key literary works on Partition inhibit the past as much as historical accounts do. For many novelists, fiction provides a better medium from which to explore and detail the realities of Partition and to expand the 'alternate archive'. Partition fiction does not dramatically reimagine the past, but reinterprets and reconstructs it based on a multitude of sources. Fiction, therefore, offers alternative 'truths' about Partition and sheds light on its human experience. Fiction is also an example of narrative agency that authors use to rewrite the past using their own interpretation. This can be liberating and also inclusive for those voices that have been 'left out' by official discourses. Narrative agency in fiction can also empower characters to challenge and refute oppressive histories that seek to define them. Approached as *texts*, both fiction and oral testimonies are as valuable as any version of history that represents Partition. A critical literary analysis of 'alternative' investigations on the division of India, demonstrates that they represent realities which are different to what historical accounts report. Such an analysis shows us how these representations work and why, and to what extent they expand our understanding of Partition and its legacy in present times. In discussing the dominant paradigms of trauma, history and memory which have informed 'alternative investigations on Partition, this chapter has shed light on the validity of the different kinds of 'truth' that 'alternative' histories represent. It has also argued that fiction and oral testimony can account for the 'real' experiences of Partition by engaging with its human aspect.

The next chapter will undertake a literary analysis of the works of Bapsi Sidhwa, while exploring the role fiction plays in narrating an 'alternative' Partition history and the experience of marginalised groups.

Chapter Two: At the Margins of Experience - Bodies of Violence and Memory in the Works of Bapsi Sidhwa

Bapsi Sidhwa was born on the 11th of August 1938. She is a Pakistani writer of Parsee descent who has written novels on Partition in English. Her works on Partition are of seminal importance as she uses realism to narrate complexities and details related to the division of India. Sidhwa's works also focuses on the female experience which help map the plight of women who were victims during Partition. Her works move away from what is submerged by official and male-dominated accounts of Partition history and offer an 'alternative' representation. Sidhwa was born to Zoroastrian parents in Karachi and the family later moved to Lahore, where Sidhwa lived through Partition as a nine-year old child. Her most famous novels connected to Partition are *The Crow Eaters* (1978), *The Bride* (1984), and *Ice Candy Man*. Her first novel, *The Crow Eaters*, concludes just before Partition and explores the sentiments of various political and religious leaders who intend to 'break up' India. *The Bride* discusses the communal tension that surfaced during Partition, as well as the subsequent displacement of people from their homeland. The narrative tells the story of a young Muslim girl from India who is adopted by a *Pathan* (someone originally a member of the Pashto-speaking people of Afghanistan) during Partition. He later promises her in marriage to a man of his tribe. The unfolding events are used by Sidhwa to create a narrative which explores power, passion, brutality and murder. Her most recent work, *Their Language of Love* (2013), is a collection of eight short stories that continue to engage with Partition and its inter-generational effects. The stories are bound together by Sidhwa's life experiences and continue to add to an understanding of human nature in connection to Partition.

This chapter is a discussion of Sidhwa's *Ice Candy Man* (1988) - a seminal Partition novel that captures the human dimension of the division of India, and "Defend Yourself Against Me" (2013) - a short story detailing modern-day effects of Partition in the diaspora. This discussion contributes to the existing body of knowledge on Partition by expanding academic engagement with histories reported from the margins. This is achieved by analysing how a collection of tropes and metaphors, denoting different kinds of margins, are simultaneously deployed to generate texts interested in representing the main events of Partition through the perspective of people who are otherwise designated to the periphery. These perspectives from the periphery in *Ice Candy Man* are communicated via the main narrator who is a child, a Parsee character (Parsees are a religious minority originally from Persia), and the fact that Partition violence takes place in fringe spaces. In "Defend Yourself Against Me", the peripheral perspective comes from Sidhwa's diaspora short story being located geographically and temporally at the 'fringe' of Partition. In both these works, Sidhwa's telling of Partition continually thinks of decentring and displacement in its literal and figurate organisation.

Another focus of this chapter is to explore the experience of individuals who appear to be 'victims' of history, rather than agents. Their embodied feelings and experiences are relayed in Sidhwa's fictional works which, in turn, expand our understanding of the human aspect of Partition. Literary fiction uses creative approaches to telling different kinds of 'truth' about history through storytelling, and this chapter argues that fiction provides a valuable and 'alternative' investigation on Partition. The stories in the works of Sidhwa are connected to actual historical events and are not dramatically reimagined. Her narratives work within existing knowledge of Partition history to creatively explore the individual experience. A literary analysis of the personalised emotions and experiences in Sidhwa's work will be undertaken in this chapter by examining her representation of the relationship

between different communities at the time of Partition and how she captures the voices of marginalised groups and ordinary people. In analysing how she presents her characters, this chapter will discuss how creative practice is put to work in conveying the violence, heroism and rehabilitation associated with Partition. Violence against women, as well as their recovery, rehabilitation and identity struggles are all embedded in historical fact. Analysing how Sidhwa conveys various types of 'truth' about historical events using fiction, through the lens of those designated to the periphery, will shed light on the difference between representations of marginalised people (mostly women) in official histories and 'alternative' representations in fiction. In discussing Sidhwa's short story, which is located at the 'fringe' of Partition, this chapter will analyse the use of storytelling in reflecting the sentiments held by the different religious groups involved in Partition who live side-by-side in the diaspora, exploring the extent to which their lives in the present have been shaped by events of the past. This will connect to the idea that 'alternative' investigations on Partition can encourage reconciliatory dialogue and understanding across generations.

ICE CANDY MAN

Sidhwa's novel is not just a counter narrative aimed at existing accounts from an Indian perspective, as suggested by Ralph J. Crane in his article, "A Passion for History and for Truth Telling: The Early Novels of Bapsi Sidhwa" in *The Novels of Bapsi Sidhwa* (1996). As a matter of fact, it also describes the violence of the conflict from different perspectives. In the novel, Sikhs, Muslims and Hindus are all shown to participate in acts of brutality. Through depicting violence being enacted from all sides, Sidhwa presents her independent understanding of Partition – one which makes the reader aware of the inhumane and brutal

aspect of the event, which all groups participated in. Fiction, therefore, is able to tell another kind of 'truth' in its quest for objectivity by reporting the human experience and without apportioning blame. This also supports the view that fiction is an effective mode of expression that relays alternative versions of Partition history. Historical versions of the past which are shaped by statistics and nationalist ideology are not replaced by fictional versions. Instead, fiction adds a 'real' dimension to the events described in official historiography, creating empathy and emotional connection in readers. Painting vivid accounts of violence, as well as details regarding the effects of migration and dislocation in fiction, provides readers and researchers with the impetus to re-examine Partition history. This re-appraisal can call into question concepts of nation-building. Furthermore, a better understanding of how identities are constructed and shaped in an imagined society by nations which emerge from violent conflict can be attained.

Sidhwa's novel is a seminal work on Partition. She believes that she is in a position to write a fairer account of Partition history – a point she states in her 1989 interview with David Montenegro:

> The main motivation grew out of my reading of a good deal of literature on the partition of India and Pakistan . . . what has been written by the British and Indians. Naturally they reflect their bias. And they have, I felt after I'd researched the book, been unfair to the Pakistanis. As a writer, as a human being, one just does not tolerate injustice. I felt whatever little I could do to correct an injustice I would like to do. I have just let facts speak for themselves, and through my research I found out what the facts were. (qtd. in Roy 64)

From the above quote, it is clear that Sidhwa fashions herself as an author who is objective and attempts to provide a type of justice by writing *Ice Candy Man.* However, her words cannot be taken at face value, for every author is affected by bias and influence of some kind. *Ice Candy Man* should, therefore, be viewed as an alternative version of Partition history, as well as a Parsee-Pakistani response to the biased accounts that Sidhwa believes exist. It can be said that a creative justice on Sidhwa's part is achieved by using the narrative form to contend with the unfair accounts she wishes to challenge. Fiction can provide a counter narrative and Sidhwa uses her novel not only to heighten understanding of the various groups involved in Partition, but also to modify the way in which readers approach and engage with official accounts of Partition history.

Sidhwa's novel may also come across as a cementing force – one which enjoins fractious people around commonality, as developing empathy in readers can reduce some of the tensions that still exist as a result of Partition. Sidhwa's creative justice stems from the fact that the lead protagonist, Lenny, is a young Parsee girl, aged roughly the same as what Sidhwa was when she experienced Partition first-hand. It is written with an understanding that readers are expected to appreciate the testimonial account provided by the objectivity of a child narrator. For this reason, as well as others, *Ice Candy Man* can be read as a novel that describes Partition from a Parsee viewpoint, focuses on the experience of women, as told by a child narrator. However, the views of Sidhwa's child narrator are not wholly detached in her most acclaimed work on Partition. Even as a writer who is neither a Muslim, Hindu or Sikh, her sentiments do show favour to one side over another at times, illustrated by many of Lenny's comical observations and utterances in the novel. Sidhwa succeeds in providing an alternate version of historical events. However, in attempting to distance herself from the politics that affected the contending communities (Muslim, Sikh and Hindu), she is still unable to produce a truly objective account of these experiences. In seeking to counter the

Indian and British versions of history, she seems to replace one bias with another, especially in the way she depicts political leaders of the subcontinent and how portrays Muslims as victims of most of the violence (Roy 65). Despite this apparent bias, *Ice Candy Man* is successful at exploring the plight of ordinary people, especially women, at a time of mass confusion and upheaval.

Ice Candy Man is foregrounded in actual events and experiences of Partition. Lenny and her family belong to the minority class of Parsees living in India during Partition. The story begins by informing readers of Lenny's condition, as she suffers from polio and is always accompanied by her Hindu *ayah* (a loanword adopted by the English language to mean nursemaid or child-minder). Though Shanta is the real name of the *ayah*, the novel refers to her as Ayah and discusses how men from different backgrounds revere and admire her. As the narrative continues, communal riots between Muslims and Sikhs spread to towns and villages, and the narrator captures this experience in the account of Ranna, who escapes the violence in *Pir Pindo*. Later in the novel, a Muslim mob arrives at Lenny's house enquiring about Ayah, who they know is a Hindu. Learning of her whereabouts from Lenny's innocent disclosure, the Muslims take Ayah from Lenny's house to the red-light district, *Heera Mandi*. *Heera Mandi* is the site where music, poetry and the female body all converge to serve the male gaze. Ayah is recovered later by Lenny's godmother and is eventually sent to her family in Amritsar. Hameeda, a recovered woman, becomes Lenny's new *ayah* and the novel concludes when Ice Candy Man – the man who plays a part in Ayah's capture but also marries her after, travels across the Wagah border to find her.

The marginal minority experience is granted importance by Sidhwa in her novel to present an alternative account of Partition history. From the position of a Parsee child narrator, Sidhwa explores the tragic side of Partition by recalling important historical events, allowing her to revisit tropes such as rape, forced religious conversions, murder and extreme

violence. But what she also does is relay the human aspect of these tropes. Sidhwa's novel is embedded in a political and historical consciousness that explores directly and indirectly the division of the Indian subcontinent. Her interest and willingness to engage with the histories of Partition are clear from her many works, and having witnessed Partition as a child, she is well-positioned to discuss the complex nature of communal violence, division, and tragedy that occurred throughout 1947. At the beginning of *Ice Candy Man*, India is still under colonial rule and tensions between religious and political parties have become more pronounced. The harmony that existed between different religious groups before Partition is characterised by Sidhwa's description of inter-racial dialogue at the beginning of the novel, when men from various beliefs and backgrounds flock around Ayah in adoration. This, however, gives way to violence and male savagery later in the novel when the 'madness' of Partition turns people against one another.

Sidhwa's narrative uses Lenny, an eight-year-old Parsee girl, to provide an eyewitness account of the events leading up to and after Partition. According to Laurel Graeber, "Bapsi Sidhwa has attempted to give a Pakistani perspective to the Partition of India" (Roy 64), and in doing so, has provided an alternative account of Partition which responds to the tragedy that occurred during the division of India. *Ice Candy Man* is a realist text and clear in its descriptions of the unfolding events of Partition. Yet, this is not the only reason why the text is seminal. The success of *Ice Candy Man* is due to Sidhwa's willingness to explore tropes such as rape, violence, mutilation, migration and forced conversions in great detail. These explorations not only narrate an alternative version of history through fiction, but also represent the voices of women and marginalised groups that have historically been excluded from dominant, male-centred accounts of Partition.

The need to include previously neglected groups is further endorsed by Parvinder Mehta in her essay, "A Will to Say or Unsay" in *Revisiting India's Partition: New Essays on*

Memory, Culture, and Politics (2016). Mehta points out that historians such as Pandey and writers like Butalia have expressed the urgency to "understand the gaps and silences about the unspoken subject positions", emphasising the need to investigate why history has been silent regarding the experiences of so many people that were affected by Partition (Mehta 36), especially women. The mass migrations of 1947 affected women in a different way than men. The nostalgic attachment to *home* and tradition made it extremely difficult for many women to leave their homeland. Women who became refugees or victims, exercised the act of forgetting in order to survive and tolerate their new-found situations. Partition, therefore, was a divide that forced many women into amnesia, essentially eliminating their previous memories which had become linked to trauma. Sidhwa's novel engages with the female experience of Partition and makes women the central focus of her narrative. Through her storytelling, violence against women, as well as their recovery and plight are described in detail. Sidhwa grants her female characters an active voice and agency, empowering them by focusing on their individual experience and emotions. *Ice Candy Man* explores the many instances of violence, both sexual and non-sexual, that are represented in a realist style. Sidhwa's graphic representations of physical violence have stood in for figurative and literal forms of violence. She bridges the gap between history and memory by providing narratives from the survivors of Partition, in support of Mehta's idea that silence can carry meaning and "becomes a non-narrated discourse which seeks articulation and demands inquiry into its own subject formation" (Mehta 35).

When discussing *Ice Candy Man*, one must not overlook Sidhwa's wealthy diasporic position as an author, now living in the West - a view of Partition outside of the Muslim-Sikh-Hindu conflict in Punjab. Born in colonial India, Sidhwa is Parsee and belongs to an Indian diaspora. She then became part of a diaspora produced by the division of India as a Parsee living in Pakistan. Presently, she belongs to a Western diaspora, as much of her time is

spent in America. This diasporic position allows Sidhwa to provide a compelling account of Partition and its violence, as she frames herself as an objective writer. It is not a coincidence, therefore, that the novel emphasises the neutral stance taken by the Parsee community amidst the communal tension and violence that occurs between the dominant religious groups. The fact that Parsees are represented as a neutral group, allows Sidhwa to present her work as an unbiased account of Partition history. The argument here, however, is that although Sidhwa belongs to a minority religion, and uses this as a neutrality marker for her work, there are many biases that surface in her writing. Like the liminal Parsee diaspora in India, which had to manoeuvre carefully in order not to antagonise dominant religious groups, Sidhwa's narrative carefully discusses different aspects of Partition without clearly apportioning any blame, but her perspective remains a Parsee one.

As a female writer relaying Partition history from a minority Parsee stance through a child protagonist, different margins and forms of marginalisation appear quite clearly in Sidhwa's novel. Writing from the margins allows authors to de-centre themselves from the narrative, in order to appear more objective. In fiction, actively marginalising characters can be a deliberate technique to voice the author's own sentiments and beliefs from the periphery. In *Ice Candy Man,* the figure of the child narrator is marginalised from the adult world and offers an account that attempts to achieve authenticity and objectivity. By creating different types of margins, Sidhwa is better able to explore the experience of women during Partition. *Ice Candy Man* can also, therefore, be read as a feminist Parsee novel which signifies the heroic roles played by Parsee women during Partition. Women from other religious groups in Sidhwa's novel seem to be 'victims' of Partition and not agents. They are recovered and aided by Parsee women, thus, rendering their narratives marginalised, for they are not awarded the same empowerment as the Parsee women. Violence is also marginalised in the novel. Sidhwa locates certain acts of violence away from the centre – warranting a discussion

on the effects of marginalising groups and on how marginalising violence can uphold nostalgic memories of place and time.

The aim of this chapter is to explore how Sidhwa deploys a collection of tropes and metaphors denoting different margins through perspectives which are designated to the periphery, and to analyse how creative practice is put to work in conveying aspects of Partition history. The next section will explore the peripheral perspective of the child narrator and discuss the reasons why Sidhwa chose to employ such a technique to convey Partition history in her novel.

THE CHILD NARRATOR.

> I was a child then. Yet the ominous roar of distant mobs was a constant of my awareness, alerting me, even at age seven, to a palpable sense of the evil that was taking place in various parts of Lahore. The glow of fires beneath the press of smoke, which bloodied the horizon in a perpetual sunset, wrenched at my heart. For many of us, the departure of the British and the longed-for Independence of the subcontinent were overshadowed by the ferocity of Partition. (qtd. in Roy 66-67)

By Sidhwa's own admission, Partition was an event which alerted her to the cruelties that exists in society. Her use of fires in the above quote, as well as in *Ice Candy Man*, is synonymous with what Partition achieved in the view of many – a burning of the social fabric of India. The conflict was a border situation and what must be pointed out is that many parts of South Asia did not directly experience Partition in a violent way. Lahore was, however, a

place where many of the atrocities of Partition manifested. In Sidhwa's novel, the use of the child narrator positions the narrative's perspective as unbiased, for children are known to be objective and innocent. Sidhwa uses the naivety, innocence and marginalisation of the child from the adult world, to provide an alternative perspective which is not loaded with the kind of partisan politics expected in other accounts of Partition. However, neutrality in a conflict which is polarised can be difficult to maintain. Even though Sidhwa plays upon the innocence of the child narrator, her own sentiments as well as those of the Parsee community, do surface in the novel. Sidhwa's child narrator, Lenny, is a spectator - a youthful observer who describes her experiences in detail. At times, these experiences appear comical and add humour to a narrative attempting to relay the harsh realities associated with the division of India. By using a child's comical observations, Sidhwa attempts to outline the realism in her novel, and frames it as an authentic innocent account. Lenny is part of a Parsee diaspora residing in India. Her character outlines the displacement of Parsees who endured a separation from their homeland in Iran. Lenny, herself, is displaced from her peers, as she suffers from polio, much like Sidhwa did when she was a child. This disability is important for the narrative, as it frames her version of events as detached. Being crippled by polio exemplifies her dispossessed and marginalised status, and yet the privilege of detachment allows her to narrate the events of Partition – a narrative in which her versatile character is framed to present an objective account.

Lenny's consciousness gradually transforms as the novel progresses, especially in relation to the world of men. This is initially conveyed through the description of Ice Candy Man's toes which love to crawl beneath Ayah's sari and when Lenny reluctantly holds the genitals that her cousin transfers to her palm – the same cousin she later threatens to "knee in the balls" after receiving a "soggy kiss" (Sidhwa, *Ice Candy Man* 22, 23, 244). Lenny eventually grows up as the narrative unfolds and becomes aware of the significance of

religious differences and the unevenness that class and social structure create. This is emphasised, when in a moment of great realisation, she states:

> And I become aware of religious differences. It is sudden. One day everybody is themselves – and the next day they are Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian. People shrink, dwindling into symbols. Ayah is no longer my all-encompassing Ayah – she is also a token. A Hindu. Carried away by a renewed devotional fervour she expends a small fortune in joss-sticks, flowers and sweets on the Gods and Goddesses in the temple. (Sidhwa, *Ice Candy Ma*n 99-100)

In realising the effects of difference, Lenny's understanding and description of the adult world becomes more nuanced. Sidhwa deliberately uses a Parsee child narrator to narrate a complex period of history to distance the narrative from the world of adults, who are at times, biased and easily influenced. However, it must not be overlooked that Lenny's childhood mirrors aspects of Sidhwa's childhood and her experiences as a child during Partition. Sidhwa, like Lenny, matured early after witnessing the division of India first-hand, and Lenny is positioned carefully to provide credibility to Sidhwa's realist account.

Lenny has an intimate relationship with Ayah, even though she is a Parsee. This is significant as it exemplifies not only cross-religious tolerance, albeit involving the non-partisan Parsees, but also a willingness on the part of different religious groups to engage harmoniously with each other. Ayah is a vibrant and important figure at the beginning of the novel, for Sidhwa empowers her with femininity and tolerance. Men of various backgrounds flocked to her in appreciation of her beauty and peaceful disposition. However, in a turn of

events, the tolerant and vibrant Ayah is subjected to the tyranny of men and religious differences later in the novel. Ayah's experiences further broaden Lenny's understanding regarding a society dominated by male power, and thus, the marginal voice of Lenny retells the histories of Partition and nationalism according to what she experiences. Another example of Lenny's interaction with other characters in the novel is when she visits the village of *Pir Pindo* and interacts with the locals. There, she attentively observes and appreciates the diversity of the society she lives in. By positioning her as someone who interacts with people of different faiths in various spatial settings, Lenny is positioned as the embodiment of tolerance and of someone willing to engage with multiplicity.

Sidhwa frames Lenny's narrative outside of the Parsee community narrative, to present Parsees as a neutral group, interested in protecting their liminal status during Partition. Lenny's child narrator account is marginalised to not only re-centre marginalised voices and grant them importance, but also to encourage feelings of sympathy and appreciation towards the different groups that constitute India – a ploy by Sidhwa to reinforce her own status as a realist storyteller who is concerned with the human dimension of Partition. It is also important to mention here that although Lenny's experience and account is marginalised, it is also at the centre of the text and guides the narrative – reinforcing the importance of analysing versions of history written from the margins.

In relation to the significance of space, Lahore is Sidhwa's native land, her city of splendour, and forms the location for many of her works. Although she adds a gendered aspect to her recalling of Lahore, she does succeed in using realism to account for the peace and harmony that was prevalent in Lahore before Partition. Through Lenny's descriptions of Lahore, readers are acquainted with the naive and innocent perspective of a child observer, whose descriptions are presented as unbiased and outside of the charged political rhetoric of the dominant religious groups. Lahore warrants expression, for its ambience and romance is a

familiar trope in the novels of Sidhwa - an affection which Lenny grasps and relates. *Ice Candy Man,* therefore, is about real political, social, and cultural events that occurred. Yet, these events are an author's account – a representation of reality from an eyewitness perspective in literary form, providing an allegorical tale of her Parsee community and of Partition, using narrative agency. Thus, through the marginalised child narrator, Sidhwa utilises both comedy and parody to convey a clear account of her experiences of the division of India.

The beginning of the novel documents Lenny speaking about her family and about the harmony that existed in Lahore. Lahore is positioned as a microcosm of India and home to different people of various cultures and religions. Sidhwa, who left the Indian subcontinent to live in the United States, provides descriptions of Lahore which are fashioned by what Dennis Walder refers to as 'postcolonial nostalgia' in his work, *Postcolonial Nostalgias: Writing, Representation and Memory* (2010). Although Lahore is reimagined in the novel, the image of it is shaped by the author's personal position and interpretation. This can be understood when examining the way Sidhwa depicts the red-light district *Heera Mandi* in the latter parts of her novel. Nostalgia, therefore, is a powerful force at play in the recalling of a space and time from memory. According to Claire Chambers in her article "'The Heart, Stomach and Backbone of Pakistan': Lahore in Novels by Bapsi Sidhwa and Mohsin Hamid." (2014), Sidhwa's account of a palimpsestic Lahore which is "a highly multifaceted space, constituted by history, uneven capitalism, rural and urban continuities and discontinuities, and cultural nostalgia" must be scrutinised (Chambers 157). This is because she looks back at her childhood, years later, to re-imagine Lahore – a reimagining riddled with inequalities, Chambers implies (Chambers 157). For Sidhwa, Lahore is a place of peace before Partition; a megacity equating to a miniature Punjab which unites the various cultures and religions that co-exist within its borders. This harmony of Lahore is captured by Sidhwa

when Lenny describes the small crowd of people that flock around Ayah in admiration. She is loved by people of different religions, embodying an India in which the consciousness of religious identity does not determine relationships and human interaction.

Ice Candy Man, Masseur, Sharbat Khan and Butcher all spend time with Lenny and Ayah at the Queen's Park frequently. Ayah's stance on the brewing political tension is clear when she says, "What's it to us if Jinnah, Nehru and Patel fight? They are not fighting our fight" (Sidhwa, *Ice Candy Man* 81). Her want of peace and harmony is further reiterated when she is angered by discussions on religion and politics from those around her. She warns them that she will no longer join them in the park if they continue discussing politics. By illustrating the harmonious aspects of co-existence in India, Sidhwa urges the readership to question reasons behind the sudden violence that broke out between groups of people who had previously lived together, and to identity those who perpetrated it. Once the decision to divide India is made, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs forget notions of tolerance and co-existence and all turn on one another. Despite the harmony described at the beginning of the novel, Sidhwa gradually weaves in narratives of communal violence and tragedy which describe, in detail, the acts of violence different groups carried out against each other. In Pandey's "The Prose of Otherness" in *Subaltern Studies 8* (1994), the Subaltern Studies Group members outline the difficulties in representing the violence of Partition. They believe that most accounts of violence are masked by nationalist historiographies. Only the context of the violence is documented and recorded, but the violence itself lacks description and emphasis – a ploy by nationalism to frame Indian history in a totalising way that recognises only the nationalist elite. For Pandey, "As in history writing, so in films and fiction, Indian intellectuals have tended to celebrate the story of the Independence struggle rather than dwell on the agonies of Partition" (Pandey, "In Defense" 31-32). This is true of historiography but is not always the case in fiction about Partition, which focuses more on the emotions and

bodies at the heart of Partition. This is the case in *Ice Candy Man*, which addresses and describes the violent side of Partition in greater detail, without outlining national historiography and elitist versions. Sidhwa also counters the silencing of subaltern groups – men and women who belonged to the lower classes, as well as social groups which operate at the periphery, by granting them agency in the narrative. Subaltern groups are not only oppressed but have no access to the cultural imperialism of society. Their stories are seldom given importance in official elitist accounts of history – a notion that Sidhwa challenges by narrating the stories of the marginalised people of India in *Ice Candy Man*.

Whilst Sidhwa documents the peace that existed in Lahore in her novel, she also outlines the cultural and social differences between religious groups in the city and how these may have contributed to Partition. In the novel, she comments on the Brahmin notion of purity when Lenny describes how the food of a Brahmin priest is polluted by the shadow of a non-Hindu. Later, she emphasises the societal barriers that had existed between the Muslims and Hindus for centuries, played out in one example which discusses how a Muslim entering the kitchen of an upper-caste Hindu would result in the polluting of the Hindus' food. The dislike of one group by another, fuelled by notions of purity, demarcated the difference in identity between Hindus and Muslims – outlining one of the many reasons why Muslims sought an alternative homeland. To view the tensions between the various groups involved in Partition as caste conflict, however, would be a simplification of a complex issue. Sikhs, for example, do not adhere to a caste system, and further research on tribal systems has shown that such systems transcend regions and faiths. Thus, not all conflict that occurred during Partition was caste-based and fuelled by notions of purity. Sidhwa's novel does, however, succeed in portraying different types of communal violence. For her, the social fabric of society was as much a contributor towards Partition, as the selfish motives of politicians and brewing communal tensions. Furthermore, Lahore holds a significant position in the novel as

it did in pre-partitioned India, and Sidhwa outlines the contentious nature of Lahore for Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus, who all wished to claim it. Lahore had a majority Muslim population, though Hindu money was heavily involved in its economy.

During the Partition Awards announcement gathering in *Ice Candy Man*, Lahore's fate is sealed much to the dismay of many when Lenny states, "Playing British gods under the ceiling fans of the Faletti's Hotel – behind Queen Victoria's gardened skirt – the Radcliffe Commission deals out Indian cities like a pack of cards. Lahore is dealt to Pakistan, Amritsar to India. Sialkot to Pakistan. Pathankot to India" (Sidhwa, *Ice Candy Man* 149). Here, Sidhwa addresses the harsh historical realities that occurred in 1947, as Lenny's world is ruptured by the partitioning of India. Questions and confusion regarding *home* and nationality surfaced when Indian cities were dealt out 'like a pack of cards', further complicating how people of the subcontinent imagined and re-imagined their homeland during and after Partition. As Lenny matures in the novel, so do her descriptions and questions, as they coincide with a world that becomes increasingly categorised and labelled. The people of India were not aware of how the country would be divided and Sidhwa brings this to the fore in her novel to address the complexities of nation-building and post-independence cultures (Deb 220). Lahore, like other Punjabi cities, such as Gurdaspur, is shown to have a prize-like status, which the dominant religious groups wish to win for themselves. Sidhwa's novel and scholarship on Partition have long expressed the importance of Lahore as a cultural centre. The fact that its status would belong to whichever side it was given to, was of great significance. In the novel, Lahore becomes synonymous with the nation, and obtaining it equates to achieving victory during Partition – for it seems that whoever possesses Lahore, possesses India. Lahore is a palimpsest – rich, diverse and sought after. It is also a homeland, as well as a reminder of the complexities of social and cultural differences which shaped the identity and ideology of its inhabitants.

Later in the novel, Lahore transforms into a space where violence and brutality reach their peak and where the endless fires of Partition reduce earlier heartfelt portrayals. This is captured by Lenny when she says:

> How long does Lahore burn? Weeks? Months? […] Mozang Chawk burns for months… and months . . . […] And the hellish fires of Lahore spawn monstrous mobs. These no more resemble the little processions of chanting urchins that Warris Road spawned – and that Adi and I shouted ourselves hoarse in – than the fires that fuse steel girders to mortar resemble the fires that Imam Din fans alive in our kitchen grates every morning. (Sidhwa, *Ice Candy Man* 148)

The effects of Partition are long-lasting, characterised by the 'hellish fires' which bring forth further tensions. The image of fires denotes an India which has been burnt and charred by the violence of Partition, as the essence of its core is lost in smoke. Lenny questions how long Lahore will burn for, alluding to the idea that the burning is represented spatially and physically in the Punjab and temporally in the generations after 1947. Sidhwa's novel provides thorough descriptions of the events of 1947 by outlining the brutal acts of violence and religious difference that have become synonymous with the division of India. These descriptions are addressed by Chambers' approach which discusses the post-secular turn that aims "to take more account of religion, war and terror's impact on twenty-first-century cities" (Chambers 157). In her work, Chambers considers the depictions of *Heera Mandi* in the novels of both Sidhwa and Mohsin Hamid, assessing the importance of this space in relation to Lahore and Pakistan as a nation. For Chambers, *Heera Mandi* is where music, poetry and the female body all converge – a space in which women expose their bodies to the gazes of

men, whilst the singing and reciting of the Muslim poetic form, *ghazals* (a lyrical poem, typically based on the theme of love), is carried out (Chambers 149).

Another important point is that *Heera Mandi* is located near the commemorative tower, Minar-e-Pakistan, which marks the Lahore Resolution of 1940. It is also near the great Moghul Mosque, Badshahi Masjid. Religion and commemorative history are juxtaposed here with the profanity of *Heera Mandi*. Just as Sidhwa portrays Lahore as a microcosm of India earlier in the novel, she later constructs *Heera Mandi* as a microcosm of Lahore – a city in which Lenny's nanny Ayah is rendered a dancing girl after being raped and tortured. Although it can be argued that Sidhwa's mention of the *ghazal*, which is connected to certain Sufi practices that employ poetry, dance and music to express religious love is an innocent observation, combining both the sacred and the profane in a space which is depicted as the locus of the city, distorts the narrative on Lahore. It excludes the multifaceted nature of the city as a whole and guides readership to imagine *Heera Mandi* as a representation of Lahore and what it signifies. Merging the performing arts with prostitution, marginalises the discourse on Lahore, as Sidhwa transforms *Heera Mandi* into an epicentre – used as a metaphor to define post-Partition Lahore. It is perhaps for this reason that Sidhwa's post-colonial representation of Lahore's red light district, draws a closer analysis from Chambers, who concludes that "Sidhwa adds a gendered dimension to the city in her preoccupation with sex workers in *Heera Mandi* across almost all of her novels to date", in support of the view that writers from the diaspora like Sidhwa, "construct a complex picture of the city, refuting the binaries that are seductively omnipresent in the representations of Lahore" (Chambers 157).

THE PARSEE PERSPECTIVE.

In her use of margins, Sidhwa describes Partition history through the peripheral Parsee perspective to convey the experience of their liminal position in Indian society, and to provide details on individuals who appear to be the 'victims' of history. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Graeber views *Ice Candy Man* as an alternative version of Partition history from a Pakistani perspective. Sidhwa's account seems to add another layer to the narratives presented by both the British and Indians. However, Niaz Zaman in *A Divided Legacy: The Partition in Selected Novels of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh* (1999), believes that the ideology of Pakistan has influenced Sidhwa's response to Partition (Zaman 17), failing to fully appreciate elements of objectivity and impartiality Sidhwa displays in her work. Her observations of the social and cultural differences that existed in pre-partitioned India are commendable, as she uses Lenny to foreground issues such as class distinction, patriarchal norms and female exploitation. However, her own perspective, as well as that of the Parsee community does surface. This can be clearly seen in her portrayal of political leaders. Jinnah, Gandhi and Nehru are all treated subjectively, as Sidhwa attempts to outline how political figures misuse religion for selfish political gain. The novel treats Jinnah with a consideration that portrays him as a supporter of Muslim-Hindu unity. She remembers him as a reserved and practical man wanting to champion the rights of minority groups. For Sidhwa, Hindus are as much to blame as the Muslims in their role for dividing India into separate states - an attempt to perhaps counter earlier historical versions that portray Muslims as being solely responsible. Describing Jinnah, Sidhwa uses the well-known words of the Indian poetess Sairojini Naidu to resurrect his image:

> . . . the calm hauteur of his accustomed reserve masks, for those who know him, a naïve and eager humanity, an intuition quick and tender as a woman's, a humour gay and winning as a child's – pre-eminently rational and practical, discreet and dispassionate in his estimate and acceptance of life, the obvious sanity and serenity of his worldly wisdom effectually disguise a shy and splendid idealism which is of the very essence of the man. (Sidhwa, *Ice Candy Man* 171)

In stark contrast to the description of Jinnah above and to "Indian historians who credit Gandhi for single-handedly ousting the British from India" (Roy 65), *Ice Candy Man* treats Gandhi with a mild discontent. Referred to as merely "a politician" by Masseur, Gandhi is described as a dietician who asks women to flush their systems with enemas (Sidhwa, *Ice Candy Man* 95-96), while Nehru is described as the one who "will walk off with the lion's share" (Sidhwa, *Ice Candy Man* 140). Nehru here is portrayed as untrustworthy, for he also has "Mountbatten eating out of his one hand and the English's wife out of his other what-not … He's the one to watch!" (Sidhwa, *Ice Candy Man* 140).

Although portraits of Gandhi are complex and his support was not uniform during his lifetime, he was and is still held in high regard by both Indian and British scholars. Supporters of Gandhi such as historians Edward Thompson and Romain Rollard recognised his weapon of non-violence and his fight against injustice. Sidhwa, however, relays the more unfavourable opinions surrounding Gandhi. In a recent book entitled *Why Gandhi Still Matters: An Appraisal of the Mahatma's Legacy* (2017), Rajmohan Gandhi provides a more objective account of Gandhi and his relevance in contemporary times. Unlike loyalist accounts of him, the work caters not only for the supporters of Gandhi, but also for those who hold prejudices against him and criticise him for having inconsistent stances regarding the

caste system and the British Empire. Sidhwa's novel, nevertheless, steers clear of issuing any support to Gandhi and his struggle, evident through the following comical observation made by Lenny:

> […] Mother hauls me up some steps and into Gandhiji's presence. He is knitting. Sitting cross-legged on the marble floor of a palatial veranda, he is surrounded by women. He is small, dark, shrivelled, and old. He looks just like Hari, our gardener, except he has a disgruntled, disgusted and irritable look, and no one'd dare pull off his dhoti. He wears only the loin-cloth and his black and thin torso is naked. (Sidhwa, *Ice Candy Man* 92)

From these citations, Sidhwa appears more partial towards Jinnah than she is towards both Gandhi and Nehru. Although it may seem that she is balancing out history by pointing towards incidences and individuals that may have caused Partition other than Jinnah, her sentiments in dealing with political figures in *Ice Candy Man*, express her own subjectivity. Though she positions testimonial evidence and a child narrator as authenticity markers, her personal sentiment appears in the narrative, underlining the fact that no account of Partition is truly devoid of bias.

The Parsee perspective of the novel is further emphasised through Sidhwa's numerous references to her community and their stance during Partition. The novel offers a glimpse into the lives of the liminal Parsee community residing in Lahore, while charting how this marginalised minority group negotiated its position during the high politics which concerned the dominant religious and political groups. Historically, the Parsees remained neutral during

Partition, hoping to align themselves with whichever group would take charge of Lahore – a stance that Sidhwa carefully reiterates, and a point of departure for her own attempt at writing an objective fictional account. In demonstrating the reluctance of her community to engage in politics, Sidhwa uses the voice of Colonel Bharucha:

> 'Let whoever wishes rule! Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian! We will abide by the rules of their land!' […] 'As long as we do not interfere we have nothing to fear! As long as we respect the customs of our rulers – as we always have – we'll be alright! Ahura Mazda has looked after us for thirteen hundred years: he will look after us for another thirteen hundred!' […] 'We will cast our lot with whoever rules Lahore!' (Sidhwa, *Ice Candy Man* 43)

Colonel Bharucha is framed as the voice of the Parsee community who outlines the non-partisan position of his people. Sidhwa uses his character to reiterate their passive role in the politics of Partition, demonstrating their desire to flourish as a community by accepting and abiding by the rules of whichever group takes control. Colonel Bharucha is also Lenny's doctor and is seen at the beginning of the novel voicing his sentiment to a Muslim parent who he believes is neglecting the health of his child. This neglect from a Muslim parent coincides with the time when demands for a new nation from the Muslim community were being made. By showing a Muslim parent being neglectful to his child, Sidhwa draws parallels with the neglect and lack of foresight shown on part of the Muslim leaders at the time of Partition, as mass brutality and murder could have been avoided if more care had been dedicated by political and religious leaders. Although Colonel Bharucha blames the British for bringing polio into India - subtly pointing towards the colonial Raj as the perpetrators of a bloody Partition, his advice for his own people is unwavering and clear. Whilst appreciative of the

good that exists in the dominant religious groups of India, he advises caution, as Parsees are a minority and should observe a neutral stance in order to avoid being subjugated.

At the Parsee gathering for the Jashan prayer, Colonel Bharucha again addresses and cautions his community:

> 'We must tread carefully . . . We have served the English faithfully, and earned their trust . . . So, we have prospered! But we are the smallest minority in India . . . Only one hundred and twenty thousand in the whole world. We have to be extra wary, or we'll neither be here nor there . . .' […] 'We must hunt with the hounds and run with the hare!' (Sidhwa, *Ice Candy Man* 18)

The double position that Colonel Barucha alludes to demonstrates the adaptive abilities of the Parsee community. As a vulnerable minority, they had cordial relations with the contending groups in the conflict of Partition. Understanding their own vulnerability allowed them to take advantage of their neutral position in order to survive and prosper. Sidhwa, like the Parsees, also does not take sides easily and attempts to avoid apportioning blame, dwelling in a type of ambivalence, even though her own experiences and bias surface throughout the novel. Lenny's account exemplifies the insecurities faced by the Parsees. And Colonel Bharucha, when cautioning his people in the above-mentioned quote, reinforces the complicit nature of the Parsees, who are able to prosper under any rule, as long as they maintain their high moral stature as objective upright members of society. Furthermore, the adaptive nature is played upon by Colonel Bharucha who feels the Parsee community should serve its best interests by remaining loyal to a multi-nation theory, while practising caution, as they "might

find themselves championing the wrong side if they don't look before they leap!" (Sidhwa, *Ice Candy Man* 41). This demonstrates that the Parsees were not always passive, as they too had to manoeuvre carefully due to the political tensions around them. Being a minority creates a vulnerable position, and the shifting allegiance of the Parsees works in the text to demonstrate how minority groups tactfully align themselves with those under whose rule subjugation and discrimination has less chance of occurring.

Parsees migrated from Persia to India after the Arabs conquered their lands, and this is a reason for their reluctance to involve themselves in the politics that concerned the dominant groups during Partition. They were allowed into India and granted conditional refuge. They accepted the rules stipulated to them and began to co-exist. During Partition, however, ethnic anxieties arose as the politics of marginality came into play. As outsiders, the Parsees did not align themselves with the dominant groups involved in the communal tensions and violence during Partition. On the contrary, they supported a sense of communal identity as they were being confronted with a political, social and economic threat (Deshmukh 15). In these circumstances, minority groups can feel vulnerable and need to align themselves to a movement or a group which protects their interests for their own survival. Parsees were a stateless community living under the banner of acculturation. They were also well aware of their marginal status in an India on the verge of division – a division that also emphasises the shifting allegiances of minority groups who were not involved in the violence and politics of Partition**.**

As mentioned earlier, Parsees had to accept certain terms set by the Indian rulers upon arrival, to establish a home for their community. They adopted the Gujarati language, agreed to performing marriage ceremonies at night, agreed not to marry the locals, accepted to venerate the cow and agreed to the wearing of the sari for their women. These terms were accepted to ensure the survival of their people. In time, the Parsees established themselves as

a successful minority group in India. Whilst they met the conditions set by the Indian rulers, they also maintained a sense of identity and community by observing traditional etiquettes and morals. Their integrity became clear to the local Indians, as they strove to preserve their ethnic distinctiveness (Deshmukh 30). In *Ice Candy Man*, Sidhwa outlines the sense of community and group identity that Parsees adhere to in order to illustrate the adaptive nature. She also presents them as an anxious community who held firm to neutrality when confronted with the threat of subjugation. The Parsees adopted a "discreet and politically naive profile" (Sidhwa, *Ice Candy Man* 18) and Sidhwa illustrates that the Parsee community lived in a condition of liminality – one in which they absorbed themselves in the culture around them, whilst upholding their ethno-religious distinctiveness. Furthermore, Sidhwa points towards the high moral code of the Parsees in an attempt to exhibit the objective approach they live by – perhaps an assertion from her that only a member of a community which understands the politics of marginality and tragedy of displacement, is able to provide justice to all sides when writing about Partition. Like the Parsees, Sidhwa is displaced from the centre of violence, and she uses this outsider perspective to represent the past. Though they play an outsider role in Sidhwa's novel, the Parsees are empowered with tolerance, objectiveness and foresight. However, as is deduced from the shifting allegiances of the Parsee community, evidenced by earlier quotes presented from the novel, the complicit nature of the Parsees is also clear. The complicity does not mean that Parsees influenced Partition or colluded with a particular group in any way, but it shows their adaptive nature, and one which was essential at a time of heightened tension and angst. Critics who regard Sidhwa's work as a Pakistani perspective of Partition, challenge her claims of writing an unbiased and objective account. Although this can be argued, it does not take away from the fact that she has attempted to detail the Parsee experience, as well as that of other marginalised groups.

Much like the Parsee perspective, Sidhwa also designates violence in the novel to the periphery, providing an alternative lens from which to understand the experience of individuals who she represented as victims of history. The following section will discuss this in greater detail.

VIOLENCE AND THE BODY IN ICE CANDY MAN.

Ice Candy Man vividly describes the violence of Partition and the bodies of those murdered and injured, allowing readers to relate to the suffering and pain experienced by victims. Amputated and wounded bodies charged with memory and meaning, therefore, become the embodiment of nationalist ideas. In the novel, bodies are represented in numerous ways in order to capture the horrors of Partition. The body morphs into a site of meaning after violence has been carried out upon it. Much like India, Sidhwa details the body being partitioned in *Ice Candy Man*, and as a result, emotional connections are partitioned to give new identities to characters in the novel. The body becomes a fluid entity and dehumanised. This process of the de-humanisation of the body is achieved by recognising its limits and the loss of coherence which renders it unrecognisable as human. An example of this can be seen in the description of Masseur's dead body in a gunny-bag when Himat Ali and Lenny find him:

> The sack slowly topples over and Masseur spills out […] He was lying on one side, the upper part of his velvet body bare, a brown and white checked lungi knotted on his hips, and his feet in the sack. I never knew Masseur was so fair inside, creamy, and his arms smooth and distended with muscles and his forearms lined with pale

> brown hair. A wide wedge of flesh was neatly hacked to further trim his slender waist, and his spine, in a velvet trough, dipped into his lungi. (Sidhwa, *Ice Candy Man* 185-186)

Masseur has become a liquid body which "spills out" of a gunny-sack (Sidhwa, *Ice Candy Man* 185). He is dead – a liquid body devoid of integrity, yet the description of his body continues in order to evoke emotion and meaning. Masseur, one of Ayah's many admirers, has been murdered out of jealousy perhaps, and his body has become the site of violence upon which meaning has been inscribed. Through the description of Masseur, Sidhwa reiterates that the body is an embodiment of violence and has the power to offer meaning. Masseur's flesh has been "neatly hacked" from his slender waist as, he lays motionless, no longer himself, but merely a body - a thing (Sidhwa, *Ice Candy Man* 186). Yet, the silent dead body communicates and denotes meaning whilst demonstrating the intention of his killer(s). "They look at Masseur as if he's not a person. He isn't. He has been reduced to a body. A thing" (Sidhwa, *Ice Candy Man* 186). He is now an object which represents a reminder of the savagery that exists in society and the reasons that fuel it. Masseur's body has become the primary focus in his mutilation, and the body here cannot be contained as it spills out excessively, showing all the grotesque violence that can barely be hidden by the inadequacy of the gunny sack. Such an example brings to the surface discussions on whether there is any meaning beyond the mutilation, or if it is to be seen as an arbitrary and meaningless act of violence. In Masseur's case, the dehumanisation of his body has been fuelled by jealousy and rage, signifying the extent to which emotions can lead to extreme acts of violence. The dead body of Masseur also provides an example of how Sidhwa marginalises violence in her novel. The fluid dead body of Masseur, therefore, acts as an

embodiment of marginalised violence, spilling out "half on the dusty sidewalk, half on the gritty tarmac" (Sidhwa, *Ice Candy Man* 185).

In another instance of violence, Lenny witnesses a Sikh mob that hang a child on a spear and wave it like a flag. Here, the body of a young child is used to signify the power and identity of the Sikhs. The body is no longer a vessel of life but a display through which power is portrayed by a religious group. This mutilation of child innocence turns into actual body mutilation later - a recurring theme in Partition violence which emphasises the power inflicted upon victims. Another example of this power being demonstrated through violence on the body is when Lenny witnesses a Muslim mob collectively carrying out a horrific act of violence on a Hindu man. She states:

> My eyes focus on an emaciated Banya wearing a white Gandhi cap. The man is knocked down. His lips are drawn away from rotting, *paan*-stained teeth in a scream. The men move back and in the small clearing I see his legs sticking out of his dhoti right up to the groin - each thin, brown leg tied to a jeep […] There is the roar of a hundred throats: '*Allah-o-Akbar*!' and beneath it the growl of revving motors. (Sidhwa, *Ice Candy Man* 144)

Here, Sidhwa illustrates the vulnerability of an individual who cannot fight back against a mob. The "white Gandhi cap" and the "stained teeth" use strong visual imagination to connect readers with the victim (Sidhwa, *Ice Candy Man* 144). The mob, however, is indiscriminate in their actions and also in the way they are presented visually as a mass. This

important effect outlines the vulnerabilities of the individual against a collective mass of people who are motivated by religious hatred.

Sidhwa captures the graphic realities of a violent Partition and provides a realist account (bound to historical facts) of the brutality Lenny comes to know of. The Muslim men, who are the perpetrators of the violence in the above-mentioned instance, chant and roar to the sound of revving engines, as Lenny witnesses' mutilation. The act itself is pointless brutality. The violence against a Hindu body by Muslims, epitomises the hatred one religious community has for the other, whilst rendering the body a site of difference. After witnessing the dismemberment of the Hindu Banya, Lenny returns home and performs a similar act of violence on her doll - responding to what she has experienced. Here, we witness how the focus of the materiality of bodies, changes from the flesh (partitioned Hindu man) to the man-made body of a doll. The disembodied static body is juxtaposed with the immaterial body, as Sidhwa draws our attention to the significance of body politics and how meaning and intent is delivered by the body. In the novel, the China-faced, blue-eyed doll is fought over by Lenny and her brother, Adi. In a fierce tug of war, the doll splits into two halves in a meaningless act of brutality. Much like the Hindu man whose severed body acts as a symbol of political sacrifice, the severed doll – an envisioned India, unbalances both Lenny and Adi.

The effects of this unbalancing continue till the present day, as tensions resurface frequently between India and Pakistan. The *long Partition* continues to affect the lives of many in the subcontinent as the image of the 'other' remains very much alive. The violence of Partition continues to shape the identity of many communities and the way in which the perpetrators of that violence are perceived. Memories of acts like the partitioning (mutilation) of a Hindu man by a Muslim mob evoke pain and anger in communities that uphold their animosity towards the 'enemy'. In recreating the violence, the Hindu man suffered at the hands of the mob, Lenny mimics what she has seen outside in her home. Sidhwa uses the doll

to introduce shock and emotion for the reader by having a child internalise and participate in the violence that she witnesses. Sidhwa grasps the effects of a Partition which sent millions of people into disarray, dislocation and displacement. By using a metaphor for dismemberment, Sidhwa also provides her critics with evidence of her objective and independent approach to Partition. By displaying the violent acts of Sikhs, Muslims and Hindus, she does not hold any one side responsible. The violence she describes positions her as a spectator, witnessing cruelty from all groups, and thus, apportioning responsibility for the brutality of Partition to all sides. Consequently, critics such as Zaman and Crane who feel that the Pakistani national ideology and a wish to write against Indian depictions of Partition have influenced Sidhwa's novel. However, there is need to also appreciate aspects of the novel which clearly attempt to convey the realities of Partition objectively and without assigning blame.

In one of the most tragic acts of communal violence in the novel, Sidhwa describes a historical event which has become synonymous with Partition. In doing so, she reasserts that bodies can communicate, and that even the dead can convey messages and meaning. Historically, trains carrying refugees between the two newly formed nations, arrived full of dead bodies (Kaur 947). These people had been killed by mobs on their journey. Killing had become the way one side sent a message to the other. The trains carrying the dead passengers became known as *blood* trains (Doshi and Mehdi) and Sidhwa captures this in her novel by describing a train that has come from Gurdaspur carrying Muslim passengers. All aboard have been killed as they are Muslim. Their religious affiliation is the reason why *other* mobs have resorted to extreme violence to convey their message. What is of importance here is that the dead bodies have been sent on the train, as opposed to being disposed of. The meaning of what the dead represent is more important to the perpetrators, than the actual acts of brutality in these instances. It is, therefore, not a coincidence that the image of trains carrying dead passengers became synonymous with Partition, as it served as a clear example of the

savagery and mindless violence connected to the event. By inscribing violence upon the body as a message, the intentions of perpetrators were communicated.

In the novel, Ice Candy Man announces the news of the arrival of the train to his friends at a pivotal point – a point which changes him and guides his own horrific actions from there onwards:

> Ice Candy Man comes to an abrupt and jolted halt. He is breathless, reeking of sweat and dust, and his frantic eyes rake the group. They rest for an instant on the Sikh, and flutter back to us. 'A train from Gurdaspur has just come in,' he announces, panting. 'Everyone in it is dead. Butchered. They are all Muslim. There are no young women among the dead! Only two gunny-bags full of women's breasts!' (Sidhwa, *Ice Candy Man* 158)

Sidhwa here uses this event to suggest how a significant moment can radicalize an individual. In this case, it is Ice Candy Man that becomes radicalized after witnessing the dead bodies in the train. His former self has come to a halt, and a new self has emerged, as he relays the horror that has been committed against the Muslims on the train, especially against the Muslim women. Trauma, when experienced, can alter an individual and its effect can be psychological, as well as physical. In the case of Ice Candy Man, the trauma has ignited a hatred, indicated by the short time his eyes rest upon the Sikh, as if to confirm the identity of those he deems responsible for the butchering of the Muslims. The train of corpses also includes the relatives of Ice Candy Man, for whom he had been waiting, and their death, as

well as those of other Muslims, changes him. This change alongside his real sentiments can be seen when he later states:

> ‘If you must know, I was! I’ll tell you to your face - I lose my senses when I think of the mutilated bodies on that train from Gurdaspur. . . that night I went mad, I tell you! I lobbed grenades through the windows of Hindus, and Sikhs I’d known all my life! I hated their guts . . . I want to kill someone for each of the breasts they cut off the Muslim women . . .’. (Sidhwa, *Ice Candy Man* 167)

More alarming than the graphic scenes of mutilated corpses on the train is the fact that there were no young women amongst the dead - implying that abduction and rape may have been their fate. Two 'gunny-sacks' containing women's breasts were sent back - a painful example of Partition violence being inscribed on women's bodies. This mutilation is powerfully symbolic, for breasts signify womanhood, motherhood, femininity and reproduction. By amputating a woman's breasts, she is deprived of being perceived as a wife, mother or nurturer. This brutal act of sexual violence exemplifies the hatred felt towards Muslims - a hatred so profound that it resorted to extinguishing the chance of Muslim children being born. The mutilation of women during Partition, therefore, supports the notion that wounds inscribed on the body of an individual, equate to a wounding on the body collectively. Sexual violence was a material experience during Partition, and the violence performed upon women sheds light on the severe objectification of women by a male dominated society. Through examining sexual violence, dead bodies and mutilations in *Ice Candy Man*, it can be argued that the intention behind causing death and dismemberment is synonymous with the dissolution of the individuality of a people, and the nation. The body actualises violence and

conveys through it the message of those who administer it. The intentions of the perpetrators, therefore, are clearly signified on the bodies of victims.

By analysing historical and fictional texts that discuss murdered and wounded bodies at the time of Partition, the direct suffering of victims can be imagined. Wounded and dead bodies are enriched with meaning and memory. The body is the space on which powers of meaning connect to one another, where violence is enacted, and where meaning is orchestrated. A train carrying dead bodies and mutilated breasts is no longer an isolated act of brutality. Such an act is communicative and deliberate. The dead bodies are sent to the enemy to reiterate the power they possess, and the violence inscribed on bodies is the medium by which intent is communicated. Furthermore, the dismembering of the female body to fill gunny-sacks with breasts, evokes a powerful image. Much like Masseur's body, which 'spilled out' of the gunny-bag, the female body here has also become a liquid body. The body, in this case, female breasts, communicates a silent horror, leading readers to imagine narratives pertaining to the whereabouts of the remaining parts of the body which are missing. The 'bags of breasts' also imply an abundance which cannot be contained, adding to the sense of disgust and horror Sidhwa wishes her readers to experience, in order to relate to the atrocities of Partition.

The story of Ranna is another graphic account of violence inflicted upon the body. Ranna's account is the narrative of a survivor, whose initial retelling of his story is performed by his body. After surviving a brutal attack, Ranna meets Lenny, who can barely recognise him. He is "painfully thin", and his limbs are "black and brittle" (Sidhwa, *Ice Candy Man* 206). Ranna's wounded body relates his struggle for life and his desire to survive. In the story, Ranna's village is attacked by Sikhs and he witnesses his father's head being cut off. The decapitation of his family and relatives follows, as Ranna is knocked down where bodies blocking an entrance had rendered the room a pool of blood. Again, Sidhwa's reference to the

body communicates dead bodies as exhibits that demarcate boundaries created by the re-ordering of communities. Although Ranna is assaulted, he manages to survive with a scar. Some Muslims, who insisted on staying in the village regardless of the violent threat posed by other religious groups, suffered a terrible fate because of their refusal to move. The Sikhs came and pillaged the village. Sidhwa juxtaposes descriptions of the Muslims and the Sikhs - once more asserting how meaning is represented through the body. Ranna recalls seeing his sister "run stark naked . . . her boyish body bruised", attempting to escape from the Sikhs who were "tall men with streaming hair", carrying out punishments for all those who resisted the re-ordering of communities (Sidhwa, *Ice Candy Man* 214). These Sikhs are presented as the embodiment of fear and warning, killing any *other* in sight. The wound left on Ranna's head by the Sikhs is now a permanent scar rendering him emotionally unstable. His survival narrative is a trauma inscribed on his body - his wounds and scars all meaningful. Ranna's body "has been chopped up, and then welded" and Sidhwa uses the description of his put-together body to support the idea of re-integration and reconstruction of the self and society (Sidhwa, *Ice Candy Man* 206).

The mark of violence on Ranna's head is a reminder of all that he experienced and "it is a grisly scar like a brutally gouged and premature bald spot. In time the wound acquired the shape of a four-day-old crescent moon", perhaps indicative of a new life, and new-born Pakistani identity, whose national flag would come to bear a crescent (Sidhwa, *Ice Candy Man* 206). It can also be said that Ranna's survivor testimony shows how the scars of Partition will always remain etched upon its victims. However, what is implied is that hope and will for a new beginning and a better future, after having survived atrocity, is the way one can reconcile with the past. By providing different experiences that her characters have of Partition, Sidhwa urges the readership to interrogate the many versions of Partition that exist. Ranna's account narrates an intimate tale of suffering, where memory is foregrounded

as an essential factor in uncovering the many details on Partition. Furthermore, Ranna's story shows that Sidhwa supports the recovery of survivor testimonies and regards them as important aspects of Partition discourse. Unlike many who refuse to or are unable to recall their experiences of Partition, Ranna's vivid account is clear and forthcoming. His testimony captures the suffering his family and village endured, bringing to life his experience. Here, fiction transcends into reality and the readership is presented with a personalised story which warrants both empathy and analysis. This supports the idea that alternative investigations on Partition through fiction and oral histories are as valuable as official accounts. Oral testimonies which find articulation in fiction provide a nuanced and detailed account of violence at an individual level, and Ice Candy Man succeeds in presenting alternative truths about Partition by describing marginalised experiences which are bound to the historical past.

Another significant point is that violence often takes place at the margins or periphery in the novel. Participants of Partition and other violent conflicts tend to preserve memories of what is deemed sacred, and resist diluting its image with any event that results in a traumatic recalling. In oral history accounts, violence is marginalised when it distorts the sacredness of a place or memory of a person, or community. For many who experienced Partition, violence took place just outside their village, as opposed to in it. For others, it was in a nearby village but not in their city, in the dark narrow street but not on the main road directly across from their home. Trauma and rupture seem, therefore, to create the need to uphold nostalgic memories which marginalise violence - removing trauma and its affects from the centre. Although Ranna experiences violence at home in his village, it is away from the cultural and administrative capital of India - another example of Sidhwa marginalising violence and locating it at the margins. Also, the violence inflicted upon Masseur is marginalised, as it is located on a sidewalk and not in the middle of the road. By marginalising the violence of Partition, fond memories of *home* can be preserved, and violence is used to police the borders

of a society, while protecting an imaginary ‘centre’. Memory, therefore, is fluid, constructed and reconstructed at both individual and state level to uphold or relay a particular version of the past. By presenting the narratives of Lenny, Ranna, and the recovered Hameeda, Sidhwa urges for the interrogation of multiple narratives on Partition, for no absolute truth on Partition exists. In fact, the multiplicity found in the various narratives adds more detail to a complex and multi-layered history.

Rape and abduction are themes in the novel which portray the gendered experience of violence during and after Partition. Stories of women, therefore, make a poignant intervention and explore the emergence of gendered trauma and its disruption of dominant, historical accounts of Partition. Trauma was a result of the violence of Partition that many endured. This is more so the case for women who were raped, tortured and displaced – their memories disrupted, and identities confused. In *Ice Candy Man*, Ayah is abducted and subjected to violence. The trauma she suffers silences her, and at the end of the novel, she wishes only to return home to her parents, away from the world of men and the horrors she has endured at their hands. Many victims of rape and sexual violence that occurred during Partition, conceal their stories in order to forget painful events or resist re-living them. *Ice Candy Man* is successful at uncovering some examples of the violence that women endured. Identities constructed after living through traumatic experiences can be viewed as an integral part of a national, collective remembering of Partition, especially when discussing how the trauma paradigm is accommodated in literary texts which imagine a restorable future. In Ayah's case, she pleads with Lenny's godmother to help her return home to her parents, irrespective of what her parents want. Living with Ice Candy Man reminds her of all that she wishes to forget and all that she wishes to distance herself from – her trauma ultimately shaping the decisions she makes.

In providing graphic accounts of violence in *Ice Candy Man*, Sidhwa has added a raw dimension to earlier accounts of Partition history. In doing so, she offers a detailed understanding of the suffering endured by participants and the meanings carried by the bodies upon which violence, sexual and non-sexual, was carried out. Dismembering, mutilation and rape are all illustrated in detail in the novel, as Sidhwa attempts to denote meaning to the violent acts experienced by so many. According to Butalia in *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India* (2000), approximately 75,000 women were kidnapped and raped by men. It is such violence and its description that is omitted in the many historical versions of India's history. Sidhwa addresses this omission by presenting graphic examples. One such example is when she illustrates what Ranna witnesses in Amritsar:

> No one minded the semi-naked spectre as he looked in doors with his knowing, wide set peasant eyes as men copulated with wailing children – old and young women. He saw a naked woman, her light Kashmiri skin bruised with purple splotches and cuts, hanging head down from a ceiling fan. And looked on with a child's boundless acceptance and curiosity as jeering men set her long hair on fire. He saw babies, snatched from their mothers, smashed against walls and their howling mothers brutally raped and killed. (Sidhwa, *Ice candy Man*, 219)

The use of realism and graphical detail bring tropes of rape and violence to life. In Sidhwa's novel victims are not statistics and their bodies and experience are vividly presented. Partition violence has meaning and finds legitimacy through its purpose of establishing a new social order, as well as the origins of two distinct countries. Ultimately, Partition ruptured the state and the lives of everyday people. Mass violence produced a collective and individual trauma

that led to inter-generational effects. Survivor accounts of Partition are the living memory of it, and such accounts are crucial additions to bridging the gap between *real* and historical accounts of Partition. Sidhwa uses Ranna's account to tell the story of everyday people who endured the violence of the division of India, documenting the struggle and trauma of women and marginalised groups, in order to counter official accounts of Partition. As mentioned earlier, *Ice Candy Man* can be read as a feminist novel that focuses on the female experience of Partition. The following section will explore the role of women in Sidhwa's novel and the ways in which female characters are represented.

WOMEN AND PARTITION.

Women are at the centre of the narrative in *Ice Candy Man.* Sidhwa presents them as symbols of power, carriers of men's honour, and as trophies upon which male desire is inscribed. In male-dominated societies, women are the symbol which men negotiate to uphold their masculinity and honour. Women, therefore, are representative of identity - their existence fashioned by the expectations of men. Sidhwa uses violence against women as a specific trope due to the scale and specificity of the violence which Butalia and others have described in their works. Men enacted revenge upon the bodies of women belonging to other religious groups to display their victory. Many were killed or forced to commit suicide by their husbands, fathers, and brothers, for their family honour to remain intact and for masculinity and pride to prevail. Sidhwa addresses the patriarchal nature of a society which victimises women, yet she also empowers female characters in her novel and demonstrates the power and effect of female agency during the conflict of Partition. It is important to notice, however, that Sidhwa only awards complete empowerment to Parsee women in her novel, such as Lenny's mother and the character, Godmother. *Ice Candy Man* demonstrates the heroism of

these women as they aid victims and display humanitarian behaviour towards members of other religious groups. This marginalising of Parsee women brings into question Sidhwa's attempt to provide a fair account of Partition history and its experience, for it exemplifies Parsee women as saviours - in contrast to women of other religious groups who are presented as victims. By using the marginalised image of the child narrator Lenny, coupled with the heroic portrayal of her mother and Godmother, Sidhwa attempts to describe the upsurge in communal tensions from a minority group perspective which is both feminine and not aligned to any dominant group.

Lenny's female family members all represent the power of female contribution during the conflict of Partition. Sidhwa portrays her mother, aunt and Godmother as active participants who resist societal norms commonly associated with male-dominated societies. At one stage in the novel, Lenny suspects her mother and aunt of setting fire to Lahore after Ayah informs her, Adi and Cousin, of the petrol cans she has seen in the family car. However, it later becomes known that the duo is acting as activists, smuggling petrol to facilitate the escape of Hindu and Sikh friends. Furthermore, they rescue women who have been kidnapped and return them across the border, as well as to recovery camps. This example of female characters being empowered adds another layer of narrative to Partition discourse, as it foregrounds the importance of female recovery and rescue, which was facilitated by women like Lenny's mother and aunt during the conflict. Sidhwa presents Lenny's mother as a traditional housewife earlier in the novel when "she puts toothpaste on Father's toothbrush . . . . removes his sandals, his socks if he is wearing socks, blows tenderly between his toes, and with cooing noises caresses his feet." (Sidhwa, *Ice Candy Man* 72). Yet, this earlier portrayal is a stark contrast to the humanitarian efforts Lenny's mother engages in outside of her role as a loyal wife. Another interesting point is that readers are led to believe that Lenny's mother is a victim of domestic violence when Lenny says, "Although,

Father has never raised his hands to us, one day I surprise Mother at her bath and see the bruises on her body" (Sidhwa, *Ice Candy Man* 224). Here, Sidhwa highlights the masculinist tendencies which objectify and oppress women in many male-centered households, yet outlines the fact that women can and did participate as activists outside of the home, even if they were victims of abuse within it. Jacquelyn Kleist in discussing versions of feminine power in *Ice Candy Man,* emphasises that Lenny's mother transcends the typical role of a housewife, and in doing so, utilises her privileged status of being Parsee to enact change and activism (Kleist 74). Here, if one considers the workings of intersectional theory and looks at how systems of power affect marginalised groups such as women in *Ice Candy Man,* gender, faith and identity seem to intersect, for women appear outside of the typical roles attributed to them by a male-dominated society. Sidhwa, therefore, in acting as a kind of intersectional activist, brings to light the experiences of marginalised women and under-represented groups in her work. Parsee women are shown not just as witnesses to the conflict of Partition, but also as strong women who aid members of the dominant religious groups without giving preference to any one group.

Godmother, whose actual name is Roda, is another female character Sidhwa uses to subvert the stereotypical image of women. Godmother is a symbol of feminine power and agency in the novel. She is also a character who voices many of Sidhwa's personal sentiments regarding abduction, rape, female degradation and male oppression. Godmother is not a passive subject and Sidhwa awards her with significance and influence right from the beginning of the novel. Lenny also adores her, for Godmother provides her with immense care and affection. Godmother is framed as a respectful and wise woman, capable of addressing and correcting men, while symbolising reason and objectivity. Her power and agency are demonstrated best at the end of the novel when she rescues Ayah from Lahore's famous red-light district and facilitates her return to India. Prior to that, she confronts Ice

Candy Man, questioning his wayward motives, humanity and treatment of Ayah, as he was part of the group that abducted her, later becoming her husband. In a scene where she listens to Ice Candy Man's version of events surrounding Ayah's abduction and forced prostitution, she responds by saying:

> 'You permit her to be raped by butchers, drunks, and *goondas* and say she has come to no harm? […] Is that why you had her lifted off […] You are a shameless badmash! […] Oh? What kind of man? A royal pimp? What kind of man would allow his wife to dance like a performing monkey before other men? You're not a man, you're a low-born two-bit evil little mouse! […] You have permitted your wife to be disgraced! Destroyed her modesty! Lived off her womanhood! (Sidhwa, *Ice Candy Man* 262)

Here, Sidhwa outlines ideas of honour, violation and the commodification of women as a source of livelihood. Honour is extremely important in many male-dominated societies of South Asia, and Godmother plays upon this by questioning Ice Candy Man's masculinity and honour to interrogate his character and actions. Ice Candy Man has used his wife as a source of income, and this commodification of the female body outlines the subjugation of women at the hands of men. By visiting Ice Candy Man's house in *Heera Mandi*, Godmother defies the patriarchal gaze, masculine power and male dominated space. She is not there for the consumption of male voyeurism, nor is she governed by the expectations of men. She is there to exercise her power and agency to rescue Ayah from the evil of both Ice Candy Man and *Heera Mandi*. By saving Ayah, Godmother provides a justice that men could not, and in doing so, subverts the position of power. The matriarchal figure of Godmother is also granted

a stable identity in the novel by Sidhwa, in contrast to other women whose identities keep altering, based upon how their bodies and statuses are reconstructed. This is evident in the cases of both Ayah and Lenny's mother, who are given different identities during the novel. Godmother, however, portrays a sense of empathy, care and purpose throughout the novel – her identity is constant and powerful. Sidhwa uses Godmother's character to impart an objective assessment of Ice Candy Man. Ultimately, she is the one that retrieves Ayah and delivers her to Amritsar, where she will be reunited with her family.

In the case of Ayah, Sidhwa presents a dual representation of female power. Lenny spends most of her time with Ayah who is the focus of men from various religious groups that enjoy sitting around her, listening attentively to her peaceful sentiments. As the world around her disintegrates into confusion and violence, "Only the group around Ayah remains unchanged. Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Parsee are, as always, unified around her" (Sidhwa, *Ice Candy Man* 103). Lenny describes the vivacious Ayah in detail, presenting her as a metaphor for an undivided India. Ayah's attractiveness and ability to unify, coupled with her sexual empowerment, frames her as a woman of agency and power. However, Sidhwa subverts this when Ayah is abducted and forced into prostitution and dancing. Ayah, once an embodiment of the nation, characterised by her harmonious stance and adulation by people of different groups, is violated and tortured by a group of Muslims fuelled by hatred and fanaticism in the name of religion. Her power to unite men and her will to exercise choice is further lost when Ice Candy Man marries her, after partaking in her kidnapping and subsequent torture. At the end of the novel, however, Sidhwa carries out a restorative justice when Ayah finds the strength to speak out about her desire to leave Ice Candy Man. Having remained silent for so long, Sidhwa grants Ayah a voice which empowers her once more, for it relieves her of the tyranny and confines of men. Ultimately, "Sidhwa presents a uniquely gendered perspective of Partition. Moreover, Sidhwa's novel provides a comparatively inclusive view of the

diverse feminine roles during Partition, roles in which the female characters are not entirely empowered nor entirely victimized" (Kleist 70). Sidhwa's seminal text on Partition frames the power of female agency and its struggle in a socially restraining environment, yet also identifies women's refusal to remain passive, even during times of conflict and war. In keeping with Sidhwa's focus on female agency and the marginalised groups of Partition, her later work looks at how history, identity and testimony are received in the diaspora – a point that shall be discussed in the following section.

"DEFEND YOURSELF AGAINST ME"

"Defend Yourself Against Me" is a short story included in Sidhwa's most recent work, *Their Language of Love* (2013), in which the story of Partition moves forward in time and beyond the borders of South Asia. Detailed in the Author's Note, Sidhwa states that "Defend Yourself Against Me" "contained material I wanted to include in my novel *Ice-Candy Man*", and after finishing her novel, she discovered there was no place in it to refer to her meeting with Sikander Khan, who she had met at a party in Houston (Sidhwa, *Their Language of Love* 251). Sidhwa's use of margins in "Defend Yourself Against Me" presents perspectives in a text which is designated to the periphery, as her diaspora short story is located geographically and temporally at the 'fringe' of Partition. This fringe experience of Partition is explored in this section to analyse how Sidhwa explores Partition and its inter-generational impact using the short story format. The effects of Partition continue to play out in the Indian subcontinent and in the diaspora. But diasporic views are marginalised from the centre of Partition for the generations that came after it. A forgetting of their past created peripheries which dislocated communities from the history and memories of earlier generations.

In relation to Sikander Khan, who endured a horrific experience during Partition as a nine-year-old boy, Sidhwa has narrated a story like his in the chapter entitled “Ranna’s Story” in *Ice Candy Man*. “Defend Yourself Against Me” can be read as an extension of Ranna’s story, for Sikander Khan now living in the diaspora, calls upon memories of the past (memories of events similar to that which Ranna endured in *Ice Candy Man*) to negotiate his position and identity in present day America. Sidhwa’s short story ultimately presents Partition as an ongoing event which continues to impact South Asians living at ‘home’ and in the diaspora. Although the connection between Sidhwa’s most famous novel and “Defend Yourself Against Me” seems apparent, writing about Partition in the form of the short story allows Sidhwa to explore how South Asian migrants in America process and deal with memories connected to the events of 1947. For many South Asian communities living in diaspora, the history of Partition is a factor in defining and shaping identity, and this is illustrated by the community of characters in Sidhwa’s short story who all deal with memories of Partition differently, based on their own understanding and experience of it. The narrative form of the short story effectively expresses how individuals relate to memory based on individual experience – yet the act of remembering unites people of difference, as their stories are all related to a common past. Memories, although personal to every individual, can be processed together in order to reconcile and empathise, and in Sidhwa’s short story, characters recall memories communally to illustrate a collective processing used to understand and structure the past, present-day identity and events connected to 1947. The short story form also allows Sidhwa to present a metanarrative which captures the fragmented histories of Partition, emphasising another means through which Partition history can be understood.

“Defend Yourself Against Me” is set in Houston, America. Kishen and his white American wife have invited friends to their house for a family party. The friends are South

Asian expatriates from various religious groups. Sidhwa's characters represent Sikhs, Muslims, Hindus and Christians, to bring objectivity to her narrative, as well as a multi-layered understanding of the perspectives held by various groups regarding Partition. At the party, Mrs Jacobs (the narrator) is introduced by Kishen to Sikander Khan. As Mrs Jacobs recognises the scar on the back of Sikander's head, she realises that he is her childhood friend. Whilst the two discuss their shared past, Sidhwa shifts the narrative between the past and present, as well as to different locations which comprise many fragmented histories of Partition. Mrs Jacobs also learns that Sikander Khan is planning to bring his mother to America – Sidhwa's deliberate ploy to explore what happens at the intersection of first-hand memory and memories of a generation of expatriates spatially and physically disconnected from the events of 1947. As the narrative shifts between a present where different religious groups converse amicably, to the autumn of 1948 in Lahore, we learn that Sikander Khan's family migrated to Pakistan after their village was attacked – a memory marked forever by the scar on Sikander Khan's head. Sikhs attacked the village and Sikander Khan's mother, Ammi-jee, was abducted, raped and sold to the enemy. He talks little of his mother's ordeal in order not to relive the trauma and humiliation but provides details regarding the violence carried out by Sikhs in his village. Later in the story, Sikander Khan invites everyone to his house for dinner to meet his mother and this is where the climax of the story takes place when two Sikh men, Pratab and Khushwant, arrive dressed as fakirs. The jovial nature of the gathering gives way to silence as the two men kneel before Ammi-jee and plead with her to forgive them for the mistakes of their forefathers – a request they urge her to fulfil in order to reconcile with the past, and to accept that it can also affect the present in a positive and transformative way. Initially she does not forgive them, but slowly agrees, upon witnessing the sincerity of the plea-makers. She states: 'My sons, I forgave your fathers long ago […] How else could I have lived?' (Sidhwa, "Defend Yourself Against Me" 248).

The narrator in “Defend Yourself Against Me” is a Pakistani Christian, who is a writer and a teacher at an American university. Her name is Mrs Jacobs, but her childhood name was Joy Joshwa. Mrs Jacobs is also one of the protagonists in the story and is writing a novel on Partition. Sidhwa, here, has deliberately given Mrs Jacobs multiple voices, and as both narrator and character, she is able to shift between both positions to convey both a subjective account emphasised by personal experience, and an objective one, processing the views and ideas of the characters from a distance. Later the story travels back to Mrs Jacobs’ experiences as a child, thus making her a child narrator also. In a recent essay entitled “Relocating the Memory of the Partition in Bapsi Sidhwa’s Defend Yourself Against Me” in her work *Partition and the Practice of Memory* (2018), Daniela Vitolo states:

> The use of a narrator that is both one of the characters involved in the process of remembering and the only person conscious of the mechanisms of fiction writing, allows the author to stress how individual and collective acts of remembering and that of narrating are intertwined. At the same time, however, fiction is only one of the many ways in which memory can be transmitted. Indeed, in the story, the characters recall and share memories through a dialogue which allows them to develop a collective narrative of past trauma. This takes place both among people who feel an urge to remember and others who face the difficulty of bearing testimony. (Vitolo 138)

In support of Vitolo’s view, a character in a story who also narrates it and is aware of the technique and structures used in fiction writing, is well placed to illustrate the interwoven nature of remembering and narrating. However, what must not be overlooked is the

privileged position that Sidhwa grants herself by acting as an author who is attempting to provide an objective account, but also includes her own thoughts and sentiments through the narrator, using different points of the narrator's life to disseminate her personal views regarding events that occurred in different time periods. This point will be expanded further when discussing the poetics of the short story later.

As mentioned earlier, "Defend Yourself Against Me" is linked to Sidhwa's earlier novel *Ice Candy Man*, and both works explore similar themes such as collective and individual trauma, as well as the effects of violence experienced by both men and women during Partition. Furthermore, *Ice Candy Man* touches upon the significance of forgiveness and redemption for those involved in the conflict, in order to move beyond the trauma established by a violent past, towards hope of a better future. The theme of forgiveness is much more vivid in "Defend Yourself Against Me", as it is forgiveness at the end of the story that allow memories of a traumatic past to be replaced with a more accepting present. In the short story, Mrs Jacobs the narrator, is invited to a party like many others. She is an immigrant from a minority Christian group, and thus, shares a similar past with Sidhwa – a Parsee who migrated from India to America. Much like *Ice Candy Man*, Sidhwa's short story frames the narrator at the periphery, looking in from the margins, therefore, not involved in the politics of the dominant groups. As a Christian, the narrator is positioned as an objective participant in the discussion of memory and identity that appears throughout the narrative.

Another similarity between both Sidhwa's mentioned works is their focus on women's experiences during Partition and how different groups of women in India and in the diaspora deal with the memories of Partition. In "Defend Yourself Against Me", the character of Ammi-jee is of great importance, as her story displays the extent of suffering some women endured at the hands of men during 1947. The testimony regarding her past, re-visits tropes characteristic of Sidhwa's earlier novel, such as rape, abduction, and migration – allowing

readers to observe how diasporic communities deal with the brutal side of Partition. As mentioned in the introduction of this section, one can also argue that Ranna in *Ice Candy Man* represents Sikander Khan in "Defend Yourself Against Me", allowing the short story form to detail Sikander Khan as victim of Partition who has since migrated and lives amongst people who are representative of the South Asian diaspora. Similarly, it can be denoted that Chidda, who is Ranna's mother in *Ice Candy Man*, represents Ammi-jee in the short story and Lenny is Mrs Jacobs. What the short story achieves by representing the characters of Sidhwa's earlier acclaimed work on Partition, is a continuing (from the time of Partition to the present diaspora) *long Partition* in which those earlier characters still find themselves negotiating their memories in order to co-exist peacefully.

Sidhwa's short story form encompasses an economical and partial view which does not support an elongated plot but focuses on confined time and space. The narrative focalises a relatively innocuous and emotional situation at the end of the story when Ammi-jee forgives the Sikhs – an incident which becomes loaded and dramatic to achieve effect. Ultimately, the story does not act to provide a resolution, but complements Sidhwa's earlier work by echoing, in contemporary time, interrupting and disrupting histories of Partition. Contemporary time (in the diaspora) is home to people who think little about the loaded past of Partition, as their memories are located at the margins. This is where the diaspora serves as the margin where South Asian expatriates find themselves disconnected materially from the geographical location of Partition. By outlining these positions, Sidhwa turns our attention to people who have consciously or unconsciously forgotten their past and allows us to consider how acts of forgetting impact the way in which South Asians in the diaspora construct their identity. South Asian communities in the diaspora do not possess a continuity of their own history and are left to piece together various fragmented histories to reconcile their pasts.

Many South Asian diasporas exist in a state where people attempt to remember that which has been forgotten to further their understanding of Partition history and their connection to it. This is what Mrs Jacobs is attempting in Sidhwa's short story, as she is writing a novel on Partition, fuelled by creativity which is a powerful tool that can be used to create dialogue across spaces of conflict. In *Partition's Post-Amnesias: 1947, 1971 and Modern South Asia* (2013), Ananya Jahanara Kabir states that "wide ranging investigations into the management of memory, perception and experience of conflict" are needed, which she engages in by examining the creative work of individuals from India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh (Kabir 28). Kabir situates creative intellectuals (like Sidhwa and Mrs Jacobs) as "cultural ambassadors and art activists who strive to create spaces of dialogue across conflicted identities by imaginatively evoking shared cultural and natural resources so as to overcome the burden of divisive memories *and* amnesias" (Kabir 28). She also examines memory politics in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh to re-examine the way minority groups are represented, the emergence of religious and political fundamentalism, and the continuing conflict in frontier areas. In modern times, it is evident that the people of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh are all acting according to their circumstances. However, these circumstances are fashioned by a past and its remembering. This view supports Kabir's idea that forgetting certain histories was essential after 1947 and 1971. However, remembering those forgotten elements is crucial for the intellectual generations today "who attempt to move beyond divisive memory politics as well as national and subcontinental boundaries towards an emotionally sustainable future" (Kabir 30-31). It is essential to retrieve that which has been forgotten, and in doing so, one adds another layer of understanding to the conflict of 1947. Whether this is achieved by scholars and artists, or modern-day inhabitants of the diaspora wanting to remember, the effect is the emergence of an alternative way to reconcile Partition history and to grasp meanings from its legacy.

POETICS OF THE SHORT STORY.

When reading "Defend Yourself Against Me", one must consider the poetics used in the short story and how the short story form addresses issues of memory and identity in a unique way. The relationship between the author and text, and the incompleteness of the short story, which by its own definition, relies on omission in a way that a novel does not, must also be scrutinised. The first point of discussion is that the short story form differs fundamentally with Sidhwa's favoured medium of the novel. As mentioned earlier, Sidhwa had hoped to include the material for "Defend Yourself Against Me" in the novel *Ice Candy Man*. She comments that her short story contains material she was unable to use in the novel, and more crucially, that "Novels, however, determine a path all their own" (Sidhwa, *Their Language of Love* 251). Here, Sidhwa is conscious of a decisive difference between the short and longer form of prose, perhaps indicating that there is greater authorial control or influence in a short story. This brings to the fore a discussion pertaining to the nature of the short story and how it can convey connections to the author's own experience. A widely published comment regarding this aspect is discussed by the critic and author Philip Hensher - editor of *The Penguin Book of the British Short Story: 1: From Daniel Defoe to John Buchan* (2015), who suggests that "The energy of short stories may come from an understanding of scale" (Hensher x). Sidhwa's story climaxes with an unforgettable scene in which two Sikh men throw themselves to the floor and beg Ammi-jee for forgiveness for the despicable acts of their ancestors. The intensity of the story and this moment are highlighted, not only because there are few significant events in the story itself, but because it is not surrounded by other storylines - suggesting that this story must be considered as self-contained and not suitable for inclusion in the novel, which would discuss other events in the lives of real people on whom the short story is based. In the absence of any context, and without the surrounding material of a novel, "Defend Yourself Against Me" works well as a stand-alone piece, and its

intention to piece together, both fragmented memories and histories, seems better suited to the short story form, which allows swift movements between different time periods and places.

Given the complexity of the history retold in “Defend Yourself Against Me”, and the myriad ways in which events are reported by the narrator first-hand, second hand, and at times third, scrutiny of this layered approach suggests that a single reading of Partition history is not possible. Throughout the narrative, the narrator is unable to explain or summarise the complex, ambiguous and contradictory positions of the many characters. This is perhaps why Sidhwa chose the elusive short story form to reflect the complex layers of that characterise Partition history and memory. Unlike a short story, a novel requires resolution or a rational story arc.

Another major theory of the short story is outlined in *The Lonely Voice: A Study of the Short Story* (2011), by the Irish author and critic, Frank O’Connor. He argues that there is an essential loneliness in a short story, stating that the novel depends on the concept of a normal society, as well as the reader being able to identify with one major character - usually the hero or heroine (O’Connor 17). The absence of the normality one expects in a novel, leads to what O’Connor refers to as *submerged populations*, characterised as “outlawed figures wandering about the fringes of society” (O’Connor 19). This can be applied to the immigrants and displaced characters of varied creeds and backgrounds in “Defend Yourself Against Me”, who can be viewed as archetypal submerged populations and figures we know little about but exist in the story. O’Connor’s work also suggests that characters in a short story do not have a past or a future, or at least that nothing of importance happened to them before or after they appear. This can also be said about “Defend Yourself Against Me”, as Sidhwa introduces a long cast of characters, none of whom, including the narrator, are fully developed. Glimpses are provided into Sikander Khan’s links to the narrator as a child, but

even these are mysterious with sightings through a gap in a wall – "(no more than a slit really)" - allowing the mystery to be sustained (Sidhwa, "Defend Yourself Against Me" 217*)*. When two young Sikh men are first introduced, Sidhwa describes a sense of unease which is then quickly retracted. Why the unease is conveyed through the narrator when the Sikh men enter the story is not elaborated upon, and by her own admission, "The unease is so abruptly dispelled that I wonder if I have not just imagined it" (Sidhwa, " Defend Yourself Against Me" 227). This level of mystery, where much is left unsaid, cannot be sustained in a novel. The short story, therefore, accommodates Sidhwa's attempt to relay the fragmented nature and incompleteness of Partition history, emphasised by the varying experiences and memories of the different people who experienced it.

As mentioned at the beginning of this discussion on "Defend Yourself Against Me", the several roles Sidhwa allows the narrator to play must be examined. The narrator is not simply a neutral recorder of events, but self-consciously points out that she is trying to recall, as well as describe the past. In the only section of first-hand memory, which also appears cloaked in mystery, the narrator is able to recall that she had horrible pimples, but states that, "Since childhood memories can only be accurately exhumed by the child, I will inhabit my childhood" (Sidhwa, "Defend Yourself Against Me" 215). Here, Sidhwa is emphasising a self-conscious meta-fiction at the same time as allowing the narrator to describe childhood events to the reader, without confronting them as a character. She is, therefore, placing a deliberate distance between herself and the memory – even though her own memories are not traumatic. This post-modern self-awareness is clearly outlined when the narrator states: "As a writer I am already practiced in inhabiting different bodies; dwelling in rooms, gardens, bungalows and spaces from the past; zapping time" (Sidhwa, "Defend Yourself Against Me" 215). Here the narrator – already one step away from the author herself – is stating that she is consciously playing a role. Equally important is her 'zapping of time'. To zap is to destroy or

obliterate – emphasising a deliberate act on the part of the person ‘zapping’. As history and memory are linked to time, the ‘zapping’ of time amounts to the ‘zapping’ of memory, thus, removing a version of history. In the very next sentence after reference to ’zapping’, Sidhwa reverts to a formal, distant and somewhat omniscient narrator position when she states, “Lahore: Autumn 1948. Pakistan is a little over a year old” (Sidhwa, “Defend Yourself Against Me” 215). This shifting between narrative positions is an effect that is used successfully in short stories, but by using the word ‘zapping’, Sidhwa, through her narrator at times, plays a complicit role, even when attempting to remain objective. Throughout the story, the narrator provides summary snapshots and stereotypical descriptions of the characters. She is simultaneously many people - a neutral narrator of history, an embodiment of the author who is known to have based the story on real people, a character in the story who interacts with others, a childhood version of her adult character and a moral judge who wishes to destroy, or at least radically alter history. This multi-dimensional narrator position, read in conjunction with theories exploring the role of the author in the short story (that consider that there is a fundamental relationship between the text of a short story, its author and the author’s personal contexts) (Rutter 5), demonstrates how, through the poetics of short fiction, the mysteries of the untold, part-told and incomplete history can be delivered in a compelling way – and more importantly, in a way that would not be possible in novel form.

MEMORY AND ITS REPRESENTATION.

Sidhwa’s short story deals with the connection memory has with narration – using the short story medium and its fragmented multi-layered form to convey the complexities that surround the retelling of Partition history. Modern-day diasporic communities residing in the West are linked to the events of 1947, either through their parents and grandparents, or through

connection to fragmented stories and accounts which have been passed down from generation to generation. As a result, many people who are displaced from the centre of Partition, remain partially informed or misinformed about an event which still affects the present. In "Defend Yourself Against Me", Sidhwa captures the dialogue of various South Asian groups who share their memories and experiences, including those who try hard to recall their past, those who find it difficult to face the past and to relay it, and those who are negotiating the many fragmented histories they find in the modern-day to understand their identity and position amongst other South Asian communities. Unlike many other Partition narratives, Sidhwa's short story does not focus on religious and communal violence to identify characters. Instead, it zooms in to a sense of belonging connected to culture and tradition that can act as a reconciliatory force between different groups in the modern-day. Sidhwa's work encourages towards a healing process for the many communities that were involved in Partition and presents commonality as a means of understanding the past, from which dialogue between people who are all connected to the same homeland can take place. Sidhwa uses the memory of trauma and the effects of violence, especially gendered violence, relayed by Sikander Khan and his wife when narrating the story of his mother's ordeal, to bring to the fore, the need for reconciliation and forgiveness in the present day.

What is also interesting in Sidhwa's short story is the way she depicts the various communities of South Asia. The Sikh/Muslim divide of Partition is revisited, thus, warranting a discussion on the migration of this divide to modern-day North America. Zamindar's notion of the *long Partition* is very much evident in modern times, as stereotypical representations of Sikhs, Muslims and Hindus are still upheld at both community and national level. Such stereotypes reiterated by nationalist and political agenda, results in upholding a strong division which dislocates people from each other spatially and emotionally. As a result, these stereotypes add to the reasons behind frequent border tensions between India and Pakistan

and the ongoing lack of resolution concerning the Kashmir issue. Partition is an event that occurred in the past but continues to play out in the present. Memories of the event are maneuvered by nationalist discourses which aim to shape collective thought. Consequently, individuals find themselves acting in accordance with the majority or collective, without questioning or analysing the range of Partition histories that exist and their interpretations.

As previously mentioned, Sidhwa is assuming the role of multiple characters in her short story. As Mrs Jacobs, she positions herself at the margins and as an outsider looking in. In some ways, she applies a similar strategy in her famous novel, *Ice Candy Man*, where the narrator is a Parsee child, looking in at the events that concerned the dominant religious groups of India. What is different, however, is that the child narrator in the novel, relays what she witnesses first-hand, regardless of her marginalised status. In "Defend Yourself Against Me", Sidhwa uses a Christian writer from South Asia to tell the story from the margins. Christians, like Parsees, were a minority group in India at the time of Partition. By presenting a Christian view, Sidhwa is hoping to achieve a more objective narration which presents her story as unbiased. Objectivity does assume that people stand outside structures – that observing from the margins allows for a more refined analysis and re-telling of Partition history. However, even though Sidhwa's short story uses a Christian narrator, who at times switches between adulthood and childhood to relay different events and experiences in a seemingly objective way, no account is truly devoid of bias, as mentioned earlier in this chapter when discussing *Ice Candy Man*. Sidhwa uses the child narrator in her short story in the same way she uses Lenny to narrate her novel. The technique of using the purity and innocence of a child to relay the brutality and horror connected to Partition, without lending support for a particular side, can indeed be effective. In *The Ultimate Colony: The Child in Postcolonial Fiction* (2003), Meenakshi Bharat discusses how writers are able to use artistic freedom in the way the child narrator is used and thus portray them as wise beyond their

years and able to observe and relay complex matters (Bharat 123). The child narrator is then a means through which the author's own ideas and sentiments are granted objectivity and unbiased meaning. Unlike *Ice Candy Man*, "Defend Yourself Against Me" is narrated by Sidhwa through multiple characters. There is an interplay between the consciousness of the adult and the child, as Sidhwa shifts the narrative from Mrs Jacobs in the present, to her as a child in the past. This technique is used not only as an attempt to solidify the authenticity surrounding an objective Christian writer's account, but also allows readers to travel into her past to observe her innocent experiences and corroborate her sentiments in the present. When Mrs Jacobs and Sikander Khan realise that they were childhood friends, a relationship is established based on a shared childhood, allowing the adult narrative to organise the creativity of childhood into narrative form. Yet, one must not regard using the child narrator technique as a marker of authenticity, but more so as authorial creativity used by novelists for a desired effect.

Sidhwa's categorisation of people into different groups in her short story is also undertaken to achieve a desired effect. Mr Sikander Khan arrives to the gathering with "his wife and her three sisters" who are wearing "satin shalwar kameezes and heavy gold jewellery" (Sidhwa, "Defend Yourself Against Me" 209). Later, Mrs Jacobs describes the sisters as "Muslim village belles accustomed to draw water from the well to the rhythm of Punjabi lore", in stark contrast to the position she awards herself of "an English-speaking Anglican Protestant from Lahore" (Sidhwa, "Defend Yourself Against Me" 210). It can be argued that the Anglican Protestants are synonymous with the Parsees in *Ice Candy Man* here, as Sidhwa establishes the distinction between a proud minority group and certain dominant groups of South Asia. The image of the Punjabi women who have migrated from Pakistan is one which many members of diasporic communities still possess when they imagine village girls in India before they migrated. This is an effective way of allowing

readers who are familiar with the customs and traditions of South Asia to relate to such imaginings. However, the process of migration of such stereotypes into modern-day diaspora must be scrutinised to establish the reasoning behind upholding such images. More significant is the emphasis Sidhwa places on the Muslim/Sikh divide which has migrated into the modern-day. Sidhwa re-tells Ranna's story from *Ice Candy Man* in a fragmented manner in her short story and achieves this by allowing the narrative to shift between the present and the past, as Mrs Jacobs becomes the child, Joy Joshwa, and then returns to narrate as Mrs Jacobs again in the present. Sidhwa, like Mrs Jacobs, is a member of a minority group removed from the immediacy of Partition violence. Yet, as a Pakistani, it can be argued, that she is sympathetic towards her countrymen, for she emphasises more so on the violence suffered by them at the hands of the Sikhs, when presenting the story about Sikander Khan's village. The *talwar* (sword) wielding image of the Sikhs during Partition which is still common to many Muslims (and by extension, Pakistanis) is revisited when Mrs Khan describes the Sikhs:

> And, when the door was opened, the hideous swish of long steel swords dazzling their eyes in the sunlight, severing first his father's head, then his uncle's, then his brother's. His own merely sliced at the back, and his neck saved, because he was only nine years old and short. They left him for dead. How he survived, how he arrived in Pakistan, is another story. (Sidhwa, "Defend Yourself Against Me" 224)

The portrayal of the Sikhs in such a manner may corroborate the image remembered by many Muslims in Pakistan who either witnessed Partition violence first-hand or saw it enacted upon others. It may also be the memory that many Pakistanis have passed down their generations

in the diaspora. The intention here is not to analyse the motive behind detailed descriptions of Sikh violence committed against Muslims and the reason why negative images of certain groups is continuously upheld, but more so to identify Sidhwa's sympathetic tendency towards her countrymen and the reasons behind her representations. The history of communal violence in India reports that Muslims too enacted violence upon Sikhs and Hindus. Muslims were not the only victims, and many oral history testimonies support the view that violence was in fact enacted by all groups against one another during Partition. Sidhwa's sympathetic stance towards Muslims, if such a claim can be made, is also not evidence of her apportioning blame to a particular group, for her works address communal violence vividly at times. However, when biased sentiments and stereotypes migrate to the diaspora, many generations after Partition, their negative effects result in continued rivalries and tensions between the South Asian groups that once represented an undivided India. Sidhwa, as Mrs Jacobs, occupies the margins and presents her objective views, from the viewpoint of a Christian writer. But her world view seems influenced by her Pakistani background at times, even though she presents herself as displaced. For many Pakistani and Indian writers who have written about Partition, bias is unavoidable. The *long Partition* is a continuous force that affects the conscious mind, as well as the subconscious. Claims of objectivity from either side are still influenced by historical and traumatic memories which are recalled or obtained by survivor and victim accounts. As a result, writers and historians will always negotiate between the alternate accounts of Partition they interact with in order to arrive at an objective standpoint, which may still carry influence and bias.

Sidhwa does present an alternative view of modern-day Sikhs in her short story. Khushwant and Pratab are two handsome men who interact with Sikander Khan's family naturally. The sisters of Mrs Khan enjoy their company as they find community and a sense of belonging through a shared language and traditions. In Sidhwa's story, America is the

place where hostilities are forgotten or put aside – a space where reconciliation and appreciation occur. Sidhwa's short story interrogates the effect of historical prejudices that travel to the diaspora and this is illustrated when the two young Sikh men throw themselves at the feet of Ammi-ji pleading for the forgiveness of their forefathers, for what she endured during Partition. Sidhwa's way of framing this scene is of great significance, for it exemplifies how reconciliation is possible in her short story which is set in the modern-day and far removed from the events of 1947. This raises questions concerning the ability and willingness of different South Asian groups who are removed spatially and temporally, to empathise with and tolerate one another to create a reconciliatory space. Sidhwa's short story, therefore, shows how, in diasporic communities which are far removed from the conflict site of 1947, there exists a possibility to foster reconciliation, forgive and appreciate – an aim more difficult to achieve in South Asia, where communal memory is continuously shaped in the image of national ideology.

Viewed as Partition discourses, *Ice Candy Man* and "Defend Yourself Against Me" urge their readerships to revisit debates on Partition. In both works, Sidhwa conveys the human experience of Partition. The high politics of Partition, as well as the politics of nationalism, blurred the identities of people who resorted to extreme communal violence, after having lived side-by-side for centuries. *Ice Candy Man* portrays the brutalities Partition violence enacted upon women and marginalised groups. Re-telling the stories of victims of rape and abduction, questions the understanding of human rights, as well as community and identity. By exposing the atrocities that female bodies endured during Partition, attention is drawn to the ineffectiveness of patriarchal systems which vow to protect women.

It is evident that Sidhwa does not wish to possess a single identity in either of the discussed works. Instead, she assumes a neutral position based on her Parsee background. Although no writing is devoid of influence, Sidhwa frames herself as analytical and capable

of detailed observation. Like her main character, Lenny, assimilation and adaptation in her own life, does not allow her to fully align herself with one group over another. As a member of the diaspora, as well as the Parsee community, her claims of attempting to write objective versions of Partition history are to some extent plausible. However, bias, influence and subjectivity always present themselves in complex narratives, especially those dealing with violent histories. *Ice Candy Man* shows how dislocation and dispossession can result in the production of new identities. The people of South Asia living at 'home' and in the diaspora, however, must seek to redefine themselves based on the many versions of history which are re-presented in modern times, instead of accepting what is shaped and constructed by official narratives. If *Ice Candy Man* focuses on the violence of Partition, as well as the plight of the marginalised 'other', then "Defend Yourself Against Me" charts perspectives on Partition history as seen in the modern-day diaspora. Both works are disruptive and provide an 'alternative' history of Partition that is concerned with the human experience of the event. Fiction pieces together the fragmentary smaller histories that are not included in grand narratives of Partition. It presents survivor accounts in literary form, connecting readers to the emotions and empathy that official versions lack.

By adding to the alternative archives on Partition, Sidhwa's works emphasise the importance of narrating quotidian human experiences, if one is to continue reinterpreting Partition history to better understand its legacy. This chapter has demonstrated that deploying various margins to represent aspects of Partition history, adds to the 'alternative' archive, relaying different kinds of 'truth' that are embedded in 'real' human experiences. By analysing history from the margins, this chapter has critically examined ways in which an 'alternative' lens is deployed in fiction to offer a peripheral perspective, that vividly describes the minutiae of violence and breakdown of communal ties associated with Partition.

The next chapter will sustain a focus on history from the margins by analysing fictional works that narrate the experiences and perspectives of those suffering from mental illness in relation to Partition. It will also critically examine the ‘madness’ metaphor which has come to describe aspects of the division of India and interrogate the extent to which novelists and psychiatric professionals engage with this ‘madness’ and its psychological trauma, in their representation of Partition history.

Chapter Three: Asylums and Mental Health in Partition Fiction

> It is not known what transpired there, but when the news of the exchange reached here, in Lahore, it evoked some very interesting and intriguing responses. A Muslim lunatic who had been, reading The Zamindar regularly for the last 12 years, was asked by his friend, "Maulvi Sahab, what is this Pakistan?" "It's a place in Hindustan where they make cut throat razors," he answered after profound reflection. His friend looked satisfied with the answer. (Manto 64)

Partition is described as a time of insanity (Ravikant and Saint xvi), characterised by gendered and communal violence and by the breakdown of being and belonging. This chapter examines ways in which fictional works capture and explore the 'madness' associated with Partition, addressing the gap in knowledge created by a lack of critical engagement with mental illness and psychological trauma connected to Partition. It discusses the collective 'madness' (Alter 91) that engulfed and affected many segments of Indian (and by extension, Pakistani) society in 1947, and analyses ways in which fiction represents it. This thesis asserts that literary works take creative approaches to telling different kinds of 'truth' about history through creative practice. In considering texts that provide literary representations of 'madness' and mental illness, this chapter takes the figurate trope of collective 'madness' further through the creative multiplication of what 'madness' signifies, thus, making an original contribution to discourses on Partition. It also approaches the institution of the asylum as a colonial construct in which mental illness becomes a point of colonial administration and management. These social structures are critiqued by authors of fiction like Saadat Hasan Manto, whose work will also be discussed in this chapter. Through an analysis of Manto's "Toba Tek Singh" (1955) and *The Unsafe Asylum* (2018) by Anirudh

Kala, this chapter aims to explore the representation of ‘madness’ in Partition fiction. Asylums and the practice of mental health have broader social and political contexts, especially in relation to criminality. These will be discussed, alongside how terms like ‘madness’ are social and medical constructs used to marginalise, often socially ‘undesirable’ people.

The fictional works discussed in this chapter feature asylums, using them as complex literal and figurative sites. Manto’s work, in particular, satirises the operation of clinical and political power while describing personal tragedies. The metaphor of ‘madness’ ascribed to Partition often reflects the irrationality, violence and chaos associated with the event, and it is this irrationality that fictional works by Manto and Kala critique. Both use irony to probe the history of Partition and explore the psychological impact of the event. ‘Madness’ has long been used as a metaphor for Partition. Yet, the term needs to be unpacked in order to understand its effect, not just as a political term, but also as a notion that is used to absolve politicians and perpetrators of Partition violence of responsibility.

Literary works on Partition explore different types of ‘madness’, ‘insanity’ and ‘irrationality’. Not only is madness discussed as a literal condition that affected people during Partition, but also metaphorically, to describe the actions of those involved in creating Partition and of those who participated in its unprecedented violence. Works of fiction by Manto and Kala illustrate how the medical insanity of mental patients can act as a tool for resisting political control, subverting common associations with the term ‘madness’. Yet, ‘madness’, ‘insanity’ and ‘asylum’ are not neutral terms, for they often carry with them a strong social, legal, medical and moral judgement. This chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section explores madness in relation to Partition, discussing it both literally and figuratively, and contextualising it within the history of psychiatry in India. The second

section builds on the discussion in section one and analyses the representation of different types of madness in Partition fiction.

MADNESS AND PARTITION

Collective madness, with regards to Partition, indicates that the violence that erupted during it had less to do with individual sentiment and more to do with a collective state. A collective state reduces the responsibility and culpability of an individual, and by calling the violence of Partition 'collective madness', a way to excuse people for their crimes becomes possible. As authors like Manto and Kala probe, it is pertinent to look at the reasons behind why ordinary good people became involved in the 'madness' and murders associated with the events of 1947. Similarly, when considering Partition as 'madness', Urvashi Butalia states:

> The word Partition is often associated with the word 'madness'. As we try to make sense of what it was that led people to turn against compatriots, neighbours, friends, and kill, maim and violate in brutal ways, we are constantly faced with many questions: did people just go mad? Are human beings normally like this? What does 'normality' actually mean? Do they have such a capacity for violence? What role does the state play in this? (Butalia, "The Psychological Impact")

Butalia's poignant questions focus on the psychological states of the people of the Indian subcontinent during Partition. She outlines the need for these questions to be addressed if a

deeper understanding of the 'madness' of the event and its psychological impact is to be reached. In Salman Rashid's memoir, *A Time of Madness: A Memoir of Partition* (2017), there are also many references to Partition as 'madness' which use a very specific collective, political, and violent idea (Rashid 24, 60-61, 87). Memoirs from his work describe the 'madness' that resulted in communities turning against each other, and the "madness unleashed by politicians who had no clue about what they were doing" (Rashid 105). Moreover, there exists the 'madness' surrounding the idea that the British quickly drew the Radcliffe line and departed hastily. For many, it is this poorly thought-out act of 'insanity' that led to unnecessary violence, dislocation and death. The hastiness of the British, their lack of care (for the possible consequence) and foresight, as well as the ambitions of political leaders and extreme communal violence, are all examples of types of 'madness' associated with Partition.

'Madness' as a metaphor not only describes the mental state of individuals during Partition, but also reflects the actions and mindsets of those directly involved in the mass violence of 1947. Furthermore, it describes the actions of political and religious leaders who were responsible for the tensions that led to violence, as well as the mass confusion and incomprehension felt by many at the time of the division of India. 'Madness' as a figurative form has been used to describe violent histories, but it does require critique if one is to better understand the causes for it. In his work on aspects of the Holocaust, Daniel Goldhagen (1996) argues that ordinary Germans were supporters of the Holocaust, as eliminationist anti-Semitism had become part of the national identity over time. Although the violence of the Holocaust is seen as a type of 'madness' (Jick 156) which led to the killing of many Jews, Goldhagen asserts that there were underlying reasons that led to the manifestation of this 'madness' – epitomised by a campaign of mass violence carried out by Hitler's totalitarian regime. Goldhagen's theory provides an alternative lens through which the 'madness' of

Partition can be critiqued, for it proposes a move away from using the idea of 'collective madness' to justify the mass violence of 1947, towards exploring the presence of eliminationist urges that may have existed in different segments of Indian society prior to Partition. This alternative viewpoint challenges the 'madness' metaphor used by many political powers, historians and literary works that seek to understand Partition as a psychological phenomenon that suddenly overcame people in 1947, and one that exculpates those involved of their responsibility. It also demonstrates that there remain gaps in knowledge and unanswered questions about why different communities who had lived together for centuries turned on one another in 1947.

It is worth noting that discontent existed in different religious communities of India long before Partition. Tensions between Hindus and Muslims over the politics of pigs and cows (Pal 55) can both be located before and after the division of India. Whether or not these long-standing tensions amounted to deep-seated eliminationist urges, is an area which requires in-depth research. The existence of discontent between different religious groups in India, however, supports the idea that the outburst of violence in 1947 was not due to a wave of 'madness' that suddenly engulfed the Indian subcontinent. The use of the term 'madness' must, therefore, be challenged, especially when it is used to justify collective violence.

Even in its literal definition, madness has connections to Partition. The division of India caused physical, emotional and psychological trauma. Mental disorders and suffering were a direct consequence of experiencing or witnessing Partition violence. Mental asylums were also affected by Partition, evidenced by the governments of India and Pakistan exchanging inmates based on religious belief in 1948 (Roy, "Mapping Citizenship" 53). Although madness is regarded as an affliction characterised by abnormal behaviour that often absolves the affected person of any responsibility, it is also a subjective term that can be used as a political tool to control populations. Madness can also remove one from the confines of

societal expectation. This can be liberating, resulting in rightful actions that challenge the established norms of any particular society. This type of madness appears in the works of both Manto and Kala and can be empowering:

> because it invites the bizarre, the unusual, the brilliant. Because it operates outside of carefully regulated spheres of acceptability, it suffers none of the impediments that are part of the polite mainstream discourse. And while it often lacks the expected decorum or propriety, it also tends to explore the vistas of thought that were off limits to those who are "sane." (Shafer 42)

Madness and insanity in the literal sense have also previously featured in literary works. An eminent example is William Shakespeare's classic, *Hamlet* (1603). The protagonist, Hamlet, is a mad prince who uses his condition to challenge the oppressive regime that seeks to govern him. The madness that overpowers him – which in fact he embraces as a political tactic, is also what motivates him to address the corruption around him. This subverts what madness and insanity usually represent, as the insane Hamlet challenges the status quo, acting as a resisting voice in the face of oppression. Modern-day language comprises many words which portray individuals as deficient, and words such as 'mad', 'madness' and 'lunatic' are all charged with negative meaning. Yet, none of these words characterises an individual who wishes to challenge and resist any type of oppression, the way in which Hamlet does. This convergence between language and power, which assigns meanings to words in order to control society, is a powerful tool used by politicians, leaders, and writers to achieve a desired effect, and to subvert meanings (Shafer 42). In *Hamlet*, both Hamlet and his uncle, King Claudius use discourse against one another. King

Claudius regards Hamlet as different and dangerous, using his insanity against him to remove his rights and privileges. Hamlet, on the other hand, understands the social meaning of insanity and uses it to liberate himself to act in a manner which would not usually be acceptable from a sane prince. Hamlet, thus, uses his insanity to investigate the murder of his father and challenges the politics responsible for it. His literal madness is not used to absolve him of responsibility, but as a weapon of resistance that works within the remits of societal expectations of a medically insane individual

Like Shakespeare, Manto and Kala also use the apparent and literal madness of characters to challenge forces that seek to govern and organise pre- and post-Partition societies. In their works of fiction, discussed later in this chapter, they use the term madness in two distinct ways. Firstly, ‘madness’ is used as a metaphorical term to describe the eliminationist ideas and actions of political leaders, religious groups and mobs who were involved in calculated murders in 1947. Such people were not in fact medically mad but acted in a way that signified ‘madness’. This type of ‘madness’ is also often a guise used to exonerate people of their crimes. Secondly, the term madness is used literally to describe the mental state, medical condition, health and psychological condition of people at a personal level, which Manto and Kala use to explore themes such as mental illness, political subjugation and marginalisation, brought about by Partition’s dislocation.

Narratives of Partition collude in the act of remembering and forgetting the history and memory of the event. A deeper reading of how political histories and madness are represented and framed in Partition discourses demonstrates that the term (collective) ‘madness’ is a tool, used by political powers to define and justify collective violence. In relation to madness as a medical and literal condition brought about or accentuated by Partition requires a psychological inquiry. For this, the field of psychiatry have recently tried to provide an understanding of the psychological impact of the events of 1947, while

repackaging the guilt of Partition. However, the extent to which psychiatry is objective enough to comment on the madness of Partition is an area of contention. The reasons behind this recent response must be critically examined and will be discussed in the following section.

RECENT WORK ON THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF PARTITION.

Since the division of India, there has been little inquiry into mental health in Partition discourses. As a matter of fact, asylums and medical insanity are also not commonly explored by writers of Partition fiction. The impact of Partition on mental health is an area that deserves an extensive academic inquiry, more so because the inter-generational effects of the events of 1947 and the trauma left behind continue to affect people even today. One work that addresses this gap is a collection of critical essays on mental health edited by eminent psychiatrists, Sanjeev Jain and Alok Sarin, entitled *The Psychological Impact of the Partition of India* (2018). It considers the psychological effect of Partition by analysing medical and psychiatric perspectives to provide a better understanding of the 'insanity' of Partition, and to assist medical professionals in managing patients of social trauma. In the introductory chapter of the book, Jain and Sarin state that their edited collection "tries to bring together the issues of Partitioning and dividing the human experience, and its impact on the cultural life, including medical and psychological health" (Jain and Sarin 10). This work is a timely addition to discourses on mental health linked to Partition and aims to understand mental disorders and the nuances surrounding medical care before and after the division of India. By working with psychiatrists and literary critics, the collection considers the emotional effect of Partition across generations, much like works by Urvashi Butalia, Ritu Menon and Kamla

Bhasin, who express the urgency to collect narratives of women to further understand the female experience of Partition.

Sarin and Jain's work encourages critical discussion surrounding the effects of Partition on the lives of those who suffered from mental and psychological illnesses after independence. Extending Vazira Zamindar's notion of the *long Partition* to include the effects of the division of India on psychiatric practice, mental health, and psychological trauma, Jain and Sarin's work considers how post-Partition communities are still affected by the context of the lived experience of earlier generations. In her review of Jain and Sarin's work in *The Hindu* published in 2018, entitled "The Psychological Impact of the Partition of India review: A division of minds", Butalia discusses the motivation behind the examination of the psychological impact of the trauma caused by Partition from the field of psychiatry. For her and many others, the collection provides a holistic examination of both the psychological and sociological impacts of the division of India. Partition trauma has produced many psychological scars, and some of the reasons behind the collective madness and violence of the event are addressed in the collection.

Jain, Sarin and Kala, by way of a joint presentation to mark the sixtieth anniversary of Partition, expressed the need for urgency in interrogating the subject of Partition from a psychological perspective. They acknowledge that the field of psychiatry had previously been silent regarding the event, when compared to writers of history, short stories, novels, plays, and films that have revisited Partition history to offer further understanding in modern times. In addressing the silence of psychiatry regarding Partition, Jain and Sarin state:

> It is intriguing why psychiatrists, who are intimately connected with mental distress, were silent about the Partition. For those who had been part of the Partition, was the

> mental trauma of the Partition too intense to allow into consciousness? Was it another event in the lives of ordinary people which did not merit discourse? Do issues like poverty, disempowerment, marginalisation, communal strife hold no place in the mental health discourse? Or is it the alleged stoicism (fatalism) of the East, the tendency of people here to lean more towards a philosophic and spiritual approach to life and its challenges? Whatever the vantage, it is intriguing that these issues have not formed a part of discourse, either in academic or in general discussion. (Jain and Sarin 4)

The questions that Jain and Sarin pose above lead to much needed inquiry into mental trauma associated with Partition. It is commendable, therefore, that Jain and Sarin's work attempts to recognise those affected by the division of India at a psychological level, with a view to outline and understand the type of care required by those still suffering from Partition's trauma. Jain and Sarin examine the founding of medical establishments and psychiatric care in India, but also pose questions regarding the communalisation of the psychiatric field. The field of psychiatry is expected to always act in the best interests of patients, instead of being affected by any form of jingoism and prejudices brought about by the politics of national and religious identity. For Butalia, the edited collection probes an aspect of Partition which has remained untouched for decades (Butalia, "The Psychological Impact"). Where Partition has previously been discussed as a rupture and division of hearts, it can now be discussed as a division of minds, due to Jain and Sarin's work.

In another review of the work by Tarun Basu, in the *Millennium Post*, called "The Psychological Impact of the Partition of India | Metaphor for Madness: Trauma of Partition", the book is commended for exploring how the 'madness' of Partition has produced an inter-

generational trauma. Basu highlights the interdisciplinary effort of the book, pointing out that it addresses some of the reasons behind the unexplained 'madness' which led sane members of the society to act in an insane manner towards one another. Basu also emphasises the importance of incorporating professional views regarding mental health and psychiatry from Pakistan, if a more holistic and nuanced interrogation of the psychological effects of Partition is to be reached. Both Butalia and Basu acknowledge Jain and Sarin's calls for greater enquiry into the mental health aspect of Partition, in order to examine and better understand those living with psychological disorders connected to the event. Essays in the collection deal with various forms of 'insanity' and 'madness' and also discuss the psychological states of abducted women affected by the patriarchal societies that oppressed them.

Jain and Sarin's work rightfully addresses the historical neglect shown by the field of psychiatry towards the impact of Partition in India. This neglect has led to a lack of understanding about how traumatic events, heightened distress, and psychological imbalances have affected post-Partition societies. The book's discussion on the transmission of inter-generational trauma, perpetuated by political rivalries in both India and Pakistan, is a welcome addition to Partition research. Political rivalries between India and Pakistan play out in the modern-day, as the trauma caused by the mass communal and religious violence of 1947, continues to shape perceptions. Commemorative practices and memorialisation supported by government agenda uphold the figure of the 'other', resulting in on-going distancing between the two nations.

Experts in the field of psychiatry, like Jain and Sarin, as well as others who appear in their edited collection, provide a better understanding of psychiatric practices and their success in treating mental health patients. Jain and Sarin's edited collection traces the collapse of everyday life during the events surrounding Partition, whilst exploring the inadequacies of medical care, especially regarding mental health and psychological trauma

patients, during a time of extreme violence. This work also shows a renewed interest in the field and uses a concerted interdisciplinary effort to add to the corpus on Partition studies by calling attention to the exploration of mental health during and after Partition. Yet, psychiatry as a field, in relation to Partition, must be examined critically. It is imperative to interrogate the role of political spaces such as psychiatric institutions and hospitals, in which psychiatrists and psychiatric healthcare officials operate to medicalise the trauma of Partition. For this reason, this chapter first discusses the history of psychiatric care for the mentally ill in India from the time of the British Raj until more recent times. This will demonstrate the transition from colonial to post-colonial management of asylums and mental health policies.

Jain and Sarin's work also illustrates that psychiatric practices influenced by colonial rule continued long after the British left India. This point is supported by an earlier analysis made by James Mills, who discusses the development of psychiatric practice in India. Mills' work addresses psychiatric practices before and after Partition, and in doing so, tracks and analyses the influences that affect psychiatric work and the administering of care. In *The History of Modern Psychiatry in India, 1858-1947* (2001), Mills argues that the fundamental basis of modern psychiatric practice in India was established during the British colonial rule. Through extensive archival work, Mills establishes that the methods used to treat psychiatric patients after independence were heavily influenced by the systems and patterns employed by the colonial British. Whether or not these influences played a role in psychiatry's lack of response in addressing the effects of Partition's communal violence, migration, and displacement at a psychological level, it is crucial to understand how psychiatry deals with the psychological impact of the event. Jain and Sarin's work is notable for addressing the psychological and emotional impact of the division of India and urges for further inquiries into the subject of mental health.

The next section will provide a brief history of psychiatry and its practice in India, positioning the institution of the asylum as a colonial construct. This means that the medicalisation of mental illness comes with colonial medicine, framing mental illness as a point of colonial administration and management. Asylums and the practice of mental healthcare have broader social and political contexts. Discussing them can provide an understanding of why asylum populations were forgotten during and immediately after the division of India, and how the institution of asylums and mental health facilities operate as political sites that manage their populations.

PSYCHIATRIC PRACTICE IN INDIA AND THE INFLUENCE OF THE COLONIAL BRITISH.

In the late 18th century, asylums were introduced in India and became well established a century later (Jain and Sarin 4). Social and personal distress, as well as trauma, now had full-fledged definitions, replacing earlier notions of divine or demonic impact which many believed to be the cause of various illnesses that medical doctors failed to fully explain (Jain and Sarin 5). However, the psychiatric approach employed in India was organised by the British rule which had subjected Indian populations to "statistical and experimental methods that denied their individuality, but instead saw them as groups (religion, cast, tribe, etc.)" (Jain and Sarin 5). Jain and Sarin document how the advances made in psychiatry, at the end of the 19th century in Europe, established a greater understanding of the human mind, leading psychiatric practice away from the metaphysical restraint which had long been an avenue explored to understand and treat mental illness (Jain and Sarin 5). Yet, developments in mental health treatment in India post-independence continued to abide by practices

established by the colonial British, emphasising how medicine and psychiatry became another way to manage, control and discipline the Indian population.

Indian cultures have long been concerned with mental health. Traditional physicians, such as the *vaid* of Ayurvedic medicine (practitioners of a holistic healing system developed in India over 3000 years ago) and the *hakim* (a practitioner of traditional medicinal remedies predominantly from Muslim culture), practiced medicine related to psychological disorders by drawing upon their knowledge of medicine, alchemy, magic, folk tradition, and astrology (Mills, "The history" 432). The British took official control of India in 1858, and from this point onwards, until 1914, the modern psychiatric system in India was established (Mills, "The history" 433). Following on, between 1914 and 1947, the earlier framework was further developed "by new challenges such as the psychiatric casualties of the World Wars, the increasing use of the western system by Indian families and the rise of a generation of Indian psychiatrists" (Mills, "The history" 433).

To understand psychiatric care in India after independence, it is necessary to consider the following key points. Firstly, the role of the colonial British in defining what constitutes mental healthcare and psychiatric practice in India. Secondly, the changes in psychiatric practice in India since the 1990's; and finally, the lack of mental health discourse concerning the impact of Partition on the psychological states of the people of India after independence. Published in 2009, Mills' work, "Psychiatry on the Edge? Vagrants, Families and Colonial Asylums in India, 1857-1900", succeeds in approaching these key points. He considers the development of the practice of psychiatry in India and examines it over four periods of time: from 1795 to 1857, 1858 to 1914, 1914 to 1947 and 1947 to the present day. Mills contends that psychiatric practices until the 1990's were heavily influenced, and to a certain extent dictated, by the methods established by the British during their colonial rule. After the

1990's, more attention was awarded to outpatient care and the development of modern facilities, illustrating a change in Indian psychiatric practice.

From 1858, the British built hospitals across India to treat individuals affected by mental disorders. They also established legislation addressing psychological disorders that affected the Indian people. The 1857 rebellion, which saw many Indians revolting against British rule, outlined the need for more control and governmental organisation by the Empire. Consequently, psychiatric establishments were expanded, characterised by the increased number of cases admitted into 'lunatic' asylums. It is important to note that many of the detainees admitted to asylums were in fact from poor backgrounds. It seemed that some individuals began using psychiatric hospitals and asylums as relief houses in order to avoid more challenging life situations. These instances, in which it became increasingly difficult to discern the reason behind such admissions, affected asylum expansion and continued to influence the psychiatric network during colonial rule. (Mills, "The history" 436).

A large section of patients in asylums in India between 1858 and 1914 were criminals. They were termed as 'criminal lunatics' and were admitted to asylums when it was established that a mental disorder was being displayed, even after such individuals were sentenced and had begun serving prison terms. Patients who were found incapable of attending trial due to psychological disorders were transferred to mental asylums. In other cases, those found irrational at the time of committing a crime were acquitted based on the premise that they would be sent to asylums and placed under examination and rehabilitation. From 1858 to 1914, asylums were made up of many self-admissions. These were people who deemed asylums as refuges and parish-like institutes. There were also community admissions. These were members of a community or family who were admitted for a period because they displayed abnormal behaviour, admitted due to abandonment or due to being classified as mentally ill because of criminal activity. However, what constituted 'lunacy' and

'insanity' during British rule was a contentious area, and discerning whether patients were actually mentally ill, by way of medical diagnosis or by assessment, remained extremely difficult.

Systems of management used in the West helped the British to govern Indian populations in asylums. The non-restraint system was one such approach, the objective of which was "the humane and enlightened curative treatment of the insane" (qtd. in Mills, "The history" 441). However, it is important to mention that a culmination of western management systems, therapeutic practices, and drug treatments, does not conceal the fact that early psychiatric care in India was administered by non-specialist British medical officers who were inadequately trained. They were tasked with treating the mentally ill up until 1914. The methods used during the course of the treatment did not only fail to consider the patient at an individual level, but also stereotyped and grouped the patient, resulting in inadequate or inappropriate care. Changes in the psychiatric care system after 1914 saw senior positions in asylums filled by Indians, as opposed to Europeans (Mills, "The history" 449). The reason for this change was due to the demand for European Indian Medical Service Officers (IMS) to work in active units abroad during World War I. A lack of officers due to war commitments, created vacancies that had to be filled by Indian medical professionals. Furthermore, the 1930's saw psychiatry included in medical colleges and subsequent systems of medical training for doctors in India. Although many senior positions were still held by British officers, well-trained Indian medical staff who were versed in modern psychiatry and its practice, soon found themselves employed in senior roles.

Partition, independence and the creation of two nation states also brought about changes in psychiatric care. The Indian National Committee for World Mental Health was established in 1948 to review the empire-influenced system of psychiatric care and its place in post-independence India. However, a lack of action was the consequence of the

committee's review, and as is argued by Mills (Mills, "The history" 453), many procedures and treatments used after Partition were the same as the ones used during British rule. It is clear, therefore, that colonial management of psychiatric care influenced Indian psychiatric practice. What is also clear, is that there has been an attempt to transition from colonial management to post-colonial management of asylums and mental health policies in recent times. This transition is evident in the work of psychiatrists such as Jain and Sarin, who apply a more nuanced approach to understanding mental health conditions in India today. Their approach and concerted effort to engage with psychological trauma, especially in relation to Partition, attempts to provide answers to survivors and their families, and responds to the neglect shown by the field of psychiatry to Partition trauma and its inter-generational effects.

The brief history of psychiatric care in India provided in this section has outlined that the field of psychiatry is regarded as a contentious discipline. The institute of the asylum is a colonial construct and one in which psychiatric care is administered. Thus, it becomes a literal space where colonial administration and management is carried out. Furthermore, the establishment of asylums and psychiatric care in India, historically, have been criticised for the neglecting patients and the use of invasive treatments. Asylums in India, as well as the administering of psychiatric care, has been a form of social control, which critics and opposers of mental health care have labelled as coercive and ineffective. The use of electroconvulsive therapy (ECT or shock therapy) as a treatment is not only seen as barbaric, but also humiliating when it is used to treat patients without their consent. This is why throughout the twentieth century, there seems to be a determined effort to disassociate modern psychiatric practice from the unfavourable view of asylums, which were held to be controlling and oppressive.

This section has charted the practice of psychiatry in India and discussed how the psychiatric care framework established by the British continued well after 1947. The entire

point about the history of psychiatry is that terms like ‘madness’ and ‘insanity’ are social and medical constructs which are used to marginalise people who are often socially ‘undesirable’. Colonial constructs and social structures are critiqued in the work of Manto, as he presents a simultaneous critique of social structures and a speculative account of what India could become when colonial structures are removed. The next section will discuss and analyse literary works that explore the psychological impact of Partition, showing how fiction approaches the trauma of Partition. This analysis will also measure the extent to which authors grasp the idea of ‘madness’ as a metaphor for Partition. An analysis of “Toba Tek Singh” (1955) will interrogate the effectiveness of the short story in capturing how mental illness and disorientation can affect the everyday lives of people. This analysis will also discuss how madness can be empowering in an asylum, providing inmates with the liberation to challenge control and forced migration. Anirudh Kala’s *The Unsafe Asylum: Stories of Partition and Madness* (2018) will then be discussed to understand how Partition impacted mental health after the division of India and why it continues to affect the psyche of many people in present times.

“TOBA TEK SINGH”: A DISCUSSION ON MENTAL HEALTH IN SAADAT MANTO’S SATITICAL SHORT STORY

“Toba Tek Singh” (1955), written by the Pakistani writer Saadat Hasan Manto, is a literary depiction of how the psychological trauma of Partition affected the inmates of a Lahore mental health asylum, many of whom were transferred to India following the division of the country. The interwoven story charts the way inmates at an asylum respond to Partition and

the ‘madness’ associated with it. It also explores ways in which mental illness can be negotiated by patients to resist political control and the identity that it imposes.

Born in Ludhiana, British India, Manto was raised in an educated family with Kashmiri roots and went on to produce many short stories that address collective violence, as well as the consequences of the unresolved Partition trauma that continues into modern times. Some of Manto’s most recognised works on Partition include *Siyah Hashye* (1948) – a collection of stories written shortly after the division of India; “Taqseem*”* - which appears in the collection and is a story that illustrates the risk of Partition repeating itself; and “*Saha’e”* (1948) – a narrative exploring the breakdown of friendship due to religious difference. In another poignant story “*Khol Do”* (1948), Manto describes the impact of trauma and sexual violence on the body during Partition. The story highlights the mental trauma caused by Partition violence, allowing readers to understand better the mental scars caused by sexual violence during the event.

Manto witnessed some of the violent events of the division of India and is regarded as a great short story writer who questions the absurdity of Partition and the ‘madness’ it created (Alter 91). As an author of more than twenty collections of short stories, his work explores themes such as mental trauma, alienation, and migration, framing Partition as a trans-generational phenomenon. Much like Jain and Sarin’s recent edited collection, Manto’s work responds to the impact of the division of India and explores the theme of madness both literally and figuratively, especially when describing the kind of ‘madness’ national leaders displayed when deciding to divide India.

Partition’s ‘madness’ refers to (amongst other things) society’s lack of understanding and irrational behaviour during 1947. The result was unprecedented levels of violence and brutality between people who had previously shared a peaceful co-existence for the most part.

Manto in his short story, uses madness in a different way. He explores literal madness to oppose the 'insane' nature of political control and powers responsible for the division of India. Instead of using it to describe irrationality and confusion of those who experienced Partition, Manto uses the madness of inmates to present rational criticism and responses to the 'madness' of Partition. Manto's characters are empowered and liberated by the social meaning of madness, as they use their 'mad' behaviour to interrogate and criticise the politics that caused Partition and the violence and dislocation that ensued.

"Toba Tek Singh" has been researched extensively for it is regarded as a masterpiece which discusses an aspect of Partition seldom explored in political discourse. Stephen Alter regards it as an example of the most effective use of the guiding metaphor of 'madness' (Alter 96), wherein Manto uses it "to exaggerate the sense of separation, the distorted loyalties and the dislocated self" (Alter 97). Tarun K. Saint regards the work as the "most remarkable artistic engagement with the traumatic events of 1947" (Saint, "The Long Shadow" 56). He feels that Manto's invocation of madness in the story, particularly in the character of Bhishen Singh, as representative of the disorientation and bewilderment experienced by ordinary citizens as they became refugees, "remains the most brilliant treatment of the subject so far" (Saint 56). The story addresses the idea of borders, nationality, identity struggle and the effect Partition had on individuals, both emotionally and psychologically. As Kala and Sarin report in their article entitled "The Partitioning of Madness" (2018), "Toba Tek Singh" "in its unblinking gaze is a grim recognition of the multiple tragedies that surrounded the partition of the sub-continent" (Kala and Sarin 16) – one that attempts to present the 'madness' that characterised the people of Partition in 1947. What they also identify is that the subject of Manto's work (mental health and how it was impacted by actual events connected to Partition) has remained a neglected area.

By using the metaphor of ‘madness’, Manto offers an analysis of how dislocation – a complete breakdown of identity and belonging, can lead to mass confusion and absurdness. The story, which can be read as political satire, critiques the nations of India and Pakistan whose regimes played a part in dividing India along religious lines. The narrative of the story follows Bishen Singh, once a successful Sikh landowner, who grew up in a village called Toba Tek Singh. He was brought to the Lahore asylum by his family fifteen years earlier when he went mad. Since arriving at the asylum, Bishen decided to keep standing and refused to sleep. He is constantly preoccupied with his village, Toba Tek Singh, and questions anyone he communicates with regarding its whereabouts. After fifteen years in the asylum, Bishen is visited by an old friend who informs him of his family’s well-being and safe passage to India after Partition. Upon listening to his friend, Bishen remains mentally occupied with concerns about Toba Tek Singh and questions his friend also regarding its location.

This questioning continues later when Bishen is involved in the diplomatic exchange of mental patients across the newly founded border of Pakistan and India. The inmates at the asylum are moved to the Wagah border where they are due to meet Indian officials. At the border, chaos ensues as inmates clash with officials from both sides and between themselves. When it is time for Bishen to cross over the border into India, he asks the Indian officials about the whereabouts of Toba Tek Singh. One Indian official responds by saying that Toba Tek Singh is a village in Pakistan, causing Bishen to run back to his fellow inmates, refusing to cross over into India. Pakistani officials try convincing him that Toba Tek Singh is in India to usher him across. The confusion leads him to stand in no man’s land - a place between the two newly formed states. Pakistani officials allow him to remain there due to his harmless nature, as they continue to assist the remaining inmates in crossing the border. Bishen

remains in no man's land until the morning when he suddenly lets out a shriek and dies. This moment is captured by Manto in the final paragraph of his compelling short story:

> Just before sunrise, a sky rending cry emerged from the gullet of Bishen Singh, who till then had stood still and unmoving. Several officials came running to the spot and found that the man who had stood on his legs, day and night, for fifteen years, was lying on his face. Over there, behind the barbed wires, was Hindustan. Over here, behind identical wires, lay Pakistan. In between, on a bit of land that had no name, lay Toba Tek Singh. (Manto 70)

Manto's story exhibits the love one can have for his/her homeland and the relationship between location and identity in constructing the self. The manner in which Bishen dies, not only addresses the intersection between national space and identity, but also describes nationalism's failure in imparting an understanding to its people regarding the direct connection between identity, land, and the populations inhabiting it. Bishen comes to be known by the name of his village and this connects his identity to the land he comes from. Manto describes the nuances of Bishen's existential struggle by locating his death in no man's land, as he pursued both belonging and identity. The image of Bishen lying face down into the land, depicts him as becoming one with the land he identifies with and recognises as Toba Tek Singh, when he says, "Toba Tek Singh is here!" (Manto 70), after being ushered by Pakistani officials to cross the border. Bishen, therefore, becomes "the figure for the border who heralds the past into a present context that bears the name Toba Tek Singh – a name that is at once Pakistani and Indian" (Yusin 27). His face merges with the landscape of the space he has proclaimed as Toba Tek Singh. No longer visible to those around him, location and

identity intertwine and eliminate any difference between Toba Tek Singh the man, and Toba Tek Singh the land. This coalescence is the intersection where memory, location, and identity come together in a space which geographical cartography and nationalism fails to include in its definitive boundaries.

The national spaces of India and Pakistan were divided by borders, yet the confusion experienced by Bishen when unable to locate *home,* allows Manto to display the disorientation felt by many whose notions of home were thrown into disarray, due to Partition's 'madness'. This 'madness' caused mass confusion, as many did not know where the borders of the newly founded nations began and ended. People also had to redefine their individual and collective identities according to the cartographic demarcation that located them. The creation of new identities can be viewed as a defining aspect of the division of India. An exploration of the trauma associated with it provides a greater understanding of the communal violence and reconfiguration of identity that occurred. Manto's protagonist Bishen, demonstrates how the human disposition of preserving and protecting certain memories can be viewed as an act of resisting change and control. Bishen's memories are tied to his village Toba Tek Singh, which he recalls in the present by continually asking about its location – a location which is bound to his identity. Present day events, as well as his visitors, are not given recognition or importance in his mind which is continuously engaged with acts of remembering and forgetting.

In her article, "Beyond Nationalism: The border, trauma and Partition fiction" (2011), Jennifer Yusin moves away from discourses surrounding nationalism and independence, and focuses on how geographical borders can be viewed as a site which enjoins nations "into a traumatic figure, represented by and embodied in Bishan, that is at once Pakistan and India – into a figure that needs a new and different name, than those granted under the national banners" (Yusin 27). Through the experiences of Bishen, Manto urges for borders to be

considered as an enjoining space as much as they are a dividing one. Bishen's struggle with the self in relation to his homeland, Toba Tek Singh, not only displays the trauma associated with the bewilderment caused by Partition but portrays it as a history of borders. In this history, the dividing lines of the newly formed nations become a space where the relationship between self and home "reconfigure the subcontinent into a geography of trauma that does not distinguish between national identities" (Yusin 27).

Partition caused a rupture, the consequence of which was a profound trauma, exacerbated by the confusion caused by the hasty demarcation of national borders. The concept of the border is personified in the character of Bishen whose experiences allow Manto to call to attention questions surrounding ideas of being and belonging. In his inability to locate his home, Bishen struggles to locate his national identity in the newly found state that he finds himself in. Bishen gradually becomes more confused and disorientated, as his fixed notions of identity and home become blurred. His existential crisis and need to belong serves as an allegory for the disorientation of the nation. He does not understand how Toba Tek Singh has changed location but has not changed its locality. This sheds light on how spaces which constitute a homeland can suddenly become foreign due to a profound event brought about by political and religious tensions. The borders that separate India and Pakistan can, therefore, be regarded as conceptual figures that not only explain the construction of land division, but also the traumatic building of identity.

Manto's "Toba Tek Singh" is a fictional story, but it is narrating a historical event in which both the Indian and Pakistani governments agreed to exchange mental asylum patient populations based on their religious affiliation. Although many patients were transferred, there were others who lost their lives during the upheaval. This point is evidenced by Jain and Sarin who refer to the 1951 review of the annual report of the Amritsar Mental Hospital by Mangat Rai - the Secretary to the Government of Punjab, who says:

> At the time of partition of Punjab, the number of Indian mental patients in MHL was about 650. Of these only 317 patients returned to India. It is tragic to note that the remaining Indian patients did not survive due to the unfortunate post partition circumstances. The fate of patients in the Sindh and Peshawar Mental Hospitals must have been worse and of these only 133 were received at the time of exchange. We have asked the Punjab (P) government for details regarding date of deaths, cause of death in each case and number of deaths separately-among Pakistani and Indian patients for the same period. The reply of Punjab (P) govt. is awaited. (qtd. in Kala and Sarin, "The Partitioning" *The Psychological Impact* 20-21)

Here, Jain and Sarin outline the tragic number of deaths caused by the negligence of carers, raising questions regarding the responsibility and care of the mentally ill during the transfer of mental asylum populations between India and Pakistan. The annual report of the Amritsar Mental Hospital did not provide the cause of death of those who lost their lives; however, the annual report of the Lahore Mental Asylum shows that a high percentage of patients died from Cholera (Kala and Sarin 21). It is poignant to mention here that the transfer of mental patients took place more than three years after Partition – emphasising how the newly-formed states forgot mental asylum populations who were "ranked lower than the division of the materials assets of tables and chairs in the scheme of things" (Kala and Sarin 22).

Although the focus of this research is not to provide statistical data regarding mental asylum populations, it is important to note that the tragedy of Partition occurred on multiple levels and included unexplained deaths during the transfer of the mentally ill. Revisiting Partition discourses concerning the mentally ill, as has been attempted in Jain and Sarin's edited collection of essays, shows that mental asylum populations were marginalised and

disempowered. They were neglected and subjected to chaotic transfers which severely impacted their physical and psychological well-being. This area, therefore, warrants further inquiry to evaluate the impact of Partition on the psyche of the mentally ill. In "Toba Tek Singh", Manto captures the thoughts of mental patients through their satirical exchanges with one another and also describes the transfer of patients over the border. However, he does not discuss the patients at length, nor does he elaborate on what happens to them after the transfer process. Readers are left to ponder over the fate of those transferred and what becomes of them after they arrive on Indian soil. Manto details the fate of his central protagonist Bishen, the archetypal figure of insanity, whose life ends in tragic circumstances. However, by not discussing the fate of the other inmates after the transfer, Manto's story points to the neglect shown to mental patients during and after Partition, probing also the silence of national discourses pertaining to the matter.

In "Toba Tek Singh", the trope of borders explores Partition as a traumatic event which, through Bishen's death, presents border space as both tangible and obscure. Borders, in their connection to land, can shape and compose identities, yet one must consider how the notion of obscure borders and unknowable spaces can occupy memory (Yusin 30). Yusin believes that "the border exists not in between two nations but in knowing and not knowing, between a geographical reality that binds together two nations and an inconceivable abstract that inscribes itself into a cartography of the mind that cannot clearly distinguish between the self and the land, and thus between identities" (Yusin 30). In support of Yusin's view, it is evident that Bishen's identity merges with the identity of his village, as its name replaces his own. In relation to borders, Manto draws attention to the fact that Bishen's ontological crisis is essentially a struggle that attempts to locate the land where he grew up, in order to (re)establish his individual identity. When the British lawyer Cyril Radcliffe, under the orders of the British Empire, drew up the dividing lines between India and Pakistan, the detrimental

effect and psychological strain that would affect so many was not envisaged. Familiar maps of people's homeland changed as the new borders carried out a cartographic reconfiguration.

The location of Bishen's Toba Tek Singh does not actually alter, but it is the map of the area delineated by the two newly found states that locates it in a place in Pakistan, which was previously a part of India. The village of Toba Tek Singh, therefore, simultaneously exists in both India and Pakistan. Although it is geographically located in Pakistan, its memory in Bishen's mind locates it in India. Such a complex notion of nation-building affected many people during Partition. The 'madness' of the event confused all types of people who found themselves in an existential struggle connected to land and identity. Ultimately, borders and cartography set by national agenda does not help Bishen locate his village, nor his notion of home. The confusion of Partition has stripped Bishen of an identity which was preserved by memories of the village in which he grew up. Like many others, his suffering has been caused by a lack of belonging, brought about by the newly formed states of India and Pakistan, as well as their political and national consciousness. The creation of borders was a creation of new identities, and it is at the space where borders exist, that disorientation and bewilderment related to one's own identity and notion of belonging, manifest.

Essentially, Manto's story explicates some of the after-effects of violence and dislocation that were experienced by the populace. His use of the short story genre provides a platform to explore the difficulties experienced by the mentally insane after a period of extreme conflict, and assesses the alienation, disorientation, and loss felt in psychological spaces. "Toba Tek Singh" is narrated from a detached point of view and utilises Partition's effect on the character of Bishen to explore the impact on the psyche at individual, community, and national level after Partition. Though the fates of inmates other than Bishen are not expressed in Manto's story, he does describe the confusion, agitation, and

disorientation they felt and how the absurdity of Partition further marginalised them. Regarding the confusion that inmates felt about the location of Pakistan, Manto writes:

> However, they did not know a thing about its actual location and its boundaries. That is why all the inmates of the asylum who weren't completely insane were thoroughly confused about whether they were in Hindustan or Pakistan. If they were in Hindustan, then where was Pakistan? And if they were in Pakistan, then how was it possible that only a short while ago they had been in Hindustan, when they had not moved from the place at all? (Manto 65)

As is evident here, many of the inmates were disconnected from the high politics and the organisation of borders. The absurdity of Partition is felt by the inmates as their sense of self in relation to their past has become disconnected - they have become detached due to the changing of national boundaries. Manto not only portrays the angst felt by both Hindus and Muslims in the Lahore asylum, but also describes the anxiety felt by two Anglo-Indian madmen located in the European Ward. These inmates are shocked to learn "that the English had left after granting independence to India" (Manto 66), and their concerns become focused on the type of breakfast they would receive, and whether or not western bread would be replaced by Indian chapatti.

"Toba Tek Singh", in describing the plight of inmates from different backgrounds, accounts for the main communities that were affected by the events of 1947, displaying the different anxieties of each group based on their religious and political affiliation. Manto outlines the failure of the British in addressing and managing the 'madness' leading up to,

and after, Partition, portraying them as being concerned only about themselves and the Empire, after granting independence to India. Concerns felt by the Anglo-Indian inmates regarding their post-imperial position also draws upon the anxieties that many marginalised groups lived with once the British left and the dominant religious groups became involved in mass violence. In Manto's story, the sense of self becomes ruptured and disconnected, characterised by the exchanges of the inmates, as the land of India alters in accordance with newly set out demarcation. The transfer of mental patients from the Lahore lunatic asylum across the Wagah border becomes chaotic and confusing when the inmates resist being transferred. There is an absurdity that characterises this exchange of madmen, yet their refusal to be transferred, which has been dictated by the politics of Partition, appears to be the sanest response to the 'madness' embodying the tragic events of 1947. The resistance of the inmates not only exhibits the role personal memory plays in challenging hegemonic control, but also shows how memory, in its resistance, can oppose uprootedness ordered by the state.

During Partition, Manto migrated to Pakistan where he began to use humanism to write about the trauma of the events of 1947 and its effects on different sections of society, including the mentally ill. In "Toba Tek Singh", the 'madness' that affects the nation, perpetuated by the dominant political parties involved, extends into a mental asylum, as Manto outlines the exchange of inmates to evidence the bewilderment caused by the absurdity brought about by the division of India.

According to Saint in his article "The Long Shadow of Manto's Partition Narratives: 'Fictive' Testimony to Historical Trauma" (2012), "Manto's work refuses to become dated, especially on account of his ability to reinvent the *afsana* or short story as a self-reflexive mode of 'fictive' testimony, which captures both the direct impact of fiendish forms of collective violence as well as the persistent after-effects of historical trauma" (Saint, "The Long Shadow" 53). This is particularly the case when considering the existential crisis mental

asylum patients found themselves in after Partition. Referring to the Annual Report of the Punjab Mental Hospital in Lahore from 1950, Saint discusses how the transfer of mental patients described in Manto's work has factual basis, and one which questions governmental procedures of control that render populations alienated. Saint also mentions how the transfer of mental patients across the border in Manto's story is not managed by health professionals or trained psychiatrists. Rather it is carried out by government officials who possessed little expertise regarding the needs of the mentally ill and the appropriate care that should be awarded to them. A critique of Manto's decision to outline the absence of psychological experts at the time of the transfer not only emphasises the failure of the state in providing appropriate provision and care for populations who were dislocated, but also urges readership to question the silence and absence of psychologists and psychiatrists as a whole, in relation to addressing the psychological impact experienced during and after Partition.

The 'insanity' attributed to Partition is as much about the chaos which ensued due to communal violence, mass displacement and dislocation, as it is about the absurd nature in which governments went about exercising control through the establishment of new national borders, often against the will of the people. Manto interrogates the jingoistic nature of governmental procedures by exhibiting the satirical exchanges that arise amongst the mentally insane in his story. One is left questioning whether the insane are the mentally ill located in the asylum or the government officials and politicians operating outside of the asylum. In a well-known saying, Gandhi urges the people not to "meet madness with madness" (qtd. in Ravikant and Saint xvi) – a madness which, in "Toba Tek Singh", constitutes a breakdown of understanding, language, empathy and communication, not only amongst inmates but also amongst the different communities of India living in the outside world. Manto displays acts of insanity carried out by inmates in order to lay bare the sheer helplessness and disorientation felt by them in the asylum – serving as a microcosm for the

confusion Partition caused in the subcontinent, especially in and around national borders. As mentioned earlier, the inmates in the story are not aware of the exact location of Pakistan, nor do they understand what the new nation stands for. Yet, it is their acts of insanity performed at times quite creatively, which sustain their agency and individual thought process. Manto allows his characters to live within the social meaning of 'insanity' to liberate them, as they use insane acts as a device to challenge that political machination that caused Partition.

In one example, Manto describes a Muslim lunatic who slips and faints while shouting the slogan ""Pakistan Zindabad"" (Manto 64). Here, Manto reasserts that extreme nationalism brought about by "such gusto" can lead to dangerous outcomes (Manto 64). Furthermore, Manto's use of the slogan "Pakistan Zindabad", is designed to draw the reader's attention to the incoherence and 'mad' nature of such terms, when considering how and at what cost Pakistan came into being. In another example, a man named Muhammad Ali proclaims himself the Qaid-e-Azam - Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Upon learning this, a Sikh inmate declares himself Master Tara Singh, and the two are separated in order to avoid any bloodshed. Here, Manto subverts the place in which sanity occurs, for violence is avoided in the mental asylum when the *other* is regarded as the enemy. But in the outside world, violence reaches unprecedented levels as jingoistic 'madness' engulfs the populations who turn on one another. Another example of Manto's deliberate choice of creative acts performed by the inmates to address an aspect of the alienation, occurs when an inmate climbs up a tree where he wants to live forever, as opposed to living in Pakistan or Hindustan. This poignant act not only demonstrates the power of agency articulated by the freedom of personal thought, but also signifies the sane response of an insane patient to the forceful imposing of national identity, ordered by the jingoism of national governments. In his refusal to belong to politically separate countries, he detaches himself from all that is

familiar, expressing the disorientation he feels, as well as outlining a breakdown of ties which divide on the basis of religious affiliation.

The formation of the new nation states of India and Pakistan can be read as ‘insane’ decisions and arbitrary, for the new national identities which were forced upon people led to extreme disarray, mirrored by the angst of the inmates at the asylum. At the beginning of this chapter, a quote from “Toba Tek Singh” shows one inmate asking the other as to the whereabouts of Pakistan. He reverts with a jibe saying Pakistan is a place in India where cut-throat razors are made, emphasising the relationship between violence and the birth of a new country. Cut-throat razors are sharp, and metaphorically speaking, they can cause deep incisions which not only dismember parts of the body, but can also dislocate people from a sense of self. The ‘insanity’ connected to the creation of new states is further perpetuated when a Sikh inmate asks as to why they are being sent to Hindustan when they cannot speak the language. This signifies the erasure of linguistic identity, as well as cultural and traditional practice that united people under a common language and communal identity. Manto, here, also exhibits the breakdown of language in communication and meaning at a time of ‘madness’ which Partition symbolises. Bishen’s character, in his inability, and perhaps unwillingness to communicate. except to enquire about his village, further demonstrates the failure of language in providing meaning. Throughout the story, Bishen utters a group of words with no apparent meaning, such as “Opar di gurgur di annexe di bay dhiana di mung di daal of the government of Pakistan” (Manto 66). Read as a sentence, there is little meaning that can be derived from it, except that it seems to be Bishen’s response to being offended or to reflect his discontent at something. Read closely, one notices words and phrases like ‘annexe’, ‘mung di daal’ (lentil soup) and ‘government of Pakistan’, that can be viewed as words that constitute an unfathomable response to the chaotic and barbaric violence caused by the nonsensical ‘madness’ of Partition.

In their introduction to the book, *Translating Partition* (2001), Ravikant and Saint state that ""Toba Tek Singh" is a triumph of ambivalence and a great story because it proclaims the in-betweenness of its protagonist and his triumph over those who want to fix his identity. The madman's death takes place in a no-man's land, where the writ of neither nation prevails" (Ravikant and Saint xvi). Manto explores the madness of Partition by using an asylum as the central location for his story and by using 'madness' as a metaphor for sanity when he empowers Bishen with the power to resist the geographical demarcation that political powers subjected populations to. When discussing asylums, government institutions are often criticised for their need to control and organise people. Yet, Manto's asylum is a space in which the mentally insane discuss the 'insanity' ensuing outside – providing agency for the mentally ill to produce sane questions and answers regarding the 'madness' that is characteristic of the decisions made by political leaders. Bishen, although regarded as mentally ill, is as uninformed about the location of Toba Tek Singh, as the sane people around him. This irony about Partition, therefore, is that the confusion caused by it was experienced throughout every section of society. As political satire, "Toba Tek Singh" uses the humour of inmates in the asylum to undermine and challenge the insane decisions made by political leaders who would later come to govern the institutes providing care for the mentally ill in the nations of India and Pakistan. Manto's work is ultimately a harsh condemnation of the political decisions that caused the division of India. He achieves this not only through satirical language but also by subverting the meaning of insanity to include the ability to oppose and deny political control, as is seen through the actions of Bishen. Manto's asylum does not categorise the inmates along religious lines. They are also not provided names, acting only as a microcosm of Indian society which uses humorous responses to satirise the different political figures and communities involved in Partition.

Manto's short story captures the role geographical cartography played in reconfiguring identity and disconnecting populations, especially those in mental asylums who were subjected to political exile against their will. "Toba Tek Singh" speaks of the grief of Partition which attempts to deal with the absurdity that was caused by an event that historians, novelists, and psychologists are still trying to make sense of. As mentioned in chapter one, Gyanendra Pandey discusses the nuances between memory and history, leading to the idea that commemorative practice and memorialisation erase the narratives of private memory. Taking this into account, "Toba Tek Singh" is an allegory which charts the distress and alienation felt by Bishen, who not only resists the politics that attempt to locate him, but also self-preserves his sense of being and identity by upholding private memory. Although Bishen's memories are unreliable, for he is a madman, they provide agency in a climate where political agenda and boundaries were negotiated to erase the sense of self many had, as well as their identity.

The "madmen" in Manto's story are being subjected to political control and it is their experience of loss and confusion which emphasises their existential crisis. Bishen's search for Toba Tek Singh ends with his death in a space which is alternate to that of India and Pakistan. By dying in no man's land, he evades the displacement that he is subjected to by the new national boundaries. The field of psychology has long concerned itself with the effects of violence and trauma at a psychological level, and Manto, in describing the alienation and loss experienced by post-Partition populations, urges for further investigation from the field of psychiatry, especially in Indian and Pakistan, into the effects of Partition on the human psyche. Writers such as Krishan Chander, Ibne Insha, Kamleshwar and Rajinder Singh Bedi have all described the torment of Partition, but Manto's short story is clearly unique. It is a tale that takes place at a mental asylum, dealing first-hand with the anguish caused by dislocation and exile. "Toba Tek Singh" was instrumental in initiating discussion surrounding

the neglected populations residing in mental asylums after independence. Up until recently, very few efforts to address the issues that Manto's work outlines, especially from the literary world, had been made, and this space continues to remain wanting.

On the 24th of August 2018, Ketan Mehta released the film version of Manto's short story to commemorate his seminal work and to revisit the tropes that he discussed. Although the film was met with negative reviews in *The Indian Express* and *The Hindustan Times*, which regarded it as oversimplifying the 'madness' of Partition and failing to portray the nuances alluded to by Manto, it brought up fresh discussions on the 'insanity' of Partition. Capturing the essence of a short story as compelling as Manto's in a film can be challenging, however, Mehta's attempt exhibits the importance of Manto even today, as scholars and filmmakers alike, continue to interrogate the trans-generational effects of Partition trauma. Bishen, is a symbolic representation of the unwillingness to reconcile with the division of India. Nostalgia and a longing for home is still felt by many today who were displaced and forced to migrate over the border. Manto uses the madness of mental asylum patients to challenge the decisions that caused Partition. Through his own madness, Bishen rejects the insane political decisions that attempt to govern him, thereby, refusing to accept the political system of the newly formed nation-state. The 'madness' metaphor of Partition, therefore, represents incomprehension, emphasised by Manto who maintains that during times of 'madness', the insane voice is perhaps the only sane voice.

Academics and researchers of Partition studies still need to acquire a deeper understanding of why political discourses neglected the subject of mental health and the populations of mental hospitals during and after the division of India. Failure to address the consequences of Partition at a psychological level shows a disregard for the marginalised groups who had been admitted to mental health facilities and those who continued to suffer from its trauma. By describing the plight and existential struggles of mental asylum inmates

in Manto's *Toba Tek Singh*, Partition is regarded as a rupture which dislocated, alienated, and disorientated people. A similar trajectory is seen in Kala's work which also features an asylum in which inmates demonstrate rational behaviour and tolerance, starkly different to the 'madness' playing out in the outside world. The next part of this chapter will discuss parallels between Manto's short story and Kala's work by undertaking a close reading of Kala's interconnected stories, as they explore themes such as shared psychosis, inter-generational trauma, and the importance of cross-border relationships.

THE UNSAFE ASYLUM

Anirudh Kala's *The Unsafe Asylum: Stories of Partition and Madness* (2018), revisits some of the tropes discussed in Manto's *Toba Tek Singh.* It describes how Partition affected the lives of ordinary people based on Kala's own experience as a psychiatrist. His response is indicative of the views of psychiatric professionals on the after-effects of Partition and, hence, demonstrates, to some extent, how the field of psychiatry has negotiated the transmission of Partition's inter-generational effects. Sixty-three years after Manto's compelling satirical response to the 'madness' of Partition, Kala presents a series of interconnected stories describing how the psychological effects of the tragic events of 1947 have impacted post-Partition societies. His work, alongside that of other eminent psychiatrists such as Jain and Sarin, encourage continued enquiry into mental health and psychiatric care in India. Kala's background in psychiatric practice informs his stories, bringing depth and authenticity, especially regarding the madness and psychological trauma that patients endure.

Kala's family came from a village in the Sheikhupura district of Pakistan and later moved across the border to India. He eventually visited Pakistan in 2006 when invited for a psychiatry conference by Harun Rashid Chaudhry - the Director of the Institute of Mental Health in Lahore. Along with Chaudhry, Kala established the Indo-Pak Punjab Psychiatric Society which is tasked with examining the impact Partition trauma had on mental health, while considering the effects of the division of India at a psychological level on both sides of the border. Furthermore, Kala is the president of the Indian Association of Private Psychiatry. He attempts to provide legitimacy to the stories that he pieces together in his book by grounding them in his extensive experience of treating patients suffering from mental illness. His intimate interaction with the legacy of Partition and its impact in the local environment, positions his work as timely, rich, and well-informed. He discusses the perpetual violence Partition caused, as well as the effects of migration and the survival of relationships across borders. Much like his work for the Indo-Pak Punjab Psychiatric Society, Kala's literary production considers mental health in both India and Pakistan to demonstrate evenly, the effects felt on both sides of the border, without presenting bias. However, Kala's work needs to be thoroughly critiqued, for it is the work of a psychiatrist who is medicalising the memory of Partition in his fictional work. Psychiatry can be understood as a political science which attempts to make sense of the effects of events that result in trauma and mental illness. In Kala's case, one must question the intention behind the use of psychiatric terminology in literary work which attempts to anchor the 'madness' of Partition in psychiatry – a notion that shall be discussed when analysing the text later.

As an experienced psychiatrist, Kala brings a personalised understanding of how Partition has affected the lives of many subcontinent communities, and is able to draw parallels between the effectiveness of psychiatric processes in both India and Pakistan. Amandeep Sandhu, in his review of Kala's work in *The Hindu,* entitled 'The Thin Red Line:

The Unsafe Asylum – Stories of Partition and Madness', states that Kala "is well-suited to uncover the trauma and psychosis that Partition caused in us as nations and in Punjab as a society" (Sandhu). Sandhu's review provides an overview of Kala's work and points to the importance of revisiting a subject that has seldom been discussed in literary fiction written in English and in academic research. This view is corroborated in the *Hindustan Times* which featured a review called "Tale of Two Sides: Book on Mental Scars of Partition, and a Cursed Heirloom" by Nirupama Dutt, who believes that Kala's work:

> […] and many more such tales are part of a volume straight from a shrink's keyboard, underlining that the trauma of Partition is not a thing of the past. Do not, therefore, think that Bishan Singh's mutterings in "Toba Tek Singh" by the famed chronicler of Partition, Saadat Hasan Manto, are over and done with! (Dutt "Tale of two sides")

Dutt discusses Kala's roots and the fact that his family was uprooted from their village, Kala Shah Kaku, which fell within the borders of Pakistan after Partition. Dutt outlines important themes such as the effects of madness, the benefits of cross-border relationships, and the concept of longing in the interconnected stories Kala presents. She showcases him as a writer whose observations are authenticated due to his experience in treating mental health patients.

Although Kala's work has been positively reviewed, it is important not to overlook the fact that it medicalises memory, wherein memory is approached from within the constraints of a medical/psychiatric lens. Memory is, however, fluid in its nature and requires an interdisciplinary and multi-layered approach to assess, interpret and represent it, even in literary works. It is pertinent to raise questions regarding the positive reviews Kala's work

received. The field of psychiatry itself has been the subject of much criticism, and literary work produced by a psychiatrist requires a more objective evaluation. Kala's personal views are by no means devoid of bias or support for the psychological structures that frame the mentally ill. Nevertheless, his work does shed light on the challenges that migration posed to those who were displaced by Partition, while considering the mental suffering they endured.

Kala's work begins by exploring the idea of cross-border relationships that continued long after Partition, regardless of the dividing lines established by the nations of India and Pakistan. The story is set in June 1947 and describes a Muslim psychiatrist called Dr Iqbal Junaid Hussain who works at the Lahore Mental Hospital. Also at the hospital are two close friends called Fateh Muhammed (Fattu) and Rulda Singh (Rulda). They are both recently discharged inmates who remain at the asylum, helping with tasks while waiting for their families to come and take them back home. The families who were informed of the discharge, however, do not come. Dr Iqbal is then shot dead by a Sikh army officer who is acting with vengeful rage. The murder was carried out because the officer's family had been killed by a mob. As a result, he had sworn to murder ten people in retaliation. However, instead of killing ten people, the officer kills only one doctor that night. Many years later, the son of Dr Iqbal, Dr Asif Junaid Hussain - himself now a psychiatrist, travels to India with the excuse of watching a cricket match, to find the man who murdered his father and to attain closure. Later, Rulda and Fattu are separated when the mental asylum populations of India and Pakistan are exchanged based on religious beliefs. Dr Prakash Kohli, who has also lost his father to violence in Punjab, is an Indian psychiatrist who meets Rulda. Rulda describes to him the story of his transfer from the Lahore Mental Hospital to the mental institute on the Indian side, and his painful separation from Fattu who had to remain behind.

Prakash later visits Lahore and learns more about his own birth in 1947. He comes to know that he was born under the care of a Muslim midwife. He forges a strong relationship

with Asif, the Pakistani psychiatrist with whom he continues to have meaningful cross-border exchanges, whilst questioning why the survival rate of patients from the asylum transfer was so low. The individually linked stories then follow the life of Prakash who has become preoccupied with wanting to uncover information about those who were not transferred. He also understands that the psyche of a number of patients he treats continue to be affected by Partition. In one of the stories, Prakash meets Harpreet, a Sikh woman who is abducted and forced to marry her kidnapper's younger brother. Later, she is forced to return to India where her ties have all been severed. Examples like this demonstrate that Kala is rooting his narrative in real-life experiences to outline the tragedy and trauma experienced by many at a local level. It also reflects the attempts being made by psychiatrists in India to use a cross-border approach to help survivors of Partition and their families reconcile with a violent past.

Another story from Prakash's interactions with patients is the tale about a young couple that arrive in Ludhiana at the time of the riots. The wife has an emotional breakdown, leading to delusion and panic. She begins to see and hear a Muslim mob, wearing blood-filled clothes, who threaten to cut off her breasts. The panic and confusion results in her being treated by a traditional Muslim healer after she is found at the train station asking to be taken to Multan – the place from which she migrated from initially. The narrative then locates the same woman twenty years later after the death of her husband. The delusion she experienced as a younger woman and the voices of the Muslim mob have come back to plague her. As a result, she climbs a parapet and falls to her death. Ironically, all her children suffer from delusions over time. Her son is overtaken by thoughts that people are trying to kill him and Pakistan's intelligence agency, the ISI, are trying to read his mind. Her youngest daughter's delusion results in her believing that a Muslim doctor killed their mother. The oldest sibling is the unnamed protagonist of this interwoven story, and she also falls prey to a delusion

which ends with her accusing Prakash, the psychiatrist treating her, of harming her other two siblings and of causing the death of their mother.

Later in the narrative, stories are told from across the border to frame Kala's narrative as inclusive. In a section entitled "The Mad Prophesier", Mr Haq is described as having a deep psychosomatic connection to the popular Bollywood actor Amitabh Bachchan, for whom he prays and constantly wishes good health. Mr Haq bears a striking resemblance to the Bollywood actor, and every time Bachchan falls ill, Mr Haq too becomes ill – recovering only when the actor recovers. Ironically, Mr Haq flies to Mecca with his wife to pray for Bachchan in order to aid his own recovery, after the film actor falls into a lengthy coma. In another interwoven story, a young Punjabi boy named Brij from Shimla, believes that Benazir Bhutto – the daughter of the President of Pakistan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, is in love with him after seeing her at the Shimla summit in 1972. His obsession results in him writing countless love letters to her – letters to which a reply never comes. At the end of the book, Kala brings Rulda back into the narrative by describing his discharge from the mental hospital in Amritsar. The concluding part of the story takes place in 1984, when Rulda's nephew from Delhi sends his assistant to collect Rulda, having claimed him as a near relative. The assistant accompanies Rulda to Delhi, however, they encounter a violent mob who are retaliating against Sikhs after the assassination of the Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi. Although the assistant is killed, Rulda escapes, ironically stopping a taxi to ask for the address of a mental hospital in the city to which he can go to.

As mentioned before in the synopsis of the book, Kala's experience as a psychiatrist positions him to address the subject of mental health and psychiatric care in India after Partition. His literary work is an important addition to discourses on Partition in relation to mental health and it is important to explore how his work acts as a modern-day response from the field of psychiatry to the psychological effects caused by the division of India.

Furthermore, his work sheds light on how the field of psychiatry deals with a legacy that continues to impact populations in India and Pakistan in its professional practice. Much like the recent edited collection by Jain and Sarin, which Kala has also contributed to, Kala's literary piece deals with the nuances related to mental health in post-Partition India, asylum transfers, and the silence of psychiatry on the subject.

What makes Kala's work different to "Toba Tek Singh" is the way in which the field of psychiatry is represented in his work. Manto uses the absence of psychiatrist professionals to outline their lack of response to the psychological effects of Partition. However, in *The Unsafe Asylum,* the first story begins with the death of a Muslim psychiatrist who is killed by a Sikh. The dead psychiatrist's son grows up to also become a psychiatrist and befriends a professional from the same field across the border. Here, Kala points not only to the absurdity of Partition which led to extreme levels of violence between members of different religious groups, but also alludes to the fact that psychiatry itself was silenced by the violence. This is characterised by the death of the psychiatrist Dr Iqbal in June 1947. This silencing of the field of psychiatry is broken years later when Dr Prakash – the embodiment of modern-day Indian psychiatric practice, begins to question the reasons for Partition, as well as the reasons behind only a small number of mental patients being transferred between India and Pakistan during the bureaucratic exchange of asylum populations. During a conversation with Asif and Salma in Pakistan, Dr Prakash voices his concerns:

> 'There are many ways of killing a mental patient, without even lifting a finger. He gets dysentery; nobody does anything about it. He dies. Simple.'
>
> 'Who gained by their deaths? Where is the logic?' Salma desperately needed this stranger to be wrong. Asif, who'd been sitting and smoking Salma's Marlboros, spoke

> for the first time, 'Who gained by the deaths of one million people? Where was the logic? The partition of mental hospitals was an extension of the Partition of India. So people died here too. Only difference was the modus operandi and the cold-bloodedness.' 'Happened in India too, if it makes you feel any better,' offered Prakash. (Kala 137-138)

Kala's sentiments are also reflective of those of the field of psychiatry and Partition researchers who are concerned by the unexplained deaths of mental patients. Although statistical accounts recognise that asylum populations were transferred, little is known about the circumstances surrounding their deaths. The fact that many of these aforementioned questions remain unanswered adds to the 'madness' of Partition – one which can be unpacked through cross-border dialogue and a focused effort from both sides to address these issues. By forging a cross-border friendship with the murdered Dr Iqbal's son Asif, Kala presents the ambition and intentions of both psychiatrists to understand the effect of the division of India at a psychological level. This demonstrates a disentanglement from the legacy of established psychiatric practice framework left behind by the British Raj, towards a modern-day Indian and Pakistani psychiatric framework, concerned with individual psyches and the psychological effects of trauma.

By considering cross-border friendships and dialogues, what is deduced is that Partition remains a crucial factor in constructing modern identities in the nations of India and Pakistan. Memories of the event continue to impact individual and collective consciousness. In light of this, Kala's ploy to demonstrate the benefits of cross-border initiatives can lead to a better understanding of Partition, contributing to the construction of a more balanced identity which takes into consideration psychology, history, and individual experiences.

However, Kala's use of psychiatric professionals who seem concerned with understanding the complexities surrounding mental health and trauma in his literary work, positions psychiatry as the frontrunner for treating those afflicted by the effects of the division of India. He also creates a relationship of power between psychologists and the mentally ill by awarding the field of psychiatry the right to repackage the psychological impact caused by Partition for patients.

It can be said that Prakash's life mirrors that of Kala's. Both are psychiatrists born in 1947, both have learnt much from their patients and both establish a friendship with a Pakistani psychiatrist across the border. This is important to note, as it demonstrates that Kala's work is not drastically reimagining the past to create an 'alternative' version of Partition history and the 'madness' connected to it. Instead, it is operating within the boundary of what he knows about Partition from his own experiences and the patients he has treated. Kala, like Prakash, was invited to Pakistan by his friend, and engaged in cross-border projects that continue to advance scholars of Partition studies, as well as mental health professionals in both India and Pakistan. Kala's admiration and respect for his cross-border friend and colleague, Dr Harun Rashid, is clearly demonstrated in the book's dedication – a reminder that political boundaries cannot halt cross-border ties; and that exchanging dialogue with the 'other side' can bring about reconciliation and a deeper understanding of a shared past. Kala's use of mental health professionals in his literary work reflects a commitment from psychiatrists, like himself, who are directly involved in revisiting the subject of mental health in relation to Partition and treating those affected by its aftermath and trauma. Though many may regard this commitment as late and ambitious, a multi-disciplinary approach which includes eminent psychiatrists like Kala, Jain and Sarin will provide a richer understanding of Partition – one which fosters reconciliation and presents treatments for trauma survivors.

In a profound scene in Kala's work, the possibility of Partition reoccurring, even as a fleeting thought, is revisited in a conversation between Prakash and his mother, in the chapter, "Refugees": "'Is it Partition time again?' Ma asked when I drove her to the station to put her on a train. Feeling her heart pounding against my chest, I patted her on her back and said, 'Don't be silly. Partitions do not happen every day.' But that was later.' (Kala 167). This scene touches upon the idea that Partition is an event that can occur frequently. Although Prakash's response appears light-hearted, there is a sense of irony in his reply. The question his mother asks him can be read as satirical, for it ridicules the vices of those political powers who were instrumental in causing Partition hastily, and their vices that may let it occur again. The possibility of Partition occurring again can also stand as a metaphor for the effects of the division of India, which continue to play out frequently in present-day India and Pakistan. Partition occurred in 1947, yet it had a deep connection to the wars between India and Pakistan in 1965, 1971 and 1999. India has also accused Pakistan of supporting militant insurgencies in Kashmir, and blamed Pakistani terrorist organisations for the attacks on the Indian parliament in 2001. Furthermore, the 2008 standoff following the Mumbai attacks saw India accuse Pakistan's ISI of assisting the perpetrators. These incidents demonstrate the continued animosity between India and Pakistan, and though Partition does not occur every day, the effects of a *long Partition* are characterised by the manner in which both nations continue to accuse each other of various infringements.

At an individual level, the effects associated with the trauma of Partition are a reoccurring phenomenon evidenced by the stories of Prakash's patients, who for one reason or another, are suffering at a psychological level due to symptoms brought about by the division of India. In a reversal of his earlier thoughts, Prakash later considers if Partitions can, in fact, occur every day when Punjab experiences violence after the militant call for a separate homeland – echoing his mother's earlier sentiment when she asks if it is time for

Partition again. In her essay, “Partitioning of Minds and the Legitimisation of Difference”, Moushumi Basu considers the everydayness of Partitions all around the world when she states:

> Partition as a phenomenon takes many forms, some more subtle than others. At the heart of all partitions lies a fundamental belief in the idea of difference that causes divides (both mental and physical) to exist between groups of individuals. These ideas permeate across a range of spaces, both private and public, leading to the construction of divides that defy accepted norms and attributes of democratic citizenship, based on the principles of equality and non-discrimination. (Basu 62-63)

Basu here, points to the “everyday phenomena of partition” (Basu 63) that continue to affect post-Partition societies. She refers to the construction of a wall in Bhagana village in India, intended to exclude people of lower caste from accessing communal grazing land. She also refers to the “‘Love Jihad’” (Basu 63) initiative started against Muslim men by the Hindu right-wing. For Basu, these characterise everyday Partitions. Her concept aligns with the thoughts of Prakash and his mother who outline how the events of 1947 cause smaller Partitions which continue to occur, reiterating the everydayness of the event.

Kala’s individual stories address different ways in which the impact of Partition affected the everyday lives of ordinary people. In the first story entitled “No Forgiveness Necessary”, Kala introduces the two friends, Rulda and Fattu, who mirror each other in their description. To point out, Rulda is Sikh while Fattu is Muslim. The narrator describes how “Fattu and Rulda were huddled together under a ragged umbrella. They both wore outsized

uniforms with tall grey-and-black stripes which made them look more like prisoners-of-war than patients in a hospital" (Kala 2). This description of the two friends huddling together, at the beginning of Kala's story, immediately emphasises how friendship can transcend religion and exist in a highly politicised space designed to control the mentally ill. "The uniforms, in fact, happened to be war surplus, like many things in the hospital. But technically, the two men who wore them were no longer patients. Both had been discharged from the hospital a month ago, within a few days of each other" (Kala 2). Kala here shows the co-existence of Muslim-Sikh identity within a mental asylum, criticising the outside world in which Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus are involved in communal violence. Fattu and Rulda are close friends, wear identical clothing and are grouped together as inmates in the asylum, without being defined by political orientation and religious beliefs. Dressing inmates in war-surplus uniforms shows the unwillingness of the state to recognise the condition of the mentally ill, thus, failing to distinguish them based on the psychological care that they required. Yet, the two inmates maintain their strong bond and fail to succumb to societal or political definitions of themselves.

The fact that Fattu and Rulda have been discharged but not claimed by their relatives also highlights the inability or unwillingness of family members to retrieve the mentally insane during and after a time of extreme conflict. Many believed that life inside prisons and asylums was better than the chaos outside. Rulda and Fattu are inseparable friends and share a relationship that is sane and sincere, even though it is forged in an asylum. In presenting this relationship, Kala criticises the outside world which engaged in insane violence during Partition. The insanity in the outside world was more real than the one inside mental health facilities, where friendships and harmony continued without religious prejudice and discrimination. The witty dialogue between the two friends not only addresses the subject of asylum transfer and displacement, but also problematises the concept of madness.

In a story entitled “Folie à Deux”, Kala explores the idea of shared psychosis, where madness and its symptoms are repeated in multiple personalities. The story displays the inter-generational effects of the trauma of Partition. As quoted earlier, a woman who migrates to Multan experiences a psychological breakdown, leading to delusions that cause her death. A year later, her son also becomes afflicted with delusions, followed by his sisters. What Kala describes here are the trans-generational effects of a traumatic event that occurred in 1947. Trauma is transmitted from one family member to another, showing how the psychological impact of Partition continues to affect the lives of many everyday people of South Asia, whose parents or grandparents lived through Partition.

In the same story, Prakash’s interactions with an unnamed protagonist, who is the eldest daughter of the initially deluded woman, is narrated. The woman describes how her mother “had become fearful and swore that she had heard the whisperings of a mob, growing louder and shriller, threatening to carve her to pieces. She also vividly ‘saw’ bearded ‘mussalmans’ wearing clothes drenched in blood, threatening to amputate her breasts” (Kala 113). Here, Kala reiterates the image that many Hindu and Sikh women had of Muslim mobs who threatened to kill or rape them during the communal violence of Partition. In doing so, Kala exhibits the anxiety felt by women of all faiths when faced with impending sexual violence at the hands of the enemy. The violent act of amputating breasts mimics what happened on blood trains historically, as mentioned by Bapsi Sidhwa in *Ice Candy Man*, when a train full of dead Muslims and bags of amputated breasts are sent to Gurdaspur. In describing the deluded woman’s fear of being subjected to sexual violence, Kala reasserts the view that gendered violence produced a long-lasting trauma, which at times, resulted in inter-generational effects.

Another instance which describes the mother’s delusions is when she begins hearing the voices of the “blessed ‘mussalmans’”, who this time “threatened to rape her daughters”

(Kala 115). Kala, here, highlights the gendered aspect of Partition violence, asserting the view that men inscribed violence on the body of women to convey their power. The notion of honour and chastity is an integral part of many South Asian cultures, and by hearing voices that threaten the honour of her daughter, the deluded woman is further troubled. In exploring sexual violence in his field, Kala highlights the importance of work done by Urvashi Butalia, Ritu Menon and Kamla Basin, which concentrates on women and their experiences during Partition. Such work, supported by testimonies shared with psychiatrists and psychologists, shows the mental scars of Partition, and identifies illnesses which have a deep connection to the violence of 1947.

Towards the end of the story, the unnamed protagonist takes her brother Om and sister Chitra to Prakash due to their deteriorating psychological conditions. The "delusion of Muslim men baying for blood and honour had been passed down through the family like a cursed heirloom", and the younger siblings were now hearing voices (Kala 121). The story concludes with the eldest sister also becoming afflicted, as she begins to see and hear the same bearded Muslim men wielding swords, wanting to kill her and her family. In a sudden twist, she turns on Prakash, accusing him of "pumping drugs" into her siblings, also claiming that he killed her mother (Kala 123). "You are on their side. You killed my mother too. You are a psycho yourself, a killer" (Kala 123), she states. Kala, here, exhibits ways in which madness can cause a complete breakdown of how reality is perceived and constructed, mirroring the 'madness' of Partition which caused people to turn on each other, regardless of a shared history and identity. The beginning of the inter-generational trauma described above shows how the threat of violence, whether real or reimagined, can continue to unsettle and affect families throughout generations.

The deliberate use of the title, "Folie à Deux", for the chapter in which Kala narrates the above-mentioned story must also be mentioned here. The story title refers to a clinical

syndrome characterised by the transfer of delusions from one person to another who live in close proximity. The syndrome was first identified in France by Ernest-Charles Lasegue and Jean-Pierre Falret in 1877. Kala uses the term to categorise the characters in his story. The delusions experienced by the family in his story are given clinical recognition by him to show how psychiatric practice in India has taken a progressive stance to understand and label the condition of patients in order impart appropriate care. However, by including medical terminology into literary work, Kala medicalises the madness of Partition by defining it through psychiatric framework. Using medical language in literary fiction to categorise mental illness can be viewed as a simplistic re-organisation of complex mental conditions on the part of the field of psychiatry. As psychiatry is a contentious field subject to much critique, it is fairer to say that psychiatry, like history, medical science, and politics is also trying to make sense of Partition and its legacy in present times. There is no doubt that the recent work of Sarin, Jain and Kala are all welcomed additions to Partition discourses related to mental health. However, medicalising the after-effects of the psychological impact of Partition, especially in literary fiction, must be questioned. The anchoring of Partition trauma in psychiatry warrants examination, even if it is a sincere effort to tackle the subject after many years of silence. Kala's work does, however, exhibit a willingness from the field of psychiatry to interrogate the madness of Partition, especially beneficial for those seeking clarity from the medical field regarding inter-generational trauma and treatments.

A study done by Sharon Dekel, Zahavia and Solomon Eyal Rozenstreich, entitled "Secondary salutogenic effects in veterans whose parents were Holocaust survivors", explores the effects of trauma-transition in second-generation offspring of Holocaust survivors. The researchers evaluated the impact of the Holocaust on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) course and its connection to anxiety and depression. A comparison between second generation Holocaust survivors and other war veterans was carried out to evaluate

which group suffered more from PTSD, anxiety and depression. The findings led the researchers to conclude that a complicated trauma effect can develop in the children of trauma survivors. They also concluded that both positive and negative trauma outcomes can be transmitted from one generation to another and that more research on the inter-generational transmission of trauma must continue. However, the same concern and willingness to delve deeper into Partition's trauma, especially its effect on the mentally ill, has not been forthcoming. This void is what recent Partition discourses from the field of psychiatry are attempting to address. When trauma is transmitted across generations, the psychological effects of that trauma can also be passed on. As a result, medical health professionals, psychiatrists and psychologists need to examine trauma using a nuanced approach, in order to help provide appropriate treatment to patients. Trauma transmission in relation to the Holocaust has been thoroughly researched, and Kala's book urges for a similar enquiry into the trauma transmitted to the offspring of Partition survivors, as well as into their personal and inter-generational memories about the division of India.

Kala's book is a display of various types of 'madness'. Whether it is the madness of the Sikh officer who killed Doctor Iqbal due to rage, or the anxiety-filled-madness that overtakes Prakash's mother when she asks if it is Partition time again. Madness in its many forms is the central theme that Kala unpacks. By describing the inherited madness of the family of his unnamed protagonist, the madness of Mr Haq who is psychologically tied to the famous Bollywood actor Amitabh Bachchan, as well as the madness of the young boy who writes love letters to Benazir Bhutto, Kala displays the inter-generational effects of Partition and the entanglement of identities of those living in Pakistan and India after the event. Kala's work has been met with appreciation and commended for tackling a challenging area which few writers and historians have attempted to explore. The positive reviews of his work, however, need to be evaluated critically and considered alongside the review of those who

are more critical of the work. Farah Yameen, an oral historian, writes a review of the work entitled, “In unsafe hands”, in *The Hindu Business Line*. She criticises Kala’s work for not exploring the lives of his characters deeper and for not investigating the reasons behind the unexplained deaths of mental asylum patients in Pakistan in the aftermath of Partition. She also feels that he has done his work an injustice, calling for further work on the subject to possess the courage to relay more knowledge about the themes he explores. Being criticised for failing to detail the ‘madness’ of Partition in a manner that avoids medicalising and presenting it within a psychiatric framework, does not take away the fact that Kala has succeeded in calling attention to the subject of Partition’s madness and its effect on the psyche of survivors and their offspring.

At the end of the book, Rulda is a free man. However, he wants to return to a mental asylum, after witnessing acts of extreme violence in the outside world. Presenting this as the last scene of the book, Kala points to the complexities that continue to affect societies in the subcontinent, emphasising how the prolonged ‘madness’ of Partition needs to be addressed, if the people of both nations are to better understand each other and reconcile differences. What this scene also subverts is the definition of asylums and what they represent. Rulda has experienced a peaceful life within the mental asylum, among the mentally ill. In contrast, it is outside of the mental asylum where he experiences madness and chaos when communal violence begins. Writers like Kala, therefore, remind readers of the risk of Partition madness continuing in the outside world for generations to come, and calls for a re-evaluation of how Partition’s after-effects continue to affect people of South Asia at a psychological level.

This chapter has demonstrated that terms like ‘madness’, ‘asylum’ and ‘insanity’ are not neutral terms, but often represent strong social, legal, medical and moral judgement. These terms are also social and medical constructs used to marginalise (often socially ‘undesirable’) people. Manto and Kala explore this in their fiction, and these works are

considered as literary representations of mental illness that take the metaphorical trope of collective ‘madness’ further, through the creative multiplication of what ‘madness’ means. Manto’s work is a simultaneous critique of social and colonial structures and a speculative account of what life in India could possibly look like, when colonial structures which reorganise and reorder people, disappear or become redundant. The re-ordering of people’s realities by the state led to confusion and identity crisis, which Manto captures quite poignantly in his short story. Kala’s work is interesting because it is informed by patients he treats as a psychiatrist. He explores the madness of Partition in a literal and figurative sense by using the institution of the asylum in his work, as well as stories of inter-generational trauma caused by the ‘madness’ of Partition. This chapter has also discussed the asylum as a colonial construct, which both Manto and Kala explore as political spaces, wherein government control is exercised to organise individuals. Thus, this chapter has outlined asylums as complex sites where clinical and political power join to systematically administer care. By describing the influence of established practices of the British Raj in relation to psychiatric care, it has shown that mental illness is a point of colonial administration and management in the institution of the asylum. Furthermore, the use of medical terminology in literary works has been questioned, as it deliberately medicalises a phenomenon that needs to be understood through a multi-disciplinary approach, instead of being examined solely through a psychiatric lens.

This chapter further asserts that much like the voices of women disseminated in works by writers such as Butalia, Menon and Bhasin, similar efforts need to be made in order to collect the testimonies of those affected at a psychological level by Partition. A discussion of the psychological effects of Partition has been marginalised in popular accounts. Therefore, a more detailed exploration of mental health issues connected to the event is necessary. It is also necessary to address the effects of Partition trauma in the descendants of survivors, to

better understand the events' inter-generational impact. Rendering trauma into insightful narratives is definitely a challenging task. However, both Manto and Kala have produced insightful works that employ creative practice to convey different 'truths' about Partition and the psychological impact caused by the events of 1947.

Manto and Kala have both produced fiction which is embedded in history. Personal experiences as well as stories based on real-life accounts allow writers of fiction to use storytelling to represent history. These representations in fiction are often informed by oral histories of survivors who lived through Partition. Oral histories have, therefore, continued to expand the 'alternative' archive on Partition, not just to contend or complement conventional histories on Partition, but to also bring to the fore, the lived human experience of many who endured the division of India. Since 1984, many oral histories on Partition have been collected and disseminated to enhance our understanding of the human dimension of Partition. The following chapter will provide a closer analysis of some of these oral histories to discuss the value of 'alternative' investigations and the contribution that they make.

Chapter Four: Oral Histories of Partition after 1984

Oral histories present a move away from official state archives, statistics or data based on mass-observation. Chakravarty argues that "Partition Studies, perhaps by definition, has become a primary location for the insight that history, overall, is no longer a subject that can rely upon research solely on the written document as preserved in the official archives, but must also involve – and in ever-changing ways – the identification of new sources, new archives: the alternative archives." (Chakravarty 92). This removal of 'high politics' has fostered the growth of interest in the, "fragmentary, unofficial, autobiographical, and of course, literary" (Nagappan 78). This chapter focuses on two related questions. It asks why, oral history as a practice and methodology, has been particularly important to scholars of Partition. Secondly, it analyses the content of a selection of oral history projects about Partition and the context of their production to ask what kind of alternative 'people's history' of Partition is emerging from the archive. This is a discussion which moves towards archives of memory and public history in order to capture alternative accounts of the past which carry an individualised and embodied experience of real events. This chapter approaches oral histories of Partition as types of *texts* which employ the creative practice of storytelling to relay different kinds of 'truth' about the events of 1947. By offering a close analysis of extracts from existing oral histories, the argument that this chapter makes is that 'alternative' representations of 'truth' are extremely valuable and requisite, as they help provide a better understanding of Partition and its legacy. Oral testimonies focus more on the human aspect, and this chapter asserts that their value stems from the fact that they are bound to actual historical events, therefore, complementary to discourses on Partition concerned with the politics and statistics of the event.

By exploring closely, the common tropes of violence, displacement, migration and silence in various oral history projects, this chapter draws attention to the kind of value that these 'alternative' truths bring to existing history, and how they affect the dominant narrative of Partition. The lived experiences of common people have informed both literary production and non-literary representation of Partition. In this regard, a discussion on material memory and the importance of 'objects' that were carried by migrants across the border at the time of Partition is undertaken later in this chapter. These 'objects', which include heirlooms, jewellery and photographs, speak volumes of individual emotion and experience. While in literary fiction, authors can create an imaginative story around a handful of facts, these objects in relation to the non-literary, tend not to speak of just a story, but rather they create legacies which are then passed down generations, often employed to negotiate identities even in modern times. In representing 'alternative' truths, such literary as well as non-literary representations provide a mode of narration to the silences, trauma, loss and even hope, of those witnesses of Partition who have been left out of the larger official narrative for the longest time. In this regard, this chapter approaches both oral history (which employs storytelling and often informs literary production) and non-literary (material memory) representations as significant to expanding discourses on Partition.

Although the reliability of memory is a contested area of research because it is seen to head towards "the world of image, selective memory, later overlays and utter subjectivity," (O'Farrell 5), oral historians have continued to examine the authenticity of memory while outlining that the traditional historical sources can also be subjective. Viewing history through oral testimony, therefore, grants agency and empowerment to marginalised groups who have been neglected by state versions, providing an alternative perspective from which to critically re-examine the past. In studies of Partition, discussions of memory have focused on the inability to rehabilitate the experience of Partition into national memory (despite it

being the foundational event for Indian (after 1947) and Pakistani nationhood). As Pandey argues, "there is no consensus among us about the nature of Partition. We have no means of representing such tragic loss, nor of pinning down – or rather, owning – responsibility for it. Consequently, our nationalist historiography, journalism, and filmmaking have tended to generate something like a collective amnesia" (Pandey, "In Defense" 33). In *Remembering Partition* (2001), Pandey argues that existing Partition historiography has worked at, "justifying, or eliding, what is seen in the main as being an illegitimate outbreak of violence, and at making a case about how this goes against the fundamentals of Indian (or Pakistani) tradition and history" (Pandey, *Remembering* 3). The 'lack of consensus' about Partition has created a field of inquiry which not only has multiple perspectives, but also turns to a variety of representations, including art, fiction, and other forms of creative narrative. The reluctance to understand Partition in the context of reparative justice, or to address the violence during Partition as an integral, and therefore a foundational aspect of national history, has created a series of colluding efforts, according to Pandey, from historiography to social commentary and cultural representations, to 'forget' Partition. This structural and collective amnesia has been discussed by Partition scholars such as Pandey and Kabir, who urge scholarship to go beyond the scope of nationalistic history that perpetuates the rhetoric of jingoistic nation states. The counterpart to this in oral histories of Partition, therefore, is the recurring trope of subsequent generations 'not knowing' or 'discovering' stories about Partition in their own families.

This chapter also seeks to explore how 'difficult' or traumatic events are remembered, and how this remembering becomes part of an alternative, unofficial process of memorialisation in the absence of state/official commemoration. Until recently, there was no physical museum to commemorate Partition or to memorialise the many lives lost during the violence of division of India. Guy Beiner in *Forgetful Remembrance: Social Forgetting and*

Vernacular Historiography of a Rebellion in Ulster (2018), succinctly summarises the power of social or collective memory to produce 'truthful' accounts of the past: "Practically all governments aspire to utilize collective memory as a tool for cementing hegemony" (Beiner 444). He goes on to argue that the experience of Partition in particular (he takes a comparative approach which includes places such as Ireland and central Europe), is one that facilitates 'social forgetting', as fundamentally contradictory views of the same event guarantee the impossibility of resolution. (Beiner 444). The moment of fractured history, then, belongs to no singular nation or people. Taking this into consideration, the social memories of Partition emerge from the difficult ways in which history is remembered or forgotten; and from statistics pertaining to casualties, migration, and dividing lines. These statistics established the basis for social memories of Partition, instead of the accounts of survivors who lived through it. Official accounts of Partition, which forget to include smaller histories, create no space from which social memories can be shaped by individual stories that offer a more detailed version of history, and which supplement official archives. Instead, social memories of Partition are maintained through modes of remembering that are deliberately positioned by the state to pursue a particular agenda.

Social memories move through generations and are constantly reconfigured and shaped, as historical occurrences are remembered and interpreted according to one's own viewpoint. Memories, at times, remain forgotten until they are triggered and manipulated by a need or political circumstance. In relation to Partition, memories can be shaped by governments, as well as the media. However, these sources deliberately exclude key information required by later generations to better comprehend the histories of the division of India. This state of 'not knowing', which descendants of Partition's participants find themselves in, is written about extensively by Kabir (2013). She cites Partition's post-amnesia as a response from the grandchildren of Partition's survivors, who re-remember the

division of India, in order to support methods that promote intergenerational reconciliation. These grandchildren are not burdened with direct memories unlike their elders. Thus, they approach memories of the event by dissecting oral histories of lived experience, as well as memories connected to objects which have been passed down the generations, without the need for self-preservation. To achieve a better understanding of Partition and to initiate reconciliatory processes which are needed to ease tensions in modern-day South Asia, as well as in the diaspora, oral history projects present an opportunity to unearth a more nuanced and much-needed interpretation of Partition history.

This chapter is divided into three main sections. The first section discusses the significance of oral history and seminal oral history works on Partition. It will provide an understanding of the intervention oral testimonies have made to discourses on the division of India. The second section explores the representation of Partition history through memorialisation and in digital archives. It will probe how different types of 'truth' are narrated and put to work for a particular effect. The third section analyses recent oral history projects to discuss the contribution they make to furthering our understanding of the human dimension of Partition and its legacy.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ORAL HISTORY

Oral history has become a vital complement to various documentary sources and historical accounts. However, what is distinct about oral testimony is that it, "includes within the historical record the experiences and perspectives of groups of people who might otherwise have been hidden from history" (Perks and Thomson ix). Oral histories provide views of those traditionally marginalised from official accounts and histories. They also provide

people, who have traditionally been excluded from official narratives, such as women, cultural minorities, and indigenous people, with the opportunity to be recognised by allowing their experiences to be recorded. These recordings ensure the due consideration of oral history project participants alongside historical records. Personalised interpretations of history record aspects of human experience during Partition which are otherwise missing from the official archive. In this alternative way of accessing history, oral historians are able to speak directly to sources, engaging in active human interaction, thereby transforming "the practice of history" (Perks and Thomson ix). It also provides empowerment "through the process of remembering and reinterpreting the past" (Perks and Thomas ix), resulting in the lost and forgotten becoming accessible. Consequently, oral history has impacted the way in which history is understood, especially in many post-conflict societies, where the need to interpret narratives of memory is crucial to further understanding of communities and the past that shapes their present. This is clearly evident in the case of Holocaust survivors, whose personal experiences have been shared through the oral history medium. In relaying their stories, the embodiment of feelings and experience is conveyed. Such alternative representations of the past play an important role in informing our understanding of the past.

Many conventional historians, however, remain sceptical of memory as a historical source (O'Farrell 5). The intersection between the fluid nature of memory and authenticity has been the point of discussion in many works on memory. The reliable recovery of repressed memories is a contentious point for many critics who view any such endeavour as flawed. Memory can be manipulated and implanted, leading to the production of false memories which appear credible. The remembering of a traumatic event does not, therefore, render an account authentic. Although oral histories make a distinct contribution by providing alternate accounts of the past, debates surrounding the "reliability of memory and the nature of the interview relationship", as well as the representation of people's lives and the

"relationships between memory history, past and present" continue (Perks and Thomson x). According to the social historian Paul Thompson (2003), ancient historians used eyewitness accounts to prove the reliability of an event, and this continued until the nineteenth century when academic history established "archival research and documentary sources" (Thompson 1). It is clear then that oral history was an established authenticator historically, until it became side-lined. Furthermore, the post-second world war renaissance, in the use of memory as a source for historical research, also outlined the significant contribution that oral testimonies could make to the discourses of history and its interpretation in the modern-world (Thompson 1).

Thompson defends oral history against the criticisms levelled at it. In countering the view that memory is an unreliable source, he explains that oral history has "transformed both the content of history" and "the process of writing history" (Thompson 2). The content of history being transformed is achieved by the ability of oral history to shift the focus away from nationalist and institutionalised accounts, towards new lines of inquiry which provide marginalised and forgotten groups more recognition. The change in the process of writing is established through oral history's disruption of the relationship between the "chroniclers and their audience" (Thompson 2). Selective memory recall, physical deterioration of interviewees, nostalgia and unreliable memory are just some of the other criticisms aimed at oral history accounts. However, as disciplines such as social anthropology, psychology and linguistics come together to establish effective methodologies to counter these criticisms, oral history finds strength in providing meaning to historical experiences and the relationship between past and present.

Oral history positions itself as a powerful device for discovery, recovery, exploration, and interpretation of memory. It is a tool that provides people with an opportunity to access and understand their past, whist learning how this past is continuously shaping the present.

Individual experiences are re-lived and find connection to social contexts and others whose lives may have followed a similar trajectory. Memory, in this case, becomes both the subject and the source of history (Thompson 4). Through innovative approaches utilised by oral historians in their interviews, a decisive intervention is made, which continuously bridges the gap left by mainstream historical accounts. Without doubt, a critical approach to memory and history produces a more reliable oral history archive. Yet, oral historians also engage with interviewees whose history and memory are influenced by dominant narratives and popular accounts. Such accounts are not to be dismissed or overlooked, for they too carry clues about how and why individuals remember and recall in the way they do. These nuances require critical examination to unearth some of the struggles faced by communities and individuals in their re-constructing/remembering of the past.

Another important aspect to consider, for the purpose of this research, is the relationship between oral history and women's narratives. Since the late 1960's, oral testimonies from women have strengthened the "symbiotic connection" (Thompson 4) between oral history and feminist history. Accounts of women have brought to the surface experiences which have been kept away from historical accounts. These versions challenge the interpretation of male-dominated histories. Oral history, in the case of women, reveals the oppressive silence that many women around the world have had to endure. In India, much more importance was given to the shaping of collective memory after Partition, than to accounting for the female experience in historical accounts. This was the default approach until an attempt to recover these experiences became an integral part of uncovering details related to the gendered experience of the division of India. However, in present times, both memory and oral history play significant roles in the exploration of history, community, and identity. Oral history links sophisticated theoretical approaches about "narrative and memory" (Thompson 5) to the history of many marginalised and oppressed groups, in order

to explore the challenges and limitations faced by people who attempt to live in a present which is heavily influenced by the past.

An informative example of women's oral history is the life-story of Doña Maria in *Doña Maria's Story: Life History, Memory and Political Identity* (2000) by Daniel James. The book explores the challenging nature of oral sources when they are considered for historical research. James investigates how social context and gender influences Doña Maria's story - a woman who lived and worked in the meatpacking community of Berisso in Argentina. He explores the importance of 'remembering' as an act embodied in practices such as storytelling and analyses the issue of modern memory being affected by deindustrialisation, as well as the disappearance of social and collective memory sites. Such a study not only alters the way in which we perceive the past and how different people interpret it, but also outlines the continuous need to investigate memory in relation to important events like Partition. When memories of different people are scrutinised, a more vivid picture of an event is possible, which in turn helps one to understand communities and nations, as they attempt to make sense of their past in today's world. In *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* (2017), Thompson explains that the challenge of oral history lies partly "in relation to this essential social purpose of history" (Thompson 2). He believes that a fear of oral history is baseless, and countless examples prove that the use of oral history interviews conducted by professional historians is fully compliant and "perfectly compatible with scholarly standard" (Thompson 285). For Thompson, oral history is not a device which enacts change by itself, but it is a means of changing the focus of history and the way in which it is written and presented. History and its representation in academic pursuit has traditionally been dominated by cultural elites with a focus on structural approaches to understanding society, rather than on individual lives. Even when the experiences of marginalised groups were recorded, they were lost or destroyed by those in power, as the "power structure worked as a great

documentary machine shaping the past in its own image" (Thompson 4). Supporters of oral history believe that it presents a rich and varied source material which could lead to the discovery of important stories, documentation and artefacts by way of the interview process. It is not bound by a responsibility to official history, influential movements, political leaders and nationalist agenda. In contrast, it provides a fairer re-enactment of the past and challenges existing accounts which feed into dominant nationalist discourse.

Alessandro Portelli in "What Makes Oral History Different" (2009), draws attention to oral testimony as narrative, therefore, in need of critical analysis from narrative theory studies, literature, and folklore. The "relationship between the velocity of the narrative and the meaning of the narrator" (Perks and Thomson 66) is an important one which considers the distinction between 'real' and fictional narratives. Here, one must consider narratives in which personal truth overlaps with shared imagination. The reason is that truth can become part of legend, personal experience as well as memory and historical memory, all at once. Portelli believes that oral history sources are "credible but with a *different* credibility" (Portelli 68). Making a rather important point, he argues that the relevance of oral testimony is not in its validating of facts, "but rather in its departure from it" (Portelli 68). Consequently, no oral history account is deemed as false. He feels that once a thorough factual verification of the interview content is carried out, the wrong statements that are left behind "are still psychologically 'true'" and these truths carry meaning perhaps equal to the "reliable accounts" (Portelli 68). Although critics may point out the complexities of classifying all oral history accounts as true, Portelli's focus is not to justify and validate oral testimony, but to outline how memory acts as "an active process of creation of meanings" (Portelli 69). For the oral historian. therefore, oral testimony is not the site of preserving the past, but rather a means of analysing and comprehending the changes fashioned by memories, and a chance for interviewees to make sense of their pasts.

In support of the views of both Susan Armitage and Sherna Gluck, who are both pioneering feminist oral historians, it remains necessary to recover histories of women around the world, especially where women's histories and voices have been silenced. This is not only to set in motion the political ramifications due to new findings, but also to bring to the surface, experiences which have long remained hidden and kept from the world. An email exchange between Armitage and Gluck, documented in *The Oral History Reader*, conveys the reasoning behind oral history interview projects and how oral history scholars reflect upon their work, interview methodology and the challenges they encounter (Armitage and Gluck 76-81). A major point that is discussed is related to validation – the idea that there needs to exist a desire not to interpret meaning based on self-interpretation, but to carry out a checking procedure with the interviewee to decipher what particular ideas and utterances mean. Ultimately though, the urgency remains to recover as many women's' stories as possible, whilst employing sensitivity and self-awareness without individual interpretative authority shaping the interview. For Armitage and Gluck, as well as for Partition scholars concerned with the intervention that oral history makes, such as Menon, Bhasin and Butalia, oral history is an effective way to collect and examine the consciousness and experiences of women.

There is much that oral testimonies on Partition can reveal. Scholarship continues to collect the oral histories of a generation that is dying out. Both literary representation and oral history accounts provide invaluable insights into the traumatic effect that Partition had upon the psyche and imagination of those who witnessed it. Survivor testimonies translated from Punjabi, Hindi, and Urdu, as well as fictional stories attempting to capture the atrocities of Partition lay bare the horror of collective violence, identity crisis and dislocation. Fictional representations are greatly influenced by survivor accounts and present themselves as another mode of testimony which can relay 'real' events. Novelists and short-story writers, therefore,

continue to articulate the complex experiences of a seismic event whose intergenerational effects continue in the present day. Although truths about Partition provided by literary stories is a topic of debate, "'fictive' testimony as a paradoxical mode of truth-telling may achieve a resonance beyond the immediate context of suffering and trauma to which the writer bears witness" (Saint, *Witnessing Partition* 3). Fictive testimonies are able to traverse the complex terrain of Partition by voicing alternate perspectives and awakening the need to explore the subject further. The tropes that appear in oral history also appear in fiction, for fiction is embedded in the historical past that is often narrated in oral testimonies. The politics of both India and Pakistan, after Partition, governed nationalist historiography, as it displayed a silence about the communal violence both sides participated in during Partition. As a result, censorship, and authorised versions of the past shaped popular sentiment and resigned the storytelling of actual events to the private domain. Some writers reconstructed extreme violence in fictional accounts which appeared cliché and banal – reinforcing "nationalist frames of reference" (Saint, *Witnessing Partition* 8) by repeating the major tropes of death, brutality, rape, and torture. However, this was not the case for others who used fiction to illustrate the human plight of Partition, including marginalised groups in their frame. Oral testimony, while informing fictional works that concentrated on embodied feelings and experience, also provided a perspective that moved away from both nationalist and colonial historiography. Memoirs of survivors (including women and refugees) documented in works by Butalia, Menon and Bhasin, Veena Das, Ian Talbot, Ashis Nandy and Shail Mayaram, revealed not only hard facts about Partition, but of other experiences, such as the extent of sexual and non-sexual violence that was suffered by different groups who had been disregarded. The eyewitness accounts collected by the above-mentioned scholars, present memories that constitute an alternative history. These works not only reignited debates

regarding the ethics of remembering, but also uncovered the silences and omissions that were present and unquestioned for an extended period in conventional history.

As will be discussed later, the most well-known oral history works on Partition have been Butalia's *Other Side of Silence*, and Menon and Bhasin's *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition.* These highly acclaimed projects explore the raw dimension of individual experience, often of marginalised groups. The works critically engage with the gendered aspect of Partition violence as well as memory. Butalia outlines the challenge of working with memory as it is never constant and pure. Consequently, how Partition is remembered, and to who and how the event is narrated, is crucial to Butalia. She assumes the practice of oral history to engage with the memories of Partition and her focus leans towards the violence committed against the Sikh community. The interviews she carries out enables her to draw conclusions regarding the correlation between family relationships and collective memory. A valuable point which she makes in her work is that the reluctance to remember is not only out of not wanting to relive the trauma of Partition, but also due to the guilt that many live with because of their complicit role in the violence. The people of Partition were either victims or aggressors, and this led to a reluctance to share personal experience publicly or privately.

In an interview for *Scroll*, Butalia discusses the violence of Partition and the reasons behind it. By examining the element of complicity in the violence, the lack of memorialisation of Partition history today, the reasons why men killed their women and the martyrdom of women who chose to be killed before the aggressors reached them, Butalia reinforces the importance of bringing various oral history collections together. She also questions the many accounts of Partition which claim to recall the event with honesty, as any such honesty would mean having to:

> […] admit that politicians agreed for the sake of power to what became a bloodbath. The human cost was so heavy – and it continues even today. It is also very useful for India and Pakistan to demonise each other even today. It makes any dialogue on difficult issues impossible. This is because there is an unacknowledged history, which we do not talk about. This is another reason why there are no memorials, although some sporadic efforts are being made. (qtd. in Ashraf)

For Butalia, a lack of memorialisation and heritage conservation is not an innocent attempt to forget the atrocities and complexities of Partition, but more so a stance of disinterest taken by Pakistan and India in their attempt to dislocate the contact of the present with legacies of the past. The conservation of Partition memory through memorialisation is a means of bringing forth Partition stories into the present. Though institutional forces affect the way in which these memories appear, the framing of Partition memory serves as an agency of recovery and restoration. In this regard, Butalia states that "at Purana Qila in Delhi, lakhs of refugees stayed, but there isn't even a plaque which mentions that history. Nor do you have anything at Humayun's tomb, which was the place for Muslim refugees. You don't have plaques at Tihar village or Kingsway Camp or Faridabad, a city which was established to house Partition refugees" (qtd. in Ashraf).

Such neglect towards the conservation of memory recovery outlines the deliberate indifference in Partition history by nations who "want to hold onto those enmities" (qtd. in Ashraf), which are constantly being negotiated to further the ideological imperatives of the state. Butalia's work also focuses on the ordinary people of Partition, including the experiences of the forgotten women and children of Partition. By her own admission, the devices of oral history are problematic and challenging, but she feels that oral history allows

for a shift in focus – providing marginalised groups with an opportunity to relay their stories, which in turn, would flow through narratives of conventional history. Butalia's work is also crucial for other oral historians as it addresses the issue of a gendered telling of Partition. The differences in the speech of men and women means that one needs to learn to listen differently in order to identify hidden nuances in interviews and to interpret silence as meaningful. Furthermore, Butalia's work addresses the power relationship between the oral historian/interviewer and the interviewee, identifying the gradual decline in information from the interviewee as an interview progresses. The impact of an event upon the psyche of survivors or participants of Partition is complex and multi-layered. An understanding of Butalia's work is vital for any oral historian who wishes to identify the nuances that could potentially present themselves during similar projects.

Menon and Bhasin's *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition* offers a different perspective than that of Butalia. The work focuses on the experiences of women and the violence suffered by them during Partition. A crucial point made in the work is that official memory is only one type of memory, and different types of memories (local, individualised and public) reveal different truths. Menon and Bhasin question the way in which history is constructed, pointing out that female historiography must be included as one of the many fragmented histories in order to counter the tropes of nationalism and male-dominated accounts which are in need of re-writing. For Menon and Bhasin, the absence of women from historical archives is another problem which needs to be addressed. They believe that fiction is a richer means of source material, as women's voices are heard more in fiction as compared to partial/exclusive archival accounts. Menon and Bhasin successfully present first-hand accounts of social workers who were pivotal in the rehabilitation of female survivors of Partition in Punjab and Haryana. These testimonies not only provide an insight into class differences, but also allow audiences to engage with accounts overlooked by

dominant historical versions. The projects conducted by Butalia as well as Menon and Bhasin paved the way for many oral historians to continue the tradition by recovering more testimonies. Such endeavours are crucial if we are to continue enriching Partition discourses, for only through the various reconstructions of the past will Partition survivors and Partition-affected communities make sense of the present and the future. Oral history projects such as *Stories of the Broken Se*lf by Furrukh Khan record the accounts of women in Pakistan who witnessed the becoming of a separate nation. Interviews are carried out with survivors, many of whom find it difficult to locate themselves within the national narrative. Such a project demonstrates the complexities that narratives of memory engage with, allowing for a more critical evaluation of the gendered experience of Partition. Khan's project breaks down many barriers by interviewing women. Usually confined to the domestic space, some of the interviewed women feel empowered by the agency that narration provides them. It is this empowerment that many oral historians wish to provide to interviewees, especially to those who are from marginalised groups.

In more recent times, Guneeta Singh Bhalla established the 1947 Partition Archive which is an invaluable collection of oral histories. Inspired by testimonies collected from the Hiroshima atomic bomb survivors, she wishes to recover and preserve the stories of those who experienced the trauma of Partition. Her organisation hopes to collect 10,000 stories which will be made available online by interviewing survivors from different religious backgrounds. Bhalla understands that survivors of Partition are dying out and stresses the importance of recovering the remaining stories of Partition. This chapter will later lay emphasis on the recovery of eyewitness accounts of Partition survivors residing in the United Kingdom. Many testimonies have been gathered from India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan. However, considerably less have been recorded from those who underwent a double displacement and travelled to the diaspora after Partition. Such individuals, especially

women, were initially dislocated from their motherland, and then migrated with their families to the United Kingdom in the 1950's and 1960's. As a result, the crisis of identity became two-fold, and there is much that can still be learnt from these individuals who found themselves disconnected from home and alienated in their new surroundings. In a new and unfamiliar country, the trauma of past events may have increased. Migrants found themselves detached from their language and culture. Women in such circumstances, struggled to truly integrate into mainstream British society and mostly felt ostracised, as they spent decades negotiating the identity that society and the community demanded from them. There was no reconciling of the past and history was never spoken of, nor were stories and experiences shared. The testimonies of such individuals provide an invaluable intervention in the current political climate, where governments across Europe demand a higher degree of integration and assimilation from its ethnic minority groups. Yet, such demands are made without care and attention to the histories of many people who have become disconnected, and a greater inquiry into the pasts of individuals who have never come to terms with the loss and dislocation that has come to define their lives is required.

The Partition archive needs continuous transformation and expansion. This cannot be achieved by relying on official archives, which are limited, organised and shaped by the politics of history and memory, and the furthering of nationalist narratives. More emphasis, therefore, needs to be placed on the 'alternative' archive which can collect and disseminate the fragmentary and localised histories of Partition. Although criticism from feminist groups has been addressed somewhat by recovering women's oral history testimonies, a determined attempt to recover Muslim women's accounts about the trauma they suffered has been neglected. Exploring such a gap, which is created by cultural, and at times, religious expectations, will broaden the understanding of Partition, and probe the religious and cultural

systems that may discourage women and other marginalised groups to share their experiences.

Oral histories contest state archivisation, which concentrates on statistics pertaining to Partition history, by focusing on the human dimension and lived experience. Eyewitness accounts collected by oral historians and researchers in comprehensive oral history collections and oral history archives, as well as in smaller studies, allow a wider range of voices, especially those from marginalised groups, to be included in Partition discourses. The following part of this chapter will discuss seminal oral history projects which made an important intervention to Partition discourse, by relaying the human experience and initiating further research that probed the reliability of state archives and nationalist accounts.

COLLECTING MEMORY: SEMINAL ORAL HISTORIES OF PARTITION

In her recent article "Looking back on Partition" (2018), Butalia regards the emergence of new fields of inquiry and subjects as a significant development in Partition history, concluding with a poignant question:

> How can we move beyond the mere recording of incidents and happenings of a particular history, to somehow begin to touch upon, or approximate, the meanings of those incidents and happenings for those who lived through them, and for those who are their descendants and who inherit its legacies. (Butalia, "Looking Back" 269)

Collecting oral histories and expanding the alternate archive is the answer Butalia presents in her article to the above question, reiterating the role oral history research has played in history writing. For her, preserving Partition memories has helped interpret the meanings behind the histories of Partition which, according to Pandey, "had previously been either relegated to the margins, as a short concluding paragraph in the grand narrative of the Indian Nationalist Movement, or [. . .] had been disregarded entirely in favour of a study of its causes" (qtd. in Chakravarty 94). Commending how Partition histories have 'spilled over' from the confines of state history into "explorations that involve so many other people – students, storytellers, archivists, musicians, artists, museologists, journalists and more", Butalia feels that an environment in which survivors can articulate their experiences has emerged (Butalia, "Looking Back" 265). These articulations have become a resource, allowing access to individual memories of the past for the descendants of Partition survivors and for researchers, thus, representing how Partition narratives have moved "from the private into the public, as survivors feel the need to speak" (Butalia, "Looking Back" 265).

It was this 'need to speak' which Butalia addresses in her own collection of oral histories in *The Other Side of Silence* (2000), where she explores how individual memories of marginalised groups are constructed and relayed. Her "impulsion to engage in such a project comes from the 1984 anti-Sikh brutalities perpetrated in Delhi and other cities in north India" (Bhattacharya 144), when the Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was killed by her Sikh bodyguard. The reoccurrence of communal violence in 1984, reminded Butalia of the violence of Partition, and of how the event continued to affect the modern-day experience of people in India, especially concerning her own family who had also been deeply affected:

> […] I began to realise that Partition was not, even in my family, a closed chapter of history […] It took 1984 to make me understand how ever-present Partition was in our lives too […] I could no longer pretend that this was a history that belonged to another time, to someone else. (Butalia, *The Other Side* 6)

A closer look at Partition history showed her that "nationalist discourse sought to shroud Partition in a veil of silence, as if such a disgraceful setback never disrupted the process of nation-building" (Bhattacharya 145), making her aware that stories detailing the human side of Partition had to be located in survivor testimonies, to remember and acknowledge those forgotten in national archives.

Butalia's response was to undertake a decade-long research project that involved collecting interviews, archival research and cross-border journeys to Pakistan, all of which culminated in the production of her book. Her work discusses the violence in Punjab and documents the voices of historically marginalised groups such as women, children, and those from lower castes. Butalia's interviews include the accounts of victims and witnesses, at times revealing narratives of complicity not found in official histories of Partition. She argues that the way people remember Partition is as important as the historical statistics that detail the event. In collecting the personal memories of Partition, Butalia also discusses modern-day experiences that are continuously influenced by a past of violence, loss, and displacement, demonstrating "how oral testimonies can lead Partition Studies in entirely new directions" (Chakravarty 94), which offer exclusive meaning of the event to its survivors. Yet, Butalia also understands that no account of Partition history collected through oral testimony is fixed and constant, for traumatic memories play a part in how the past is remembered. As selective recall can be the consequence of suppressing memories, how one remembers the history of

Partition is also affected. Oral historians understand well that narrating trauma is often replaced with the tendency to forget. This is further emphasised when Butalia states, "Tellings begun thus would be left incomplete: I learnt to recognize this, the mixing of time past and time present, the incompletedness, often even contradictoriness, in the stories as part of the process of remembering, to oneself and to others" (Butalia, *The Other Side* 24). Much like survivors of the Holocaust, who can be unwilling to recall memories of their experiences due to the pain re-evoked (Kirmayer 174), Partition survivors also face challenges when trying to remember painful memories from the past (Harrington 263).

As a feminist, an oral historian, and civil liberty activist, Butalia's work can be read as a feminist disruption of the official accounts of nationalism and state-building which overlook the relationship between conflict, gender, and violence. Moreover, by focusing on the experiences of women during Partition, Butalia addresses how women have been overlooked, and at times, erased by elitist accounts that are concerned with the high politics of 1947 and homogenising women. As co-founder of the feminist publishing house, Kali for Women, established to provide a voice for Indian women through academic and activist works, Butalia's commitment to raising awareness concerning the treatment of women and the social and political issues that affected them, was expanded upon in her seminal work, *The Other Side of Silence*. The book was unique at the time of its publication, for it represented a disengagement with statist versions of history to concentrate on the life-stories of people and their suffering, adding to the area of 'alternative' archival research on Partition. Butalia's oral history project consists of seventy interviews from people in both India and Pakistan, some of which are presented in her book to locate and recreate Partition through memories of its survivors. Her qualitative oral testimony approach presents the little-known versions of history and politics as seen by eyewitnesses, who, in being provided the

opportunity to remember and tell their own version of events, find agency through narration and the opportunity to reclaim their history.

Butalia's work is organised into themes that also represent groups which were 'othered' during the conflict: "Beginnings", "Blood". "Facts", "Women', "Honour", "Children", "Margins" and "Memory", make up eight chapters that use stories and individual testimony to create an alternative historicization of Partition. She argues that smaller histories, represented through individual voices, can be combined with secondary sources, such as official records, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how Partition affected the lives of people in India. In doing so, Butalia rejects the idea of an objective history being applied to Partition by state archives, and destabilises the connection between history and objectivity, arguing that individual experiences of suffering and trauma cannot be presented objectively, thus, urging researchers and readership to reconfigure existing understanding. Influenced by James E. Young's *Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust* (1990), which she mentions in the first chapter of her work, Butalia "questions *not* the importance of the mainstream history, but the absolute truth-claim it makes" (Bhattacharya 145) – emphasising that a multiplicity of voices and a multitude of memories construct the many realities of Partition. For Butalia, historians cannot offer an objective truth or a complete representation of the past, and only through presenting variance that accounts for subaltern voices from the margins, alongside national and statistical histories, can Partition history be more accurately reinterpreted and re-written. By recording the subaltern voice - represented by the marginalised groups she includes in her work, and her own family history, which is reflected through the story of her uncle staying behind in Pakistan out of attachment to his homeland after his family migrated, Butalia becomes a subjective participant in her work. Her position presents oral history as "the space where the researcher and the subaltern can collaborate to create a narrative and also its supporting context" (Bhattacharya 147). From

this space, one can consider how and when the past is remembered, and how silence and speech are both important aspects involved in recalling Partition history.

Butalia's discussion on gendered violence demonstrates how violence against women was enacted to convey the strength of one community over another. Men inscribed their victories and vengeance on the female body to reveal the incompetence of the *other* men who had vowed to protect them. Butalia also illustrates how violence was committed at times against family members in the name of honour and pride. In doing so, she exposes the inability of macro-histories of Partition, which overlook details concerning the types of violence that occurred during Partition, by including accounts of personal history that provide a more in-depth retelling of the event:

> The abduction and rape of women, the physical mutilation of their bodies, the tattooing of their sexual organs with symbols of the other religion - these acts had been universally condemned. But no mention was made of *this* kind of violence by anyone - neither the families, nor the state, nor indeed by historians. And yet, its scale was not small. Virtually every village had similar stories. (Butalia, *The Other Side* 204)

Whether or not notions of honour and pride prevalent in South Asian societies are the reason why the state, family members, or individuals refrained from discussing the sexual violence endured by women, it is a question that Butalia interrogates in her work, for women "would 'save' or 'pollute' the glorious/virile self-image of their community" (Bhattacharya 148). In elaborating on this point, Butalia presents two examples in her work; the first is the story of ninety Sikh women from the village of Thoa Khalsa who jumped into a well to kill

themselves, as their men could no longer protect them from the Muslims mob, and second; the narration of Bir Bahadur Singh, when he recalls the scene of his sister removing her plait in fearless assistance, so her father could behead her in the name of honour, to grant her martyrdom. Here, Butalia demonstrates how Partition violence was enacted by different groups for various reasons. She also emphasises that violence was not only carried out in the name of politics and religion. Remembering such events is challenging for the survivors of Partition, and Butalia brings a more nuanced approach to Partition-based violence, especially when attempting to understand types of violence as acts of heroism and sacrifice. To truly grasp the plight of women's experience and understand the female voice, she "had to begin to pose different questions, to talk in different situations, and above all, be prepared to do that most important of things, to listen: to their speech, their silences, the half-said things, the nuances" (Butalia, "The Other Side" 126).

Butalia's seminal work concentrates on Partition violence, exemplified by the individual testimonies of survivors. However, what is absent from the work is accounts of positive stories of hope, friendship, and sacrifice with regards to women, children, and marginalised groups that also emerged during Partition. As much as Partition is synonymous with acts of violence, it also produced acts of humanity, bravery and tolerance. The fact that many women were recovered through heroic attempts and experienced acts of kindness from the 'enemy', shows another side of Partition which should also be evidenced by collecting oral testimonies. Nevertheless, Butalia's work, in concentrating on the violence and displacement that was a direct and a more obvious consequence of Partition, positively influenced many writers and oral historians from various scholarly fields to present the different realities of Partition, in order to probe the Partition politics that exclude marginalised groups from its frame.

Butalia's pioneering work and her call for further research that collects oral histories of Partition, especially regarding women's experiences, was met by Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin in *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition* (1998). The work is a blend of academic research, first-hand experiences of women undergoing rehabilitation, accounts from social workers involved in the recovery initiatives, as well as survivor testimonies. In collating this wide range of material, the authors explored the long-standing effects of loss, trauma, and dislocation that survivors of Partition experienced. Menon and Bhasin, in attempting to recall the 'real' plight suffered by women during Partition, argue that abducted women came to represent a breach of social and cultural boundaries which warranted the recovery process. The authors also argue that the notion of Hindu manhood and patriarchy representing the Indian state, was re-asserted through the call for the compulsory recovery of Hindu women. Menon and Bhasin analyse the relationship between state politics and women's sexuality by examining oral history accounts which emphasise the challenges posed by social workers who opposed the government initiative of recovering abducted women forcefully. Such an analysis not only highlights the resistive nature of those who opposed forms of oppression and force against women, but also demonstrates the extent to which the state mobilised to carry out its political goals. Menon and Bhasin do, however, document the positive role the government played in rehabilitating widows and other recovered women who used their new- found independence to rebuild themselves. In doing so, they present a more nuanced interpretation of the recovery initiative and the role of the state in it.

Like Butalia, Menon and Bhasin were affected by the 1984 anti-Sikh violence which brought about mass confusion, comparable to the confusion felt at the time of Partition. These three authors have, therefore, "opened up for the first time the silences in the historical discourse with respect to the impact of Partition on Untouchables, women and children. They also revealed the way in which women were victims of the processes of both abduction and

state recovery" (Talbot 407). Menon and Bhasin bring to the public archive many suppressed memories concerning the lived experiences of women during Partition, through their feminist reading of the history of the division of India. In the preface of the book, Menon argues that the present cannot be understood without accessing memories of the past when she states:

> How do we know Partition except through the many ways in which it is transmitted to us, in its many representations: political, social, historical, testimonial, literary, documentary, even communal. We know it through national and family mythologies, through collective and individual memory. Partition, almost uniquely, is the one event in our recent history in which familial recall and its encoding are a significant factor in any general reconstruction of it. (Menon and Bhasin xi)

Oral testimony, therefore, disconnects the lived experience of women from national and political accounts, so that a gendered approach can be used to confront the violence and dislocation endured by women during Partition. Although women appear in Partition history, they do so as "objects of study rather than as subjects" (Menon and Bhasin 11), remaining invisible until they are integrated into official accounts of history and their experiences become known. Oral history and the agency awarded by it is the way feminist scholars like Menon and Bhasin bring to the fore gendered debates on women, the effacement of women in dominant historiographies, and the importance of speech and silence in remembering the history of Partition. *Borders and Boundaries* is a project that begins with the authors interviewing women in their own families, and gradually moves throughout Punjab to gather the life stories of other women who understood the importance of remembering and of "having someone listen to their stories and feel that their experience was of value" (Menon

and Bhasin 18). Although there was hesitation on the part of certain participants who questioned why one would need to evoke the past, Menon and Bhasin realised that these hesitations soon evolved into extended conversations in which stories of the past surfaced, further enriching Partition discourses. The authors decided to use their analysis and commentary to accompany the testimonies they gathered, in order to provide a deeper context from which complex connections between violence, the female body, and the concept of home and belonging were made.

Menon and Bhasin's work is sectioned into seven chapters: "Speaking for Themselves" - which considers Partition history and women's histories, "Honourably Dead" - which looks at the violence enacted against women, "Borders and Bodies" - which discusses how women were recovered in the interest of a nation, "A Community of Widows" - which looks at missing citizens, "Picking of the Pieces" - which considers the role of women who helped rehabilitate other women, "Learning to Survive" - which looks at how women educated themselves and entered the workforce to establish themselves, and "Belonging" - which considers the relationship between women and the nation. The oral testimonies illustrating different types of sexual violence against women appear in "Honourably Dead", a section in which Menon and Bhasin discuss how "Women of one community are sexually assaulted by the men of the other, in an overt assertion of their identity and a simultaneous humiliation of the Other by ""dishonouring" their women" (Menon and Bhasin 41). During the violence of 1947, women of the 'other' groups suffered mutilation of their breasts, the tattooing of their genitalia with slogans, and were stripped and paraded naked (Bacchetta 571). At a refugee camp in Jhang, the medical doctor confirmed that the wife of a railway porter had her hand chopped off before being thrown into a fire. Having escaped from the fire, she was later thrown into a well along with her children before being rescued and taken to the refugee camp. Although Menon and Bhasin reassert that it is not their purpose to

recount the brutality that women suffered, it is their focus to outline the crimes committed against women and to show how the sexuality of women denotes manhood, and its "desecration is a matter of such shame and dishonour that *it has to be avenged"* (Menon and Bhasin 43).

Torturing women and "[r]ape became not only a male prerogative, but man's basic weapon of force against woman, the principal agent of his will and fear" (qtd. in DiGeorgio-Lutz and Gosbee 111), and the triumph of his manhood. As is the case with Butalia's *The Other Side of Silence*, Menon and Bhasin's *Borders and Boundaries* also documents the intrafamilial violence women had to endure in the name of honour. In some cases, women also colluded to uphold male honour by consenting to be killed by their fathers or brothers, as an alternative to being forced into an inter-religious marriage. What is also important to note is how the accounts of extreme violence experienced by women at the hands of their own families, made it difficult for Menon and Bhasin to write up these experiences with 'equanimity'. In addressing the subject of women's suicides, Menon and Bhasin discuss the complex concept of agency when applied to women who voluntarily took their own lives in order to avoid sexual or communal violence. However, Menon and Bhasin deem such death a consequence of patriarchal notions of honour and do not "accept these forced deaths as "suicides" with women "voluntarily" endorsing an honour code that requires their dying" (Menon and Bhasin 45).

Throughout the oral testimonies of women who survived various degrees of violence and of those who were recovered, *Borders and Boundaries* documents what the Recovery and Rehabilitation Act meant to many women. Menon and Bhasin contend that abducted women are synonymous with the transgression of national, social, and cultural boundaries; that to recover women from the hands of 'other' groups, equates to upholding the honour and sanctity of a nation and community. Moreover, in documenting oral histories of women,

Menon and Bhasin consider the long-term impact of Partition on the lives and roles of women in Indian society. The alienation felt by many women who endured dislocation from their families due to Partition, demonstrates how Partition is not a closed chapter, but an event that continues to influence the lives of many in South Asia. Yet, *Borders and Boundaries* also sheds light on the fact that many women were given the opportunity to work and study in the years after Partition, evidenced in an interview in which one of the survivors says, "Partition gave me a chance […] I gained much more than I lost […] I had spread my wings" (qtd. in Menon and Bhasin 215). Accessing the lived experience of women, therefore, provides a more complex and nuanced understanding of Partition, which cannot be overlooked or excluded from official archives. For Menon and Bhasin, while many survivors of sexual violence carry the trauma of Partition, there are others who established their independence and economic freedom after Partition. Oral histories in this collection not only offer alternative versions of the past, but also bring to the fore, details gathered through testimonies that expand discourses on Partition. This has developed the scope of the 'alternative' archive which continues to bring 'real' accounts of ordinary and marginalised people to the forefront of academic enquiry.

By discussing the works of Butalia, Menon and Bhasin above, how the rise of feminist historiography has made a radical intervention that emphasises the female experience of Partition, has been demonstrated. The following section will discuss how the Partition Museum in Amritsar and the emergence of digital Partition archive projects refocus the lens on Partition history, using cultural representation and oral history to narrate different versions of 'truth'.

INTER-NATIONAL MEMORIALISATION AND DIGITAL PARTITION ARCHIVE PROJECTS

Partition is deeply rooted in the collective consciousness of the people of both India and Pakistan. Yet, for nearly seventy years, no physical museum protected the memory of the people of Partition, unlike in other countries where traumatic and significant events have been memorialised. For example, in Japan, the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum honours the memory of those killed during the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum in Poland preserves the memory of Europe's Jewish and East European populations who were killed in Nazi concentration and extermination camps. The idea that a Partition museum would serve as a memorial for the hundreds of thousands killed on both sides of the border, as well as for those who live with its trauma, was indeed plausible, for it could provide a healing and therapeutic space for Partition's survivors, and a resource for those who wanted to access a more critical understanding of an event that shaped the modern states of India and Pakistan. This view is corroborated by Salman Akhtar in his article, "A Partition Museum" (2008), in which he states that "The country needs a national museum of the partition of India … a new monument of healing, forgiving, learning and loving in our country" (Akhtar). Akhtar also believes that a museum which makes public the suffering and plight of survivors, would present narratives concerned with the 'real' dimension of Partition and answer questions such as:

> What were the forces that led to the partition of India? Who came up with the idea of Pakistan? Who were the prominent Muslims vehemently opposed to the vivisection of

> their motherland? How were the boundaries of west and east Pakistan (now Bangladesh) drawn up and by whom? What was the connection between partition and Mahatma Gandhi's assassination? What was Mohammed Ali Jinnah's ethnic ancestry? How responsible are the British for what happened? Why was the man who coined the name Pakistan denied citizenship in that country? And so on. (Akhtar)

To note, Akhtar is a psychiatrist, and somewhat frames his call for a museum in terms dictated by his profession. Nevertheless, he echoes a keen interest in establishing a museum that would account for the lives lost and affected by Partition. By arriving at answers to many unanswered questions in a therapeutic space, Akhtar believes that survivors of Partition could begin healing from a collective trauma and from wounds left by Partition, especially if information about the event was readily available for survivors to engage with.

Akhtar was not alone in the call for a Partition museum, for there were others who also believed in the therapeutic benefits that a national museum offering access to knowledge would provide. In his article, "Demanding the impossible: exploring the possibilities of a national partition museum in India" (2012), Anindya Raychaudhuri discusses the notes of Amardeep Singh on Butalia's lecture at Yale University, in which questions regarding government plans for a museum arise. Raychaudhuri also mentions the planning of the Peace Museum in Amritsar, which "would consist of "maps", "artefacts", "diaries", "transcripts of oral testimonies", "cinema tickets", "railway tickets" of the infamous trains between what are now India and Pakistan, and other such objects" (Raychaudhuri, "Demanding"174). Others who joined the call for a Partition museum included Syed Sikander Mehdi in his article "A Peace Museum on the Wagah Border" (2005), and Ishtiaq Ahmed, in "Peace memorials and peace parks" (2007). Both these writers are of Pakistani origin and emphasise the need to

establish museums which offer a healing space that would bring about a deeper understanding of Partition – a public resource that would support dialogue and better relations between India and Pakistan. Narrating stories of those engaged in non-violent and human struggles would also help foster a consciousness of peace on both sides of the border.

Raychaudhuri also mentions the launch of the *Remembering Partition* project in 2010, which combined the efforts of a group of students from schools across India, alongside the Citizens for Peace Organisation and the Citizens Archive of Pakistan. As is evident from the home page of the *Remembering Partition* website, the project aims to increase awareness of Partition by going beyond the limitations that govern textbooks and official versions, and to help end the spread of hatred between India and Pakistan. Furthermore, as is pointed out by Raychaudhuri, the 'Future Plans' section of the website expresses the project's intention to memorialise aspects of Partition history through "the establishment of a permanent museum on the partition of India in Mumbai, India. This museum will help in documenting a tragic, yet important part of our history for future generations to learn from. It will also commemorate those who survived this traumatic event" (qtd. in Raychaudhuri, "Demanding" 175). What was evident from the calls for a Partition monument from many sources, was the need to establish a "museum that would act both as an educational tool to teach the events of history, and a tangible memorial to the suffering undergone by those who lived through, and those who died during, the violence that ensued" (Raychaudhuri, "Demanding" 175). What Raychaudhuri's article poignantly points out, however, is the lack of response to such a call, up until the writing of his article in 2012. For him, the fact that a museum did not exist until then had to be questioned, especially when the Indian government continued negotiating its own rendition of the past in order to define the Indian state, its people, and its relationship to its neighbour, Pakistan (Raychaudhuri, "Demanding" 175). Undoubtably, cultural differences play a part in the way museums are perceived in South Asia. However, such differences

cannot be used to justify not establishing a national monument representing Partition history and its legacy. What must be considered, therefore, is the way representations of Partition are used to purport political agendas in both India and Pakistan, especially through memorialisation. The absence of a museum for a prolonged period can also be regarded as a political act which needs critiquing.

Raychaudhuri's article not only outlines the keen support for a Partition museum, but also questions the purpose such a museum would serve, outlining the complex relationship between the memorial and the narrative it constructs. If a national memorial is selective of the memory it narrates, it would not challenge the history constructed by the nation-state and thus, eliminate or forget memories that fail to serve national ideology. Raychaudhuri considers how a national museum established to help survivors of Partition heal, by providing access to tangible artefacts and personal histories, may itself become the site that shapes collective memory and nation-building, in support of the political ideology and narrative. A memorial, "if one was to be erected, would inevitably appropriate the victims' grief in order to reinforce the hegemonic reading of the past" (Raychaudhuri, "Demanding" 185). A more critical demand would, therefore, be to concentrate less on establishing a national monument that would assist the nation-state in arranging its own version of history, but to demand "access to a space that one should rightfully be allowed access to, but is not", and that stands "for the ''unforgettable forgotten'' stories of the many thousands who were and are affected by the events of Partition" (Raychaudhuri, "Demanding 185).

The need for a museum was finally addressed when The Arts and Cultural Heritage Trust (TAACHT) was established in 2015 in New Delhi, bringing together prominent contributors to Partition discourses. This aim of the trust was achieved when the Partition Museum opened to the public on the 17th of August 2017. Housed in Amritsar's 19th century town hall, the museum is spread over two floors, exhibiting fourteen galleries. Positioned as a

people's museum, the galleries contain a range of material, including artefacts that were carried over the border by survivors, emphasising the importance of material objects and their connection to memories and remembering. As well as personal belongings, the museum also exhibits Partition art that explores the themes of identity, anguish, and confusion. The museum hosts an extensive array of archival documents, which include framed photographs, newspaper clippings, and posters from both before and after Partition. Oral histories and videos provide a personalised experience for visitors, as they are given access to eye-witness accounts of survival.

Alongside the reconstruction of a British jail, which illustrates the plight of political prisoners, and a train station, there is the *Thoa Kalsa* installation. *Thoa Kalsa* is the village where approximately ninety Sikh women jumped into a well to drown themselves after an attack by a large group of Muslims. The installation is located in Gallery seven of the museum, which deals with narratives of gendered violence against women. It is comprised of a well with a rope, above which there is a white cloth from the floor to the ceiling. On the cloth are written statistics of recovered women from both sides of the dividing line. Such a graphic evocation, as well as the extensive array of artefacts, art, photographs and oral testimonies, all converge in a space to provide a resource to historians and the public, where previously neglected material can be accessed to encourage a re-visiting and re-examining of the history of Partition. Having received much more exposure since the 70th anniversary, the Partition Museum continues to expand its diverse collection of work through a selection of mediums representing the living memories of Partition.

From the above-mentioned description of the Partition Museum, it is evident that its curators hold to the belief that the legacy of Partition has the potential to heal, if previously little-known narratives of migration, recovery, and suffering are collected and disseminated. The Partition Museum achieves this dissemination, but what also needs to be considered is

the extent to which, if any, it re-evaluates Partition critically, as well as its long-lasting effects on nation-building, contemporary South Asian societies, and identity. As discussed in Chapter One, Andreas Huyssen believes memories and history to have a palimpsestic nature, arguing that "The more monuments there are, the more the past becomes invisible, the easier it is to forget: redemption, thus, through forgetting" (Huyssen 184). Any national monument, therefore, can assist in effacing a particular history, replacing it with another that does not question the fixed borders characterising the nation-state. The Partition Museum is, undoubtedly, a beneficial resource that makes available previously unknown narratives of many forgotten people. However, the fact that it did not exist for seventy years, and that it was opened on the 17th of August to coincide with the date on which the Radcliffe Line was disclosed in 1947, is not a coincidence. Opening the museum, not on the date of Indian independence, but rather on a date which affected the lives of millions in South Asia, frames it as a people's museum. This framing presents it as being more concerned with narratives of lives lost and with stories about migration and personalised accounts of suffering created by the division, rather than stories of liberation and independence.

Establishing the Partition Museum around the 70th anniversary of the division of India, is also a reminder to the international community that India remains committed to preserving memories of its past. This preservation it has attempted to achieve by providing a resource that not only focuses on the event from an official and statistical perspective, but also from a personal and individual level. The museum's collection of oral testimonies and artefacts which provide access to the forgotten stories of everyday people is commendable. However, an over-reliance on the use of personal artefacts and oral histories of survivors reiterates typical perceptions of nationhood at times, instead of providing a critical re-evaluation of Partition. Emphasising on the localised experience positions it as a 'people's museum, but this can also be read as a deliberate means to bring authenticity to narratives.

This view is supported in “Curating the Partition: dissonant heritage and Indian nation building”, when Ted Svensson comments on how the Partition Museum makes use of survivor testimonies, private donations, and artefacts, to appear as a people’s museum. In fact, he says, the museum is not explicitly public, for it is run by a private trust that is able to exercise “curatorial control” when arranging artefacts received by the public (Svensson 9). For Svensson, the Partition Museum is “an attempt to discursively and affectively connect present-day visitors with the Partition through the display of objects that are regarded as having ‘lived through’ the event. The objects are viewed as embodying authenticity in and of themselves, and as grounding and authenticating the broader narrative of the Partition that the museum conveys” (Svensson 8).

India and Pakistan were brought about through a violent partitioning in a region which is still marked by conflict. Memorialising the histories of both nations is important, as it provides present generations with the opportunity to engage with important events of the past. The Partition Museum in Amritsar memorialises Partition history by exhibiting materials directly connected to the event. However, in doing so, it also perpetuates accepted notions of identity and statehood. The collection of oral history accounts at the museum invites the wider public to engage with personalised stories of survivors. However, a critical examination of the use of individual experiences and eye-witness accounts when they are used as markers of authenticity remains essential.

THE DIGITAL ARCHIVE.

The expansion of the ‘alternative’ archives on Partition can also be seen when considering the emergence of digital archives in India and Pakistan. Much like the Partition Museum which provides its visitors with access to oral histories in order to disseminate a broader

understanding of individual experience, there has been an increase in digital archives which collect oral histories, so that future generations may access the legacy of Partition. In this digital age, the sharing of information online is the easiest and most effective way to engage large audiences. When applied to disseminating discourses and oral histories of Partition online, the ability to include a much broader international population in remembering the event becomes possible. By remembering collectively or as part of an online community or platform, new collective memories can be formed, and older ones reconfigured. Digital archives of Partition, therefore, engage online communities by providing content, as well as access to previously unheard oral testimonies, to evoke memories of the past that can foster constructive dialogue.

One such example of online dissemination is The Citizens Archive Project (2007), established in Pakistan by Muhamad Owais Rana. Rana has digitised oral history testimonies to enact a preservation of Pakistan's historical and cultural legacy. The project collects the accounts of first-generation Pakistanis who share memories of Partition and significant events in their lives which are connected to the making of Pakistan. Rana, therefore, has provided a space for Pakistanis who lived through Partition with an opportunity to recount an alternative narrative to the historical state-led versions. The aim of the project is to preserve the rich heritage of the country and to provide a critical space from which future generations are informed. Another example of the digitisation of Indian history is the Indian Memory Project which was established in 2010 by Anusha Yadav. The online archive uses photographs and stories from personal archives to chart the history of the Indian subcontinent. By using personal photographs as historical evidence, the India Memory Project provides an insight into personal memory and a vivid photographic account of life in the subcontinent, as provided by its own people. Photographs are also accompanied by narratives from family members or friends who often provide details of the individual in the photos or the event

represented in them. Viewers express their thoughts regarding the photographs and stories under the entries, encouraging all types of people to engage with each other regarding the content in the comments section.

Through a crowdsourcing approach, the Indian Memory Project collates individual memories online to foster a collective remembering of history. A large online audience, not limited by the confines of time and space, can access these personal memories, and engage in a diverse exchange of thoughts and ideas. As is evident from the amount of content and comments on the Indian Memory Project website, there is a growing interest amongst online communities in wanting to access, share and engage with memories of the past. The digital archive, therefore, becomes a type of commemorative practice established using the Internet and digital technologies to help bridge the gaps that exist in modern-day understanding of Partition.

A more extensive collection of digital oral histories is the 1947 Partition Archive, founded by Dr. Guneeta Singh Bhalla. The online archive was launched in Berkeley in 2010 and has recorded over seven thousand, five hundred eyewitness/survivor accounts of Partition. As a private initiative, the archive aims to address the silencing of the peoples' history and positions itself as objective and novel, collecting testimonies with the help of donations and volunteers, and without any reliance on existing sources. Ultimately, the archive supports the inclusion of a wide range of testimonies that represent what Partition meant at an individual level, instead of echoing elitist and state-centred versions.

The archive has empowered people from every stratum of society, including marginalised groups, by providing them with the opportunity to relay personal experiences, which are recorded, preserved and made available online. Bhalla's digital archive project makes use of social media platforms to spread knowledge of Partition, which has resulted in

cross-border dialogue, acknowledgement from educational establishments and film makers, as well as the 'coming together' of families and friends. The 1947 Partition Archive methodology involves calling for online content from the public which is gathered by Citizen Historians – members of the public trained to collect oral histories through online webinars. The training involves acquainting Citizen Historians with knowledge of interview techniques, interview etiquettes, video recording skills, and basic etiquette and procedures for conducting oral history interviews. The webinar, as a space that provides online training to all types of people, appeals to a mass audience, as many have undertaken the task of collecting audio and visual recordings for the archive, resulting in its increased appeal, recognition, and expansion.

In her article, "Online Documents of India's Past" (2017), Katja Muller commends the work of both the Indian Memory Project and the 1947 Partition Archive, stating that:

> These two archives, named the Indian Memory Project and the 1947 Partition Archive (hereinafter referred to as IMP and 1947 PA, respectively), are particularly successful in engaging online communities in commemorative practices. They collect and provide historical content as the basis for an evocation of memories and an exchange of thoughts. They foster a memorizing that seems to be lacking. (Muller 150)

For Muller, the Internet and social media provide a way to preserve and create memories. Digital archives of Partition can help remember those that have been forgotten. The online digital archive, therefore, acts as a memory repository that can bring about a multi-faceted exchange of thoughts, which Muller argues can enable "successful forms of collective online memory production" (Muller 150). For her, digital media is more a means of sharing and disseminating information, than just a method of preserving it (Muller 152). Digital archives

of Partition commemorate the past using digital media and its far-reaching capacity. Muller also outlines that digital media ensures that the past is more accessible. This increased visibility of the past, allows for a greater degree of configuration, influence and interpretation (Muller 153). As a result, the digital archive challenges fixed versions of history, emphasising that memories can be influenced and shaped digitally based on a collective exchange of thoughts. Muller believes that through a new memory ecology – one in which the past can be revoked, what is allowed is "a commemorative engagement that is not limited to physical proximity or access based on expertise but engages the interested online community with documents and stories of the past, which they simultaneously cocreate" (Muller 153). In the case of the 1947 Partition Archive, which relies on online communication and the dissemination of oral histories digitally, not only does virtual space become the site for preserving memory, but also one for producing memory. As a result, conventional notions of what the archive stands for are challenged, as it becomes increasingly significant for cultural production, as well as its expression.

Muller rightfully argues that the 1947 Partition Archive applies an inclusive approach which encourages participation and sharing. Those who contribute, value the fact that their stories will be accessed by a large audience. Muller also correctly contends that the 1947 Partition Archive's engagement with the past has resulted in an overreliance on personal perspectives. However, she then states that the archive involves "a multitude of voices, they are not bound to endorsing a political agenda or a given historical narrative" (Muller 155). According to Svenson, Muller, here, "does not problematise sufficiently the extent to which, and in what forms, the 1947 Partition Archive makes '[i]ndividual stories [. . .] part of a collective memory'" (Svensson 7). Moreover, she overlooks how historiographies are related to and supported by accounts of personal and localised experiences.

Much like the Partition Museum, the 1947 Partition Archive is framed as a people's resource that collects the untold experiences of the division of India. Using oral history to emphasise the individual experience, especially in relation to women, is a more public means of organising Partition history. This focus on fragmented histories to better understand societal experiences, demonstrates the shift away from a reliance on national and state-orientated versions of Partition history. However, oral history, as an alternate mode of exploring Partition, needs to be examined critically. Svensson, in support of Kaur's view, reasserts "that public acts of memorialising and remembering, contrary to their stated intentions, might add to '[ironing] out the complexities of Partition politics' by 'narrat[ing] moving, simple accounts of human suffering'" (Svensson 218), emphasising also the fear of Kaur, who believes that '"the project of memory overshadows the project of critical history"'(Svensson 218). Oral history relies on memory to present accounts of Partition which counter official historiography. However, oral history has its own limitations, often characterised by the "kind of testimonies and stories that are being collected, stored and heard, and the extent to which they give access to actual lived experiences" (Svensson 5).

An observation of oral histories is that they are created through personal dialogue between the interviewer and the interviewee. It is, therefore, a shared experience. As a result, it can be said that oral history is not collected or retrieved. Instead, it is produced through a verbal exchange involving two participants. Svensson emphasises this and points out Portelli's view that the first person to speak in an oral history interview is the interviewer, and, therefore, part of the history being created (Svensson 5). For Svensson, the oral history interview experience is as much about the narrator's identity as it is about the interviewer's identity (Svensson 5). His criticism of the 1947 Partition Archive is manifold; however, one contention is that "the interviewer's participation, voice and identity are muted – are turned into discrete items in an online repository or museum exhibition" (Svensson 5). If the

interviewer's involvement is not shown, the co-creation of oral history in an interview is not appreciated and the manipulable recalling of past events by the interviewee is overlooked (Svensson 5). Although oral histories provide direct access to the human experience, they must still be examined, interpreted and held to account, if they are to be used as historical evidence. The large number of oral histories collected by the 1947 Partition Archive is a commendable feat. However, one must recognise the way oral history is also used as an authenticity marker by the archive. The people's history that it presents, is actually a mediation and a co-creation of both the interviewer and the interviewee.

Digital archives of Partition bring together a wider online audience that engages in interacting with and producing collectively shared memories. They have transnational capacities and provide cultural representation in digital form. The form and content used in online archives can also accentuate particular versions of history. Ultimately, oral histories allow one to appreciate the human dimension of history from an individualised aspect. This localised sense ensures a deeper understanding of the emotional states of people. Through oral history, readers and listeners are granted an insight into the speaker's subjectivity. However, it is crucial not to overstate simple accounts of suffering, in order to maintain a nuanced and heterogenous understanding of the digital archive, which can also be read as another form of public memorialisation.

The next section will discuss oral histories in connection to material memory in order to examine how biographies of people are connected to objects that were carried over the border after Partition. Thereafter, recent oral history projects will be examined to explore how testimony continues to affect ways in which the history of the division of India is represented and interpreted in modern times.

ORAL HISTORY AND MATERIAL CULTURE

Aanchal Malhotra's *Remnants of a Separation: A History of the Partition through Material Memory* (2017), presents localised accounts of those who witnessed Partition. The book explores the ability of objects to retain memories of the past and their capacity to trigger those memories previously forgotten or suppressed. Malhotra is the co-founder of The Digital Museum of Memory, and her work is based on a series of interviews with survivors of Partition who express their memories through materiality. The newly partitioned states established by the Radcliffe line, initiated mass migration in both directions. People left their homes and took with them objects they deemed significant and meaningful. It is the ability of these objects to trigger memories of the past that Malhotra examines in her work. The book begins with a moving account of her grandmother recalling a childhood memory when she was sent to ask for five rupees from her cousin. The cousin refused to give her the money, even though she was aware that her family was experiencing difficult times. This had a significant impact on Malhotra's grandmother, whose memory of that day has been triggered when she finds some old silver rupee coins. By beginning her work with a personal story, Malhotra emphasises the importance of the relationship between memories and material objects from the past to her and her family. Recalling the painful experience she endured as a child, Malhotra's grandmother states:

> I walked across the house to the room of my cousin – my eldest uncle's daughter-in-law who was much older than me. She had had nothing to do with the division of family property and seemed kind enough. So there I was, knocking on the door innocently, hoping that she would understand our plight. She opened the door and

> asked me what I wanted. “Five rupees,” I had said to her, “Just five rupees, *didi*. We don’t have anything, and this will last us the whole month.” Suddenly, she stops narrating and looks at me, her moist eyes boring into mine, and I realize that my grandmother has extracted perhaps the most heart-breaking memory from her past. Now, from the pile, she separates five of the one-rupee coins and stacks them on top of one another. Five rupees. (Malhotra, *Remnants* 2-3)

The extent to which objects from the past – in this case, one-rupee silver coins – activate memories, is profound in this example. For Malhotra’s grandmother, the coins act as a painful reminder of what her family endured at the hands of relatives when her father died. The coins act as memory objects which play a part in eliciting emotional memories of home and relationships. Although such objects can play a role in fostering a sense of nostalgia and longing for a homeland, Malhotra’s displays how objects can also trigger involuntary memories connected to pain and suffering.

In Sabine Marschall’s “‘Memory objects’: Material objects and memories of home in the context of intra-African mobility”, she states:

> Memory objects are special objects or personal belongings that elicit deliberate or involuntary memories of homeland, home culture, important places, episodes in one’s own autobiographical past and significant social relations (kin, friends, colleagues) associated with home or origin. In a narrow sense, they are *aide-mémoires*, precipitating memory and facilitating the process of remembrance. Such special personal objects can be said to have agency in that they trigger emotional responses and stimulate social effects and actions. (Marschall 254)

By outlining the intersection between material culture and memory, Marschall argues for more research to be undertaken which explores the linkage between social and cultural values of intra-African migrants and memory objects. For Marschall, memory objects not only bring about nostalgia by linking one to their home, but also trigger memories of the past and emotional connections, emphasised in the example of Malhotra's grandmother, whose personal memories are precipitated by the silver coins she finds. Stories of "personal objects", which Marschall defines as "cherished favourite things that an individual is attached to", appear in Malhotra's work to demonstrate the role "linking objects" play in remembering a lost home or a past before migration (Marschall 254). Stories of a *maang tikka* – a heirloom that adorns the foreheads of Indian brides, as well as objects such as a picture, a scarf, a turban and pearls all appear in Malhotra's work. These stories exhibit the relationship material objects have to traumatic experience, nostalgia, and hope, whilst demonstrating how material memory interacts with the construction of identity.

Malhotra's conversations with her interviewees outline how memories of the past are deeply connected to certain objects which were carried over the border. These objects, which are connected to memories and often hold sentimental value, help interviewees define and relay their personal experiences. The nineteen stories in Malhotra's work are, therefore, acts of recollection that use material memory to discuss the process of migration, as well as loss and displacement. The narratives represent a museum of loss which archives objects to piece together a traumatic past. Considering objects as triggers of memory, Malhotra's work emphasises a new and critical approach from which to approach Partition studies. By connecting material culture and memory, the argument for dissecting personal and intimate history through oral accounts is further supported. Extracting the oral testimonies that memory objects precipitate, provides another nuanced lens from which to approach Partition history. Although the malleability of memory has long been the focus of oral historians,

collecting the oral accounts of Partition's remaining survivors which are linked to material objects, increases the depth of the Partition archive and provides a more detailed understanding of the human experience of the division of India.

Malhotra's work contests how the global has constructed the local, framing what it deems important and excluding what it deems unnecessary. Malhotra's work concentrates on local stories as an avenue to access memories of the past. Approaching history through localised accounts creates another version of the past, in which one can revisit and analyse how new identities of everyday people where shaped and formed. Biographies of material objects also "elicit deliberate or involuntary memories of homeland, home culture, important places, episodes in one's own autobiographical past and significant social relations (kin, friends, colleagues) associated with home or origin" (Marschall 254), providing a richer understanding of culture and its connection to memory from a localised perspective. In her work, Malhotra tracks the history and social ethnographies of her interviewees by deconstructing meanings that objects carry. Memory "hides in the folds of clothes, among old records, inside boxes of inherited jewellery… it seeps into our years, it remains quiet, accumulating the past like layers of dust" (Malhotra, *Remnants* 27). Malhotra makes her readers aware of the complex relationship objects and memory have with notions of home and to remembering and forgetting. Her work demonstrates that local histories represent individual memories which are connected to material culture, and that narratives of ordinary people are constructed and shaped in relation to objects which are charged with meaning. Malhotra's approach does not challenge state archives and documentary research on Partition, but seeks to supplement Partition discourses by focusing on the real experiences of people, which she believes can be retrieved through accessing the memory and biographies of objects carried across the border of India and Pakistan after Partition.

The way one constructs narratives of the past depends on how and what a narrator remembers, as well as the time and place in which histories are constructed. What and how one remembers and forgets reveals details about the narrator's psyche, and the reasons why one constructs and reconstructs history in a particular way. Arjun Appadurai in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (1988), suggests that objects are connected to memories, as they contain cultural biographies and the social lives of people (Appadurai 43). Appadurai believes that objects assist narrators to remember, relay, hide, and create their own realities. In relation to Malhotra's work, first-hand accounts illustrate how everyday objects have the capacity to capture memories of the past which are accessed many years later. Although a scarf or a pot carried over the border may appear trivial, Malhotra outlines how individuals make a range of connections with material objects that reorganise one's identity, for "even clothing and the most ordinary utilitarian objects accrue new meanings through mobility and can acquire mnemonic function for their owners and users" (Marschall 254). By her own admission, Malhotra is attempting to complement traditional academic research on Partition with an 'alternative' approach which are "methods of Oral History recording and interviewing, and have proven to be remarkable resources, distilling an enormous event down to something that is graspable: the experience of the individual" (Malhotra, *Remnants* 8). In doing so, the human aspect of the division of India can be read alongside official and political narratives, and this provides a more comprehensive understanding of the legacy of Partition (Malhotra, *Remnants* 9).

Malhotra regards oral history as the most effective way to outline the relationship between people, objects, and places in the past - a relationship from which the 'real' stories of Partition can be ascertained. In her essay, "Changing Perspectives: The Archives Memory and Material Culture", Jimena Lobo Guerrero Arenas discusses how people in the town of Mompox in Columbia, have reconfigured their past and cultural landscape by preserving

memories through material objects. She believes that understanding the relationship between the inhabitants of the town and material culture provides a deeper comprehension of the metalwork tradition associated with the area. Much like Malhotra, Arenas regards oral history projects as a 'vivid archive', and argues that the complex dynamic that links people, their memories, and materiality, is reified by objects. One can draw parallels with the way in which metalwork production objects trigger memories for people in Mompox and the people in Malhotra's work, whose memories of Partition are often triggered by an object connected to a lived experience. In relation to physical objects which trigger memories, after being retrieved from storage boxes and drawers, Arenas states:

> . . . the memory stories evoked, provoked and elaborated by the retrieval, display and handling of these objects represent privileged access to selective thoughts, ideas, sensations and histories. They are not simply stories of a past trade. They are released only when the objects temporarily emerge from their containers. Objects and memory are stored in these same boxes and drawers, which together form a simultaneously physical and symbolic archive of vivid objects and stories. (Arenas 72)

Memories of a particular event or time-period can be forgotten, but once a particular memory object is retrieved, it facilitates remembering. In Malhotra's case, where interviewees remember stories only after encountering a memory object, personal objects from the past "have agency in that they trigger emotional responses and stimulate social effects and actions" (Marschall 254). Both Malhotra and Arenas argue that the history of objects and people inform one another, and therefore, act as an alternative lens from which to approach history.

Chris Gosden and Yvonne Marshall in their article "The Cultural Biography of Objects" (1999), refer to 'biography' – "The central idea is that, as people and objects gather time, movement and change, they are constantly transformed, and these transformations of person and object are tied up with each other" (Gosden and Marshall 169). For them, biographical methodology dissects how an object becomes meaningful through its relationship with the social context it is in, emphasising that the significance of objects is based on their own biography and a relationship to the people that remember it. Arenas, as well as Gosden and Marshall, refer to Appadurai's collection, in order to substantiate how the notion of biography stems from the view that objects, like history, need to be viewed as narratives that constantly change and adapt. Objects are capable of accumulating histories, so the present significance of an object derives from the people and events which it is connected to (Gosden and Marshall 170). In relation to Partition, trivial objects such as a pot or heirloom carried over the border, have a particular significance to a certain individuals and signify a particular time – provoking memories which are tied to the biography of the object. These memory objects, therefore, have agency, as they can activate emotional response and social consequences. The fact that material memory is passed down through the transfer of a meaningful object from generation to generation, warrants the need to research the effects of interacting with objects from the past in the present.

When mentioning first-generation African transnational migrants in Durban, Marschall refers to their personal objects as 'favourite items' that hold a special place. These personal objects are involved in "precipitating memories of home, loved ones and the pre-migration past" (Marschall 254). What Marschall also suggests is that many migrants expected to return to their native country, which granted further significance to material objects, especially those that had been part of the migration (Marschall 254). Many migrants of Partition carried material objects across the borders of India and Pakistan. These objects

became their link to ‘home’ and a reminder of their past. Some even expected to return home eventually, regarding Partition as a temporary arrangement. Of course, this was not to be the case, as the new borders became permanent and dictated a reconfiguration of identities and notions of belonging. The borders of India and Pakistan continue to restrict migrants from the ‘other’ side to readily travel back to places of their birth and trace their heritage. As a result, the idea that people can define themselves better through objects connected to ‘home’ or ‘homeland’ is a poignant area of research and one that Malhotra’s work attempts to tackle.

Malhotra’s oral histories all present a deep connection to material objects, and at times, these objects connect generations who recall their history and heritage from the memories passed down. One example is when Malhotra discusses the Bery family who obtained three pieces of jewellery whilst living in Lahore. These pieces were later carried across the border to Delhi after Partition. Narian Das Bery gave one piece of jewellery to his wife, another to his daughter Amrit, and the third to his daughter-in-law. When his wife died, the brooch he gave to his wife was given by him to his eldest daughter Jiwan. When Amrit died, the bracelet given to her by her father was passed to her daughter Rajni – Malhotra’s mother. Each time the items were passed down, the receiving member of the family regarded it as a great honour, essentially feeling entrusted with a part of the deceased persons’ legacy. This example in Malhotra’s work demonstrates the impact objects have when passed down the generations. It also emphasises how memories of Partition can be located by dissecting the biographies of objects connected to the people involved in the event. Each time an item is passed on, the receiver feels a sense of responsibility triggered by the memories carried by the object. “An object’s perceived value, meaning and emotional efficacy can change over time and especially through mobility” (Marschall 255), and items that are linked to family memories can become involved in the emotional relationships of family members. For some,

these memory objects also provide a type of therapy and a connection to those who have died.

Malhotra's work shows that objects have special meanings. Whether these objects are carried over the borders due to migration or received from loving family members, they represent a connection to time, space and people. Over time, these items become memory objects and Malhotra's work emphasises that the true value of material objects can only be obtained through a tangible interaction with the memory of objects – one she achieves through the medium of oral history interviews.

AFTER 70 YEARS: REMEMBERING PARTITION THROUGH ORAL HISTORY.

Prior to the 70th anniversary of Partition in 2017, oral history projects which collected the personal testimonies of survivors continued to surface, albeit sporadically. It is, therefore, important to mention a few such projects and the contribution they made to discourses on Partition, before a more extensive discussion on recent oral history projects is carried out. As previously mentioned in this chapter, Furrukh Khan's *Stories of the Broken Self* (2006) is a short documentary project that contains interviews of Partition survivors from Pakistan. By interviewing women who witnessed different types of violence at the hands of other religious groups, Khan probes the silence maintained by official narratives in Pakistan which fail to represent local-level experiences. His oral history project not only urged viewers, academics and researchers to revisit Partition historiography to examine how and why Partition histories are framed in a particular way, but also outlined the need to collect more oral testimonies from Partition survivors. By accessing accounts from marginalised women in Pakistani society, a nuanced understanding of their lived experience was obtained. What also became apparent was the unwillingness of some participants to speak about the violence they

endured. What is interesting about Khan's work is that it explores in detail the struggles of Pakistani women to establish memories of a violent past within the national narrative. For them, Pakistan as a nation, did not reconcile between women and a history of displacement, trauma and loss. Memories of a violent past, therefore, become the medium through which women form and configure their identities in Khan's work. His interviews show women with an array of views. Some have found belonging in the nation (Pakistan), while others remain detached from what it signifies. Nevertheless, Khan's work emphasises how women's stories 'cut across' national narratives and disrupt the hegemony that attempts to define their experience.

Legacy of Partition 1947-2009 is another oral history project that appeared well before the 70th anniversary of Partition. It concentrates on localised accounts of Partition from the diaspora. Financed by the Museums, Libraries and Archive Partnership in 2011, the project gathered oral survivor testimonies from members of the South Asian community living in Leicestershire, England. The project provided an opportunity for everyday people from the diaspora to share their experiences of Partition and migration. Archival research demonstrates the importance of including the lived experiences of those who migrated to Britain after Partition, in order to understand the effect Partition had on South Asians as they attempted to integrate into British society.

Another work which uses interviews from both India and Pakistan to promote healing between the two nations is *Humanity Amidst Insanity: Hope During and after the Indo-Pak Partition* (2009), by journalists Tridivesh Singh Maini, Tahir Malik and Ali Farooq Malik. The book contains twelve interviews carried out on the Indian side and eleven from the Pakistani side. The interviews provide examples of acts of humanity which occurred in both India and Pakistan to help heal the rifts created by Partition. By recording stories from both the Indian and Pakistani sides of Punjab, the authors outline the cultural affinity of both

regions, highlighting the desire of all interviewees to witness better ties between the two nation states. The book argues that peace can be achieved by creating awareness of the humane side of Partition through art and literature, as well as by building a memorial museum at the Wagah border to preserve the memory of those who died during Partition. The interviews demonstrate how people of different faiths rescued neighbours, saved women, guarded property and how religious sites, such as mosques and temples, were used to provide shelter for members of different religions. The testimonies collected in this work provide an alternative version of history, which the authors argue, replaces distorted versions of political history taught in schools. The authors, therefore, call for the commonality and distinctness of both nations to be recognised and appreciated, in order to work towards peace.

A more focused academic work which uses oral history to examine Partition and its effect is Devika Chawla's *Home, Uprooted: Oral Histories of India's Partition* (2014). Chawla records the inter-generational oral testimonies of Hindu and Sikh families living in Delhi to understand the migration of families, who crossed the border during Partition. By interrogating how the notion of 'home' is constructed by those who were displaced and forced to settle in a new environment, Chawla argues for a destabilising of the facile notions of home and belonging which political accounts provide the participants of Partition. Like Butalia, Menon and Bhasin before her, Chawla views migrations and experiences of the past as being deep-rooted in memories which need to be accessed through oral histories. For her, testimonies from survivors and their descendants are crucial to understand the layers of memory which bring an authentic dimension to the history of Partition. All the above-mentioned projects provided a level of agency and empowerment to narrators. They represent the multiplicity of voices which need to be heard to better comprehend the complex history of Partition. After the 70th anniversary of Partition, further commemoration and a revisiting of

the event has produced more discourse, including oral history projects. It is these recent oral history projects on Partition that the reminder of this chapter will discuss.

Kavita Puri's *Partition Voices: Untold British Stories* (2019) documents the differential impact of the division of India throughout Britain by collecting oral histories of Partition. Puri engages with the stories and traumatic experiences of Partition survivors living in the diaspora by recording testimonies from those representing the major religious groups involved in the events of 1947. She also collects testimonies from colonial settlers who lived in India until Partition. This focus of the project marks it distinctly from most other oral histories of Partition. Puri argues that original interviews that re-tell the experiences of Partition from those living in modern-day Britain, can reconfigure the way in which notions of home and belonging are understood. Furthermore, she believes that the modern-day identity of British South Asians must be informed by first-hand accounts of violence, loss, trauma, and migration experienced by Partition survivors, in order for them to better understand their history.

Originally received as a three-part series on BBC Radio 4, the book form of the oral history project includes twenty-three chapters. The chapters are sectioned under the headings of "Empire", "Partition", and "Legacy". Within these sections, Puri charts the accounts of the colonial British and members of different religious and political groups. She points out that the creative effort of oral history projects has helped people to break the silence surrounding their experiences, leading them to share their accounts. In interviewing such people, whose memories were inaccessible, Puri has expanded Partition archives which focus on preserving the 'history from below'. Puri's work documents the eye-witness accounts of those who experienced an event whose effects still play out in the present day. In doing so, she also explores the relationship between British and Indian history, and its connotations in contemporary British society.

Puri's work is a commendable addition to narratives on Partition. It engages intimately with the stories and traumatic experiences of the many silent voices which endured the violence and dislocation of the division of India. Not only does Puri turns a focused lens on the lived experience of ordinary people, but also explores the complex relationship between history, memory, and historiography of Partition. Puri's oral history collection also contests narratives of violence and hatred passed down through the generations by the communities of South Asians, essentially perpetuating a rhetoric of difference and intolerance. Accounts documenting acts of kindness and humanity during Partition in Puri's work oppose over-arching narratives which tend to forget and exclude the fact that the division of India was not just a violent historical event devoid of morality.

Partition Voices operates at a micro-historical level and does so successfully by blending historical fact with real-life stories, evidenced by timely quotations from the interviewees. The book begins with Puri's own story, bringing authenticity and a personal touch to her work. The story locates her at the River Ganges where she has travelled to with her family to scatter her father's ashes upon his request. Although her father was cremated in Kent, he wanted his ashes to be scattered at 'home'. Puri here draws attention not just to the fact that migration is an experience of both the living and the dead, but also to the notion of 'home' and materiality, as death had returned her father to India. Puri charts the experience of her father who underwent a dual migration. Initially, her father had travelled across the newly formed border of India and Pakistan, and then later to Britain. South Asian men and women, like Puri's father, struggled with their identity due to such migrations. The struggle was further amplified when survivors and victims had to migrate abroad, hoping to be accepted in their new surroundings. Memories of 'home' or the want to recall painful experiences endured during Partition were suppressed, often leading to a silence which restricted memories of the past from being shared or passed down the generations.

Setting the historical context in which the division of India occurred, Puri immediately brings to light an act of kindness which occurred during Partition violence, when she states:

> Once partition became an inevitability, the situation deteriorated: incidents of communal violence increased and it was no longer safe to be a minority in the newly independent state. But there were acts of humanity amidst the horror too. The one partition story that my father did share while I was growing up was how his Hindu family had been protected by Muslim neighbours; how they had warned my grandfather to leave, as they could no longer shield them from the mobs. My father's family left for India, and Lahore is now part of a country which is India's enemy. Yet it is also the birthplace of my Hindi father. (Puri 2-3)

Puri examines the notion of 'home' and what it signifies to Indians who had to cross the border after Partition, leaving behind the place of their birth. For Puri's father, Lahore was where he was born. Yet, Partition forced his family to move to India, after which he migrated to Britain, where he lived till his death. This was the case for many South Asians. Puri lays out the interrelation between Partition and migration to Britain, for "The areas of India and Pakistan which were most disrupted by Partition were major contributors to the emigrant flow to Britain" (Puri 3).

Puri is concerned with recovering stories of a generation dying out. Many from the generation that she targets have never had the opportunity to share their stories. This was mainly due to an unwillingness on their part to re-live the trauma of Partition, as well as societal and cultural constraints that they experienced living in Britain. It is precisely this

recovering of stories that contemporary South Asian communities in Britain require in order to better understand their past, the role of Britain in that past, and the legacy and cross-generational effects of Partition. As Puri mentions, the 70th anniversary of Partition in 2017 was a critical turning point, for many television programs increased coverage of Partition history, alongside documenting the interests of young British Asians in trying to learn more about their cultural heritage and history. Consequently, oral history projects throughout Britain emerged, focusing on untold British stories, which not only needed to be recovered at speed, but used to inform the Asian diaspora of the strong connection between the historical past and modern-day diasporic identity (Puri 5).

By creating a space in which witnesses of Partition can share their memories, Puri provides an analysis of the meaning behind the silence of many who endured the violent division of India. Institutional silence was another reason why people kept their experiences hidden, as the political and social landscape of Britain did not provide an avenue for open discussion on the subject. Puri recorded that many people simply wanted to forget what had transpired during Partition. This was due to the shame they felt, as a result of turning against those who they had co-existed with for centuries. Those who had become complicit in the violence wanted to distance themselves from the memories of a time-period which prompted them to commit unimaginable crimes. Therefore, silence, whether a personal choice or through institutionalisation, must be interrogated by historians and academics. The 'shutting out' and unwillingness to recall in an environment where survival and being accepted into a new culture took precedence, requires further examination.

The 70th anniversary of Partition was pivotal in reigniting a growing interest in Partition history, for it provided the older generation with agency and encouragement to 'speak out'; and second and third generation British Asians with an opportunity to learn about the history of their roots. This history, for many, would be heard for the first time. Puri

ensures that her work does not favour a particular group or religious viewpoint, thus, steering clear of any bias. On the contrary, she provides a space in which 'difference' and dialogue can exist, accepting and emphasising that *all* sides suffered to a certain extent during Partition. Many of Puri's interviewees recount their experiences for the first time in seventy years. This highlights the significance of the relationship between silence, memory, and recalling, and the need to probe it. The trauma which led many to such a defiant unwillingness or incapacity to speak regarding their experiences, can only be explored if a micro-historical approach is applied to the past. This provides a focus on smaller stories of real events which shaped the past, and as a result, the present of many survivors.

In *The Other Side of Silence*, Butalia is deeply concerned with testimonies of those who lived through Partition. For academics like her, understanding the division of India requires analysing how it is remembered and represented. She pursues the testimonies of her interviewees to represent the 'real' experiences of Partition. Puri attempts to do the same. She begins by presenting the account of her father and then moves on to convey the accounts of many ordinary people from different backgrounds who had migrated to Britain. The unheard voices, represented in Puri's interviewees, share their memories which Puri organises as short stories. The versions of history that these testimonies create do not attempt to contest historical fact or to apportion blame. Instead, they allow for a reimagining of Partition history, which is informed by different voices brought together, in order to demonstrate how the legacy of Partition affected, and continues to affect, the lives of people at an intimate level. Puri, in addressing gendered violence, echoes the sentiment of Butalia and Menon when she states:

> One of the hardest stories to tell is also one of the most shameful aspects of what happened during partition: how men of all religions targeted women and girls of the 'other' religion to rape and abduct them. Women of all ages, class, caste and ethnic groups were victims. Some women were forced into marriage and made to convert. Bodies were branded with nationalist slogans. This happened on a huge scale. (Puri 127)

Here, Puri visits the familiar trope of gendered violence which is documented in other oral history projects concerned with the plight of women living in a male-dominated society. She also presents historical facts to validate the sentiments she has concerning the treatment of many women during Partition. Oral history, here, provides agency to the narrator and becomes the medium through which a more complex and nuanced understating of the female experience is reached.

Puri's work, though appreciative of the historical data representing death tolls and abductions, blends them with individual voices to offer a more realist account of Partition that merges the objective political with the subjective personal. In the story of Gurbakhsh Garcha, a Sikh who grew up in a religiously diverse village in the Punjab, Puri addresses the issue of gendered violence and forced conversions. The account is also as an example of inter-religious kindness, as it shows a Sikh man protecting a Muslim woman, who then willingly becomes his wife. This is juxtaposed with an example of inter-religious cruelty when Gurbakhsh witnesses the oppressive nature of an elderly Sikh who, having abducted a young Muslim woman, forces her to consume pig fat. What these stories provide is an insight into the 'real' lived experiences of ordinary people – one which is virtually impossible to

interact with when engaging with overarching grand narratives that exclude localised accounts.

Micro-historical oral history projects, engaging with the human dimension of Partition, outline the oral archive as an essential space, which brings together historians, novelists, and politicians to reconstruct history to reflect a more grounded and informed representation of the past. What must also be pointed out here is that oral histories are invaluable when read as individual and subjective, instead of undergoing an archivisation that serves to propagate ideas that serve the interests of political narratives and agendas.

In "Orality and the Archive: Teaching the Partition of India through Oral Histories" (2016), Gaana Jayagopalan argues that oral histories of Partition are "archives of a different nature", for they "enabled students to recognize the human side of partition thereby creating an *affective* literacy of partition." (Jayagopalan 45). This 'affective literacy' of Partition allows for a distinct understanding of the historical facts of Partition, showing how oral histories are concerned with adding voices previously unheard to Partition archives. Puri's work fits Jayagopalan's definition of oral histories, as it frames itself as archival research in the form of oral history that aims to preserve and disseminate varied histories of the past. However, the relationship between the state and the archive is one that must not be negated, as many exclusions and effacements of particular histories are motivated by a political agenda.

The construction of historical narrative, even those represented in archives, must be critiqued even if only to understand the role archival research plays in shaping collective memory and truth-making. *Partition Voices* is at once representative of micro-history and macro-history working together, effectively mediating between the two scales by presenting both historical fact in combination with personal accounts, to bring an authenticity to the

work. Coupling this with individual accounts representing various religious and political groups involved in Partition, shows the impact oral history has had on enhancing knowledge on Partition, while presenting a more nuanced and 'alternative' version of reality. In combining historical facts, that develop a context for the sections in the book, with story-like accounts, Puri suggests that narratives informed by oral history are central to comprehending the division of India. The testimonies of interviewees in many oral history projects complement the historical representations which attempt to relay the statistical data on Partition.

In an interview with Aanchal Malhotra, Puri describes how she revisited the interviewees she had spoken to for the radio series her book was based on. This was to carry out further interviews with them and to continue her personal research regarding the event. This want to continue researching is apparent from the historical context provided in the book version which includes facts and figures, linking the individual accounts to the wider implications of Partition under the sections, "End of Empire", "Partition", and "Legacy". Puri, like many oral historians, regards oral testimony as a marker of authenticity. However, as has been pointed out in earlier parts of this chapter, public memorialisation in any form is not purely objective. The interviewer is part of the history that is created and recalled during an oral history interview. The inter-play between the questions and the dialogue of the interviewer and the memory of the interviewee is what produces the testimony. As a result, Puri's role in facilitating her interviewees must not be downplayed. Oral history is an indispensable source of information, more so in relaying localised experiences. However, it must also continue to be scrutinised when positioned as an authenticity marker.

A compelling point regarding Puri's work is that it chooses the account of Pamela Dowley-Wise – an English woman born in Calcutta, as the first narrative in the book. Puri's deliberate choice of using an English voice, instead of one from the major political and

religious groups, foregrounds her belief that the British were equally important during Partition. Her choice also reiterates that the division of India affected not only the dominant religious communities, but other groups, such as the British. Puri, through Pamela's account, connects both Indian and British history, urging readers to re-examine Partition history through a more informed lens. For some of the British, India was also home, and Puri presents three distinct stories from British people who have a deep connection to India. Pamela's description of the India she lived in provides an insight, not only into the type of lifestyle the British had in India, but also into the customs and traditions of local people. In relaying aspects of Pamela's life, Puri states:

> Pamela still recalls her favourite activity with a youthful twinkle in her eye – trips to the gardens of Calcutta's Victoria Memorial. . . . At the gardens they would meet her little friends. Pamela would bring one of her 'exotic' dolls, pushing it in an extravagant pram, a gift from her father from his time in New York. . . . Pamela's life was completely separate from the local population. 'We had nothing to do with and Indians. They never visited our home.' As was usual in the British Raj, the only interaction for a female of her class was with their Indian servants. Pamela's parents had eight, including a butler, a watchman, a sweeper, a bearer who served the table, and a *mali*, the gardener who maintained the grounds. (Puri 23)

These details allow readers to access a lived reality. Pamela's childhood is brought to life and her testimony provides a clear understanding of how she lived. Furthermore, Pamela provides first-hand evidence of the way in which the British and local Indians interacted with each other – adding details to historical facts which merely state that there was the existence of a

British presence in India up until Partition. By evidencing the social distancing between the British and local Indians, Pamela highlights how positions of hierarchy and status have always been maintained and implemented throughout Indian history. 'Difference' was maintained to establish order between the ruling British elite and the local Indians, and also to emphasise the hierarchical structure within the Indian caste system.

Pamela describes how "Separation and parting was the norm for so many British families in India", as they travelled between the two places readily (Puri 25). For her, it was also the same. Upon returning to India during the Second World War, Pamela entered the new family home where "servants lined up to welcome the women with garlands of marigolds and sweet-smelling jasmine flowers which they placed around their necks" (Puri 26). This was an act far replaced from the bombing that Pamela witnessed during the Blitz in Britain, after which she left for India. But, even in India, Pamela finds herself in a city under attack when the Japanese begin bombing Calcutta in 1942. Her personal and intimate description of India provides a detailed account of dead bodies lying in the streets after the bombings. She recalls that the Second World War ended in 1945 when bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, after which the riots of 1946 began. These riots spread throughout India, including Pamela's city Calcutta, prompting her family to return to Britain.

Pamela's account provides details of a past in which tensions between the different religious groups involved in the violence of Partition can be seen. From the perspective of the British, who enjoyed a privileged life in India, one learns of how, up until Partition, the different political and religious groups in India lived in relative peace. The fact that there was, for the most part, a co-existence between these groups, makes it difficult to truly understand the reasons behind the mass killings and communal violence of Partition. Pamela's witness account, operating at a micro-historical level, uses 'real' experience to evidence the historical facts pertaining to the violence that ensued during the riots leading up

to Partition. Witness testimonies, like the one from Pamela, therefore, provide an insight into the lives and perspectives of people, whose circumstances were shaped and affected by violence and migration.

In Swaran Singh Rayit's account, he recalls women being taken by force. No intervention by the authorities or anyone else takes place to save them. After saying this to Puri, Swaran Singh then stops, wanting to say no more. This silence and inability, as well as unwillingness to express more regarding the subject of women being abducted, is what micro-historical accounts give meaning and voice to by collecting the 'histories from below'. Silence here, has meaning and reflects the emotion and internal turmoil one experiences when attempting to address trauma which has not been allowed to surface for a long period. Puri draws attention to the fact that many migrants from South Asia who witnessed Partition, could not, until now, voice their sentiments regarding what they endured. Instead, they battled with trying to integrate into British culture – a process which took precedence over that of revisiting and sharing memories of Partition. As a result, stories like the ones told by Swaran Singh and Iftakhr Ahmed, who recalls the cries of young Muslim girls that were abducted during Partition, provides a deeper insight into the violence enacted upon women after the Radcliffe line was drawn. These stories also demonstrate that oral histories are able to access important details about the human experience of Partition. Without oral history projects, what survivors had endured would never be known. Nor would the understanding of Partition evolve beyond the statistics and general facts that aim to package it. The gendered experiences of Partition provide a different narrative to ones concerned with people from different classes and castes. Women's experiences included violence (often sexual), rape, abandonment and dislocation, whereas, class and caste related experiences depended on the social position of a person, which too involved levels of extreme violence for many. Oral histories do not operate to provide a history of the nation, nor a meta-narrative which aims to

characterise communities at the local level. They do, however, recover the trauma and individual suffering which has been excluded from nationalist accounts of Partition.

Butalia, Menon and Bhasin, Puri and others have carried out archival research concentrating on the plight of women, exploring dimensions of the female experience not previously detailed. However, as is highlighted in Jayagopalan's essay, "To look at Partition as an event that only affected women and children, not men, can be a dangerous reading of the archives themselves" (Jayagopalan 80). Like Bapsi Sidhwa, who explores male dismemberment and forced circumcisions in *Ice Candy Man*, Deepak Mehta's "Circumcision, Body, Masculinity: The Ritual Wound and Collective Violence" (2000), discusses the relationship between masculinity and nationalism. Her article frames the male body as a space which needs examining, for an overstated focus on the sexualised violence committed against women downplays the suffering that the bodies of men also endured.

What is important to consider is the immense challenge faced by oral historians when attempting to recover accounts of sexualised violence, from a male or female perspective. The shame associated with having endured sexual violence is immense for those originating from the subcontinent. Many South Asian communities hold 'shame' and 'honour' in high regard. Societies remain reluctant to speak about any subject which would bring shame to them or their families. As a result, many victims and witnesses of sexual violence in India and in British Asian communities remained silent about their experiences. Furthermore, men are regarded as patriarchs and the protectors of women in many South Asian societies. For these reasons, they may be extremely reluctant to accept that they had been subjected to sexual violence, or violence in general. Men who had been complicit in the violence against women or who had witnessed sexual violence against women, may also have wished to remain silent when asked about such thought-provoking subjects. Puri insists, therefore, that the silence of survivors must be respected, for reliving trauma through shared experiences can

be a painful unearthing of memories which have been deliberately suppressed. The stories of Gurbakhsh Garcha, Swaran Singh Rayit, and Khurshid Sultana alongside Puri's research, which draws on earlier oral history projects that focus on sexualised violence against women, all address the importance of recording and relaying the struggle of women during Partition. What must also be measured is the emotion endured by men who witnessed violence, often signified by silence and the unwillingness to recall or speak in oral history interviews.

Partition is known by the way it is represented – either through historical representation operating to deliver a particular narrative or through literary and archival work which attempts to enhance the understanding of a cataclysmic event in South Asian history. Oral histories concentrate on detail found at the micro-level to create an affective turn in how the historiography of Partition is recorded and conveyed. Stories of suffering, hope, kindness, and loss help create this affective turn which provides a voice to those excluded from grand narratives and state archives. Archiving stories which engage Partition history at an intimate level not only rewrites history but also uncovers the flaws inherent in the politically constructed versions of Partition that attempt to shape collective memory. In support of works by Butalia and Menon, Puri attempts to record first-hand experiences of women who lived through Partition. The notion that the female body was a battleground on which men carried out their wars and inscribed their victories, is one which Puri revisits in her work. Tropes of sexual violence, rape and forced conversion are portrayed in great detail in both oral history projects and fictional works. Memory narratives play an important role in reconstructing the past and shaping identity. An appreciation of the disruptive nature of oral testimony not only allows one to engage with Partition discourses more critically, but also emphasises how the past is not a fixed notion. It is malleable, continuously altering based on how and who is representing it in the present.

In Sidhwa's *Ice Candy Man,* Ayah, who was once the embodiment of a vibrant India, was abducted, raped, and then used as a performer after being forced to convert to Islam - showing how "women of all ages, class, caste, and ethnic groups were victims" (Puri 127). After her abduction, little is said about her in the novel until it becomes known that she has been forced to marry the man responsible for her torture and oppression. The novel's silence after her abduction until her reappearance in the narrative, is also symbolic of the silence many survivors present in oral history interviews when asked about the details concerning the violence they endured. Puri captures this point in her work, documenting how women were forced into marriages, religious conversions and outlines how their "bodies were branded with nationalist slogans" (Puri 127), resulting in a trauma that made relaying experiences incomprehensibly difficult. Much like Sidhwa and Butalia, who are concerned with the lived experiences of women during Partition, Puri discusses those who were abducted and then recovered under the Abducted Persons Recovery and Restorations Act. Puri recognises the importance of discussing the recovery of women in her work, for it details the willingness and effort of the governments of India and Pakistan in taking some responsibility for Partition. Furthermore, Puri urges readers to delve deeper into narratives concerned with the recovery and rehabilitation of women. Oral testimonies here would enjoin detailed human experiences with the statistics. Puri informs that "the recovery operation continued for nine years after Partition. In all 30,000 women were removed on both sides (22,000 Muslim women and 8,000 Hindu and Sikh women were recovered)" (Puri 129). Though these numbers provide context, statistics like these can be explained further through testimonial account which detail the recovery and restoration experiences.

Gurbakhsh's account demonstrates how oral history sheds light on the complexities concerned with the recovery of abducted women, especially those who had become pregnant whilst living through a forced marriage with their captor. The historiography of Partition, by

and large, does not document facts pertaining to those women who willingly stayed with the 'enemy' for one reason or another. Puri achieves this by presenting, through Gurbakhsh's account, the stories of two Muslim women. One was forced to obey an elderly Sikh, and the other willingly converted and stayed with a Sikh who had protected her during Partition. This need to relay diverse experiences of Partition is also discussed in the recent work of Pippa Virdee, a senior lecturer in Modern South Asian history at De Montfort University. In *From the Ashes of 1947* (2018), Virdee places great emphasis on the history of people by combining oral histories, poetry, and academic research. Virdee uses first-hand accounts of Partition from India and Pakistan to grant the same importance to personal histories that exemplify loss, suffering, and dislocation, that is awarded to political accounts. Virdee argues that all historical experiences connected to Partition should be examined by using oral histories and localised accounts to develop an alternative understanding of how Partition affected people in different ways. In echoing similar sentiments expressed in the works of Butalia, Menon and Bhasin, and in her own earlier article, "Remembering partition: women oral histories and the Partition of 1947" (2013), Virdee examines how the silence of ordinary people has featured more so in recent historical representations of the division of India. She concludes that a turn has been achieved through capturing ordinary experiences of local people in oral history interviews.

Virdee regards oral history as an empowering tool which she utilises and expands in her book to shed light on an alternative reality experienced at a personal and local level. This alternative reality opposes histories of 'great' men and nationalism commonly associated with grand narratives of Partition. Although her book focusses on the Punjab as a site where a large degree of violence and dislocation occurred, she revisits the topic of subjugated women, who after being raped, were ostracised by their own communities. The individual accounts of women in her book allow readers to understand sexual violence and the concept of honour in

South Asian communities through a critical approach, highlighting not just stories of violence, but the lasting effects left by it, even after women were recovered or returned to their own communities. Both Puri and Virdee attempt to include and discuss varied oral history accounts to broaden the discussion on the different lived experiences of Partition. Such a methodology contrasts with earlier projects such as G.D Khosla's work for the Fact Finding Organisation in which he interviewed fifteen hundred women (Frischmann 2), bringing attention to only the violence enacted by Muslims against Hindus and Sikhs. Instead of focusing on a particular group with the agenda of apportioning blame, Puri and Virdee use an inclusive approach. Oral history, as evidenced in Puri's work, is a crucial source for historians attempting to connect the official with the intimate, local, and personal. By documenting the lived experience of those who were involved in a particular history, a better understanding is made available for later generations and for those who engage with history critically. In concluding her 2013 article on oral history, Virdee states that oral history "provides the human dimension, which is often missing in the dominant political histories. Through living people, oral history allows us to connect the present with the past: preoccupation for the historian" (Virdee "Remembering Partition" 60). Negating historical facts and statistics is not the focus of oral history projects, but for them to be re-read in conjunction with the 'histories from below' that bring meaning and depth to numerical and statistical data that many histories report. The primacy awarded to empirical histories which contest the unreliability of memory and oral accounts needs to be continuously critiqued, as the construction of empirical sources and their authenticity is also the subject of debate. Piecing together stories of the marginalised groups of Partition constructs an alternative history and reality which confronts ideological representations of Partition - one which is often presented as linear and overarching.

A more recent work on Partition that includes oral histories is Anindya Raychaudhuri's *Narrating South Asian Partition: Oral History, Literature, Cinema* (2019). The book looks at how Partition is remembered by comparing the body of oral history testimonies with other representations from literature, cinema, and visual art. Raychaudhuri studies the narratives that emerge from all of these representations, approaching them as texts that interpret and reconstruct the past. In doing so, he considers the common themes that appear in various narratives and points out those marginalised voices which have been overlooked in narration, to provide an understanding of how memory is put to work in various representations in the public sphere. Raychaudhuri examines the themes of home, loss and family separation, Partition as seen through the child gaze, violence and the nostalgic home, death-trains and riverscapes in his work. He also discusses the memory and identity that emerges from the oral history interviews he conducts as evidence of agency, arguing that examining Partition discourses as representations of agency develops a more cohesive understanding of how agency allows individuals to locate an alternative route to belonging. In this regard, his work provides a new lens from which to re-analyse previous oral history projects. By regarding testimony as an act of agency that enables the narrator to rewrite history, there is a reconfiguration of the understanding surrounding how Partition history is recalled and narrated. Raychaudhuri brings together public and private forms of memory in his book, supported through the collection of 165 oral history testimonies from a diverse set of people. He demonstrates how survivors of Partition exercise their own authority in oral testimonies over how they remember the past. In doing so, he shows how memory is mobilised to construct and reconstruct identity, and how agency through testimony can award a feeling of belonging to those displaced by Partition. Although he regards oral history testimonies as extremely valuable and disruptive, Raychaudhuri's work does not overlook the challenges oral testimony presents, for "No interview is ever an ideal transmission of

information between interviewer and interviewee, and the location and physical context of an interview always has an effect on the nature of the testimony" (Raychaudhuri, *Narrating* 6).

What makes Raychaudhuri's work different to other Partition discourses is that he approaches representations of Partition as texts that navigate memories. Furthermore, his work explores representations of Bengal, as well as the Punjab, to detail the experiences of those who came from areas in the Indian subcontinent that have not been researched extensively in Partition discourses. By bringing together both private and public memory, he believes that there exists "a complex dialectical relationship between the public representation and private memories of partition – how people's memories are influenced by public discourse and how the creative and cultural practice of academics, artists, and activists is influenced by their own direct and inherited memories" (Raychaudhuri, *Narrating* 5). In discussing private forms of testimony, oral histories, and cultural representations of Partition together, Raychaudhuri evaluates ways in which these narratives shape the past and inhibit the present. Much like scholars before him, like Butalia, Yasmin Khan and Mohanram, Raychaudhuri is not concerned with arriving at fixed notions of 'truth' about Partition history, nor is he concerned with the historical accuracies of the narratives he refers to (literature, cinema, art and memory-stories) (Raychaudhuri, *Narrating* 5). Instead, as is the concern of this thesis, he is interested in how these narratives "are put to work in various ways in the present. Mistakes, misrememberings and inaccuracies can be just as interesting and just as valuable to understanding the legacies of partition" (Raychaudhuri, *Narrating* 5).

Like Puri, Raychaudhuri's work begins with him narrating what is personal to him. He mentions a poignant memory that his mother, Sipra, narrates. As a young boy, Raychaudhuri is told by his mother that their real home is in Bangladesh, and not in India. She also tells him that they are no longer able to travel there due to the division of India. Raychaudhuri finds this alarming. The fact that one can be uprooted from his/her homeland

based on political decisions and newly demarcated borders unsettles him, as it does to many in present times who constantly live with threat of dislocation and displacement. Raychaudhuri then questions his mother about the possibility of them being uprooted from where they currently reside in Chandanaggar (Raychaudhuri, *Narrating* 1). This question touches Sipra, as the emotion and uncertainty of what defines home and belonging is stirred. In Sipra's narration, there appears a challenge in narrating, remembering and articulating Partition history. She finds it difficult to convey the true extent of all the emotions that Partition evokes in her to her son, as well as the tangible facts. It is this difficulty in articulating the complex and often painful history of the division of India that continues into the present day. However, Raychaudhuri rightfully points out that "the memorial legacy of partition is one of trauma, pain and shared suffering, but it is also always *productive*, not in the sense of it being a positive event for the people who lived through it and its legacy but productive in the sense that helps to produce narratives" (Raychaudhuri, *Narrating* 2). The narratives which emerge from oral history testimonies, literature, cinema and other forms of art are part of this 'productiveness' and construct "stories which together create memories" (Raychaudhuri, *Narrating* 2).

This thesis has taken the position that different and competing discourses on Partition should all be read together and not in isolation. The official and 'alternate' archive both offer different types of 'truth' which piece together a more comprehensive understanding of the events of 1947. Raychaudhuri also believes that the forms of narrative which make up Partition discourses should be read together and "to see how one genre may illuminate another" (Raychaudhuri, *Narrating* 8). In comparing memory narratives and the way memory is mobilised in the public sphere, his work evaluates ways in which texts from each genre remember and reinterpret the division of India. The different ways in which memory works in various narratives produces 'alternative' stories of Partition which challenge state-endorsed

official accounts. Raychaudhuri's comparative study of oral history testimonies and other forms of representational production, present a contrasting view on Partition historiography "which allows for the articulation of marginalised voices, not just as victims, but as also as active agents, who through the narration of their stories, embody the desire to be seen as being in control of their histories" (Raychaudhuri, *Narrating* 8-9). This agency through narration approach Raychaudhuri applies to oral testimonies includes complicating what 'agency' means and how it is applied. For him, agency must encompass a broader meaning which he defines as "the way in which people exert narrative control over their memories and refuse to be defined by them" (Raychaudhuri, *Narrating* 10). These instances of agency that Raychaudhuri identifies in the oral history testimonies and other cultural representations in his work, allow interviewees and producers of cultural representation to "exert control over painful memories, and, through this control, construct oneself and one's community as differently victim, survivor, perpetrator, savior, and so on" (Raychaudhuri, *Narrating* 11).

Oral history testimonies expand the 'alternative' archive on Partition by representing a multiplicity of voices that produce multiple forms of interpretation. This is also the case with cultural representations of the event which encompass multiple voices, each detailing distinct experiences of the division of India. Much like Raychaudhuri's work, this thesis has discussed and analysed oral histories and fiction as *texts* that include an array of voices which deliver multiple meanings about the past. This is to stress the importance of bringing together the various multi-layered and multifaceted narratives of Partition in order to explore "its memorial legacies" (Raychaudhuri, *Narrating* 12) and to learn about how marginalised people reflect their experiences through storytelling. For Raychaudhuri, these stories not only present different kinds of valuable 'truth', but also 'give back' control to interviewees over their history and identity. As is the case for all the oral history projects discussed in this chapter, Raychaudhuri's work too is a reminder that Partition created individual and national

trauma which should not be further exacerbated by omitting the stories and voices of those who have for so long been overlooked in official versions of the past (Raychaudhuri, *Narrating* 13).

Raychaudhuri's work shows how 'alternative' representations of Partition are forms of narrative agency used by interviewees, authors of fiction, filmmakers, producers and artists to achieve particular objectives. For some of his interviewees, agency through narration allows them to challenge the 'victim' label that aims to define many Partition survivors and refugees. In one interview, Bashir states that "I was involved in the Pakistan movement as a student in my college […] And so it was the students who started going out to the public, the villages, the towns, everywhere, and explain to them, and bring them closer to the Muslim League" (Raychaudhuri, *Narrating* 150). As Raychaudhuri points out, such an admission from a regular student immediately challenges the top-down process understanding of Partition. The idea that Partition was forced upon the diverse populations of India who were made to negotiate its consequences is rebuked by Bashir. For people like him, the processes of Partition involved the active engagement of ordinary individuals who voluntarily participated in its events. By relaying such memories that feature activism in oral history testimonies, interviewees exercise narrative agency by refuting the 'victim' definition ascribed to them. In narrating their experiences of helping others, active involvement in Partition processes and of resisting political and societal expectations, they write and reclaim their own histories and identities and provide a more nuanced understanding of the human experience of the event. In another example of narrative agency, Raj rejects the 'refugee' identity given to him after Partition. Raj and his family were placed in a refugee rehabilitation camp that was unfair and repressive. After noticing that the camp's potatoes and onions were rotting, he addresses visitors to the camp by saying, "You see the conditions of the onions and potatoes. Are they worth eating? If they are, please, you first try and distribute among the

. . . no doubt you call us refugees, but we are not refugees, mind it." (Raychaudhuri, *Narrating* 159). The visitors agree with Raj and ask the truckman to bring new supplies to the camp. What Raychaudhuri shows here is not just an example of individual circumstance created as a consequence of Partition's tragedy, but the 'taking back' of control over personal representation by someone regarded as a 'refugee' by the state and society. His oral testimony provides him agency through narration in which he defines his own history that he controlled by changing his material conditions. In a further display of his self-resilience and rejection of refugee status, he says " I say I am not refugee. I have just come from my birthplace to another land, it's my own land. Bharat. Why you people are calling us refugees? We have not taken refuge with you" (Raychaudhuri, *Narrating* 161). Raj wants to emphasise that he is not an outsider, nor does he expected to be treated as one. He is Indian, and as has always been Indian. It is this mindset and resilience that serves him well during his time at the refugee camp, also bringing him success when he migrates to the United Kingdom later in life.

Raychaudhuri's work also demonstrates how Partition created opportunities and a better life for people, as is evidenced in parts of Menon and Bhasin's *Border and Boundaries,* Such narratives are in stark contrast to the stories of trauma and dislocation also reported through the 'alternate' archive. In these representations of Partition, agency and individual control is what the narration conveys. What is also interesting and relevant to the objective and overall point of this thesis, is how Raychaudhuri positions academic work and cultural representations on Partition "as material evidence of narrative agency" (Raychaudhuri, *Narrating* 171). He cites the inclusion of the author's personal stories in works by renowned scholars like Urvashi Butalia, Devika Chawla, Vazira Zamindar and Yasmin Khan, not just to show the impact of Partition at a personal/familial level, but to show that authors also attribute personal meanings to the division of India. Raychaudhuri argues that this ascribing

of meanings that results in a re-interpretation and re-presentation of Partition history is narrative agency, similar to the one oral history interviewees employ when re-negotiating their memories to reclaim their histories and how they are represented. As a result, Raychaudhuri believes that "we are all in various ways putting our memories to work, to make better sense of the stories of the past, our lives in the present and the complex relationship between the two" (Raychaudhuri, *Narrating* 177).

Narrating South Asian Partition provides a critical analysis of how narrative agency is exercised in oral history testimonies and cultural representations of Partition. It is also an evaluation of memory narratives in which the past is constantly re-created and re-interpreted. Whether it is oral history, fiction, film or memorials, the memories that shape its narrative are constantly being used and re-used in present times. Although the discussion in this chapter on aspects of Raychaudhuri's book is concerned with oral histories and the type of 'truth' they convey, his work draws attention to the plurality of narratives and the relationship between memory and representation, and the crucial role of narrative agency in it, across various forms of representation. What must not be overlooked when considering Raychaudhuri's work is how oral history can be a public means of organising Partition history, which emphasises the individual experience. As with any mode of exploring and presenting Partition, it must be subjected to critical examination, not only in relation to the way in which memories are co-created (between interviewer and interviewee) in an interview setting, but also the way in which oral testimonies may fail to address the complicated politics of Partition, by over-relying on accounts which detail human suffering. Raychaudhuri's work provides a critical comparison between oral testimony and other forms of cultural representation of Partition. However, all such forms must be held to account, so as to problematise and enhance our understanding of how representations of history work, and to what effect.

This chapter has demonstrated how a cultural turn in recent times has resulted in a move away from the grand narratives of Partition towards a more localised micro-historical treatment of Partition history. Up until the 1980's, many Partition narratives were concerned with the high politics and overarching histories of the division of India. However, as is evident from the works discussed in this chapter, oral historians have actively sought to deconstruct linear models of history, contesting the process of truth-making by conventional and official accounts.

This chapter has argued that no fixed representation of the 'real' dimension of Partition exists, but an emphasis on personal and intimate memory-narratives, which employ the creative practice of storytelling, can enrich understanding of Partition. In line with the overall argument of this thesis, this chapter has examined how oral histories are put to work, in an attempt to provide a more inclusive and comprehensive account of the lived experiences of Partition. However, this has been carried out without overlooking the limitations of oral testimony, which is based on recalling from memory in a complex interview setting. As discussed, memory has a fluid and malleable nature. Even in the absence of political influence, memories can be guided during an oral history interview, or by individuals themselves, who can remember an event differently, each time they recall it. Oral testimony is not an absolute truth, and the use of it as an authenticity marker has been questioned.

Oral history projects by the likes of Butalia, Menon and Bhasin, Khan, Malhotra, Puri and Raychaudhuri, have all documented the quotidian dimension that 'alternative' investigations on Partition present. This chapter supports the view of these scholars who have demonstrated the value of oral history and the narrative agency it provides, especially to marginalised people. By approaching oral history as *texts*, this chapter has also identified how oral history provides valuable kinds of 'truth' that use storytelling to produce creative explorations of embodied feelings and experience. Fragmentary histories supplement

historical data with vivid ‘voices’ that relay the human experience, and demonstrate the way in which testimony, as agency, allows histories to be re-written and reclaimed. Such works not only provide clarity on previously little-known aspects of Partition history (the experiences of women and marginalised people), but present alternative perspectives from which to re-interpret the events of 1947.

To refute politically charged discourses on Partition history is not the focus of ‘new’ fragmentary histories, which constantly attempt to recover first-hand testimonies from the Partition generation that is dying out. The role of these histories is, however, to problematise the interplay between the official and ‘alternate’ archive, in order to provide a more nuanced understanding of Partition. This understanding is important for those residing in South Asia, as well as for those living in the diaspora. Oral history testimony has extended the boundary of history, and a life-story approach, which regards memory as an avenue from which to access multiple versions of the past, provides different kinds of ‘truth’, presented through individual interpretation.

Conclusion

For the purposes of this thesis, a small oral history project was planned to record the experiences of migrants from both India and Pakistan in the Lancashire area of the United Kingdom. The cotton industry in the region attracted many South Asian migrants who settled there in the second half of the twentieth century. These people were from different religious backgrounds but were predominantly Muslim and Sikh. The potential participants were mostly elderly – in their 80's or older, and part of an age group that is becoming increasingly smaller. The intention was to record their first-hand experiences of Partition and to see how they use memories in the present to claim their own histories. Couples were to be interviewed with the intention of accessing different perspectives of the event – representative of both the male and female voice. Several couples were identified. The benefit of collecting the human experience of ordinary people, who migrated to the Lancashire area from India and Pakistan, would have been manifold, thus, contributing to the expansion of Partition's oral archive. The aim of the project was also to explore how different religious groups tolerated and interacted with one another, as they worked together in the cotton industry of Lancashire. The project also intended to examine the extent to which female survivors of Partition adapted to new surroundings after having witnessed a violent past.

However, due to the outbreak of COVID-19 in March 2020 and the subsequent lockdowns, face-to-face interviews have not been possible. Online alternatives were an option and practical/distancing issues could have been mitigated by using technology. However, people were not very forthcoming. There was a feeling of collective grief in the community. Finally, the increased number of COVID-19 related deaths in the Asian community made it difficult to pursue the project, considering generational and cultural

sensitivities. Many had died or become seriously ill. It was not the right time to be re-living tragedies of the past. This sentiment was reflected by the children and grandchildren of potential participants, who were reluctant to arrange online engagements. They did not want feelings of suffering or pain to resurface in a climate where grief was already widespread, making it increasingly difficult to access participants.

A focal concern of this thesis has been to delve deep into types of narrative that different bodies of history create and how they shape the legacy of Partition. By taking a *literary* position, this thesis has approached oral testimonies and literary fiction as types of *texts* which take creative approaches to telling different kinds of 'truth' about history through storytelling. The literary analysis undertaken has demonstrated how different representations of Partition work and for what reason. Conventional histories of Partition are concerned with statistics and facts. However, fiction and oral history provide an 'alternative' to 'real' historical accounts by focusing on the human dimension of the division of India. This human aspect is relayed through 'alternative' stories which are bound to a historical event. These stories do not dramatically reimagine the events of Partition, but work within the scope of known facts about Partition, so as to produce creative explorations of embodied feelings and experiences. 'Alternative' investigations on Partition are extremely valuable, for they complement and 'bring life' to the facts and statistics of 'historical' accounts.

Both historians and fiction/creative writers are interested in presenting the 'truth' about Partition, albeit using different methods. Oral history interviewees and writers of fiction narrate the feelings and emotions connected to factual events that historians try to report. It can be said, therefore, that historical and official accounts of Partition are concerned with action, as opposed to the reaction and experience of the event, which the 'alternative' archive focuses on. The writing of history involves narration which is a representation of how historical facts are interpreted. Therefore, any version of history or 'truth' is a type of

storytelling based on a narrator's perspective. The main difference between 'historical' and 'alternative' (oral history and fiction in this case) accounts is the subjective creative practice that oral history interviewees and literary authors employ to detail different dimensions of a historical event and the human experience of it. This thesis has argued that oral histories of Partition are embedded in the past, presenting an 'alternate' truth to conventional histories. Oral testimonies shed light on the lived experience, which filters into fictional and cultural representation, uncovering the stories of those who would have otherwise been forgotten.

Partition is synonymous with mass violence, displacement and migration, and analysing its narratives has highlighted stories that are conveyed by different histories. Partition's violent history has left behind a complicated legacy, both in the Indian subcontinent and diaspora. The struggle with identity and belonging, after the formation of India and Pakistan. has perplexed definitions of what constitutes 'home'. Although colonial rule ended in 1947, the hastily drawn up boundaries dividing India resulted in the largest exodus of people in human history. Killings, rape, abductions and forced conversions were just a handful of the effects of this violent divide.

By discussing bodies of history that represent and shape the present-day image of Partition, this thesis has argued that a single history cannot reconcile the legacy of Partition's violent past. It emphasises the need to evaluate further, the public and the private, as well as the fragmented and official versions of the event. This is crucial to reach a more holistic understanding. Gyanendra Pandey (2001) argues that there is no unanimity regarding the cause and nature of the division of India. He also believes that true representations of the loss it caused are not possible and that many national histories have been overly concerned with justifying the sudden outbreak of violence between religious groups that had lived side-by-side for centuries. This lack of unanimity has produced contrasting histories of the event. These histories, represented through various forms of art, fiction, film and oral history,

'remember' what the official archive and state-influenced cultural representations have 'forgotten'.

This study has discussed well-known works on Partition and examined works of literary and oral history that engage with the human dimension of the event. Examining the 'alternate' archive, especially the disruptive role that oral histories play in expanding the corpus on Partition, has demonstrated the contribution that fragmentary histories have made to Partition discourses. The medium representing it has been critically examined to convey that the past is not just palimpsest and malleable, but is also being constantly shaped. The history of Partition is recycled by dominant forms of historiography, as it is by localised stories and accounts of individualised experience. Nationalist narratives shape representations of the past to serve a particular political ideology or objective. This often omits the voices of marginalised groups and 'histories from below', downplaying the intervention micro-narratives make to the homogenisation of Partition history. Oral history projects by Urvashi Butalia, Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin, as well as Furrukh Khan, also demonstrate that the female voice has the potential to unsettle official historiography's regulating of the past, especially concerning the representation of women. This evidences the need to record, as well as disseminate, marginalised accounts, and also demonstrates how 'alternative' investigations on Partition enrich its discourses. These 'fragmentary' and 'alternate' histories complement statistical archives and official accounts by telling different kinds of 'truth' which embody the experience of violence, trauma and dislocation that was endured.

The narratives examined in this thesis represent the past by negotiating between its memories, history and trauma. In Sidhwa's work, a collection of tropes and metaphors denoting different kinds of margins are simultaneously deployed in order to generate texts interested in portraying the main events of Partition through the perspective of people who are variously designated to the periphery. The analysis of *Ice Candy Man* also explicates the

role of fiction in providing a graphic representation of the human experience, especially in relation to women. In providing agency and empowerment to female characters in her seminal novel, Bapsi Sidhwa portrays women as figures of resistance, assisting victims through the violence and chaos of Partition. The 'alternative' version of history that fiction presents, therefore, not only connects readers with the human emotions of Partition, but also 'cuts across' nationalist narratives which overlook the experience of marginalised groups. Sidhwa's short story, "Defend Yourself Against Me", which is set in the diaspora, shows how a violent and traumatic past shapes memory and defines relationships with the historical 'other' in the present. This story, like her novel, does not attempt to explain Partition, nor to resolve its trauma. Instead, it 'looks forward' by exploring the possibility of reconciliation and forgiveness. Although memories of Partition are located at the margins in the diaspora, Sidhwa uses the material disconnection from South Asia to show that identity construction is shaped by how one remembers or forgets the past. "Defend Yourself Against Me" explores the relationship between memory and narration. By using the fragmented and multi-layered form of the short story, Sidhwa emphasises that Partition is a complex topic which remains unresolved. Many, in the diaspora, are either misinformed or partially informed about their historical past. Sidhwa encourages a revisiting of this past by emotionally connecting readers with the human experiences of her characters. Many South Asians and their descendants continue to define themselves in relation to the 'other' in the subcontinent. This has also carried over, to some extent, into the diaspora. Sidhwa's novel and short story lay bare the experiences of ordinary people during Partition, but also provide hope for a better future. In support of what she suggests, this thesis maintains that only through reconciliatory efforts and forgiveness, which fosters tolerance and dialogue, can communities truly move on from the painful memories of Partition.

In discussing mental health and the psychological trauma of Partition, an analysis of both “Toba Tek Singh” and *The Unsafe Asylum* has demonstrated that Partition affected the psyche as much as it did the bodies of survivors and victims. Terms such as madness, insanity and asylum which often feature in discourses concerned with the psychological impact of Partition are not neutral terms, and they often carry with them a strong social, legal, medical and moral judgement. This thesis has argued that terms like ‘madness’ are social and medical constructs used to marginalise (often socially ‘undesirable’) people. It has also considered the institution of the asylum as a colonial construct in which mental illness becomes a point of colonial administration and management. What is evident from the analysis of “Toba Tek Singh” is that Saadat Hasan Manto’s work is a simultaneous critique of social structures and a speculative account of what life in India can possibly look like when those organizing colonial structures disappear or become redundant. “Toba Tek Singh” should have triggered much more fictional and academic work that probes the ‘madness’ metaphor associated with Partition. However, this area of research has remained wanting. Manto’s use of satire, conveyed through the actions of the mentally insane in an asylum, criticises the politics that caused Partition and the violence that ensued. His work outlines the neglect shown by the state towards asylum populations and demonstrates the inadequacies and unwillingness of medical and psychological professionals in providing appropriate care to those affected at a psychological level. “Toba Tek Singh” illustrates how institutional insanity can erase syncretic cultural identity, dislocating one’s sense of self. It shows that populations can be controlled and regulated in the image of the nation-state. In resisting this regulation, Manto’s protagonist, Bishen, dies in ‘no man’s land’ – not defined by the state, but by his own resistance. Collective and individual storytelling has the power to provide people with the agency to reconstruct their own identities. It can also become a way of maintaining communal identification in the face of loss and cultural degradation. “Toba Tek Singh” is one

such storytelling that interprets individual experiences of loss, dislocation and existential crisis that broadens perspectives and understanding on Partition.

The Unsafe Asylum touches upon tropes explored in "Toba Tek Singh", but also explores the inter-generational trauma of Partition. An evaluation of Anirudh Kala's interwoven text shows that the field of psychiatry in India is attempting to address the psychological impact of Partition. Over seventy-four years have passed since the event, but survivors and their descendants continue to reconcile with the legacy of Partition. Psychiatrists like Kala, Sanjeev Jain and Alok Sarin, represent new approaches in Indian psychiatry, which aim to revisit Partition's psychological effects and its subsequent trauma. Kala's narrative focuses on the plight of inmates at an asylum, while exploring the lives of other characters who are affected by the 'madness' of Partition. The narrative frequently emphasises the paradox of a relationship between two asylum inmates who oppose the violence of Partition and the 'madness' it represents. Their conversations are the only sane rhetoric amidst the confusion and insanity created by Partition. Kala's work also challenges the 'us' and 'them' binaries which have been created by nationalism in both India and Pakistan. He insists that cross-border relationships are possible and worthy of forging. Although his medicalising of both the memory and trauma of Partition is controversial and has been critiqued in this thesis, he illustrates the efforts of psychiatrists, like himself, who are working to understand and treat trauma patients affected by Partition. It is this commendable effort that will provide survivors and their descendants with the care and treatment they have long awaited.

The 1947 Partition is the foundation of the modern-day nations of India and Pakistan and remains one of the most significant events in their social and cultural history. Partition, however, remains unresolved, often characterised by ongoing tensions over Kashmir and border skirmishes between India and Pakistan. Official state archives and statistics-based

mass observations have been reporting Partition history since the division of India. However, history can no longer rely on the official archive to report the complex past of South Asia. The 'alternate' archive, which include digital archives, cultural representations (art and drama), film, literary works, and oral histories, have enhanced discourses on Partition by bringing together the fragmentary and autobiographical histories that have often been overlooked. The people's history that has emerged from the 'alternate' archive is by no means the only 'true' representation of the past. It is, however, a combination of memory and public history that provides a more embodied experience of what 'actually' happened during Partition, presenting another set of 'truths' about the events of 1947.

This study has discussed oral history projects and the importance of the oral archives in embodying the experience of Partition victims, opposing the erasure of the human dimension, which is characteristic of many official archives. Personal memories construct Partition history in ways that national and state-led memorialisation does not. They complement existing statistical data by offering an insight to the suffering and 'everydayness' of Partition for those who lived through it. Although memory is a contested area of inquiry when used as an authenticity marker, it provides agency through narration and empowerment to many neglected and marginalised groups. Thus, 'alternate' representations of Partition history in fiction and oral testimonies allow for a critical re-appraisal of Partition.

The 'alternate' archive on Partition has been enriched by literary works and oral histories that report the human experience. Fictional works that represent the past are often embedded in historical facts, creating stories that are informed by oral testimony to communicate 'real' feelings and emotions. In doing so, fiction also contests political and official versions which over-rely on statistical data to report the casualties of Partition. Both fiction and oral histories expand the 'alternate' archive and increase our understanding, allowing mediation between the public (or official) and private (or personal) versions of the

event. The understanding that is reached through this mediation can foster an atmosphere of tolerance and reconciliation between the different political and religious communities of South Asia. The scale of the tragedy brought about by the hastily drawn Radcliffe Line remains unprecedented. However, a concerted effort to collect the many versions of Partition history that exist will better prepare us to continue dealing with its complex legacy.

History is concerned with recording and reporting major events from the past. Much is learned from the facts and statistics narrated through 'objective' history and 'official' accounts. Yet, memories and individual experiences must contribute to any representation of history. Partition's rigid historiographic narration is challenged by the creative practice of storytelling employed in fiction and oral histories. Creative practice re-interprets the events of 1947 by recentring the narratives of those affected by Partition. This approach enables a revision of ideas surrounding identity formation and nation-building and also sheds light on the human impact of the events of 1947. Official histories, therefore, should not be rejected or read in isolation. They should be complemented by the fluidity of creative representations of Partition history, in order to counter the fixity that defines them, and to provide a more inclusive understanding and interpretation of the division of India.

Collating multiple narratives on Partition provides a multi-layered understanding of how and why the event continues to affect people and their identity formation in modern times. First-hand oral history accounts, which also inform fictional representation, provide interviewees with agency through narration, through which a deeper meaning of home, belonging, and identity can be ascertained. These accounts and narratives, therefore, represent an advance in Partition research, characterised by a determined attempt to arrive at a critical understanding of the human dimension of an event still marked by obscurity. Academic research, however, needs to remain ongoing to problematise the overreliance on oral testimony as an authenticity marker. The focus of any 'alternative' representation of

Partition history should not be to arrive at an absolute truth, but to maintain an exploratory approach which recognises that no one discipline can provide a comprehensive understanding of the division of India. Multiple and alternative perspectives on Partition history need to engage with discourses from the official archive to establish an interplay that continues to foster an interdisciplinary and critical re-interpretation of Partition and its legacy.

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