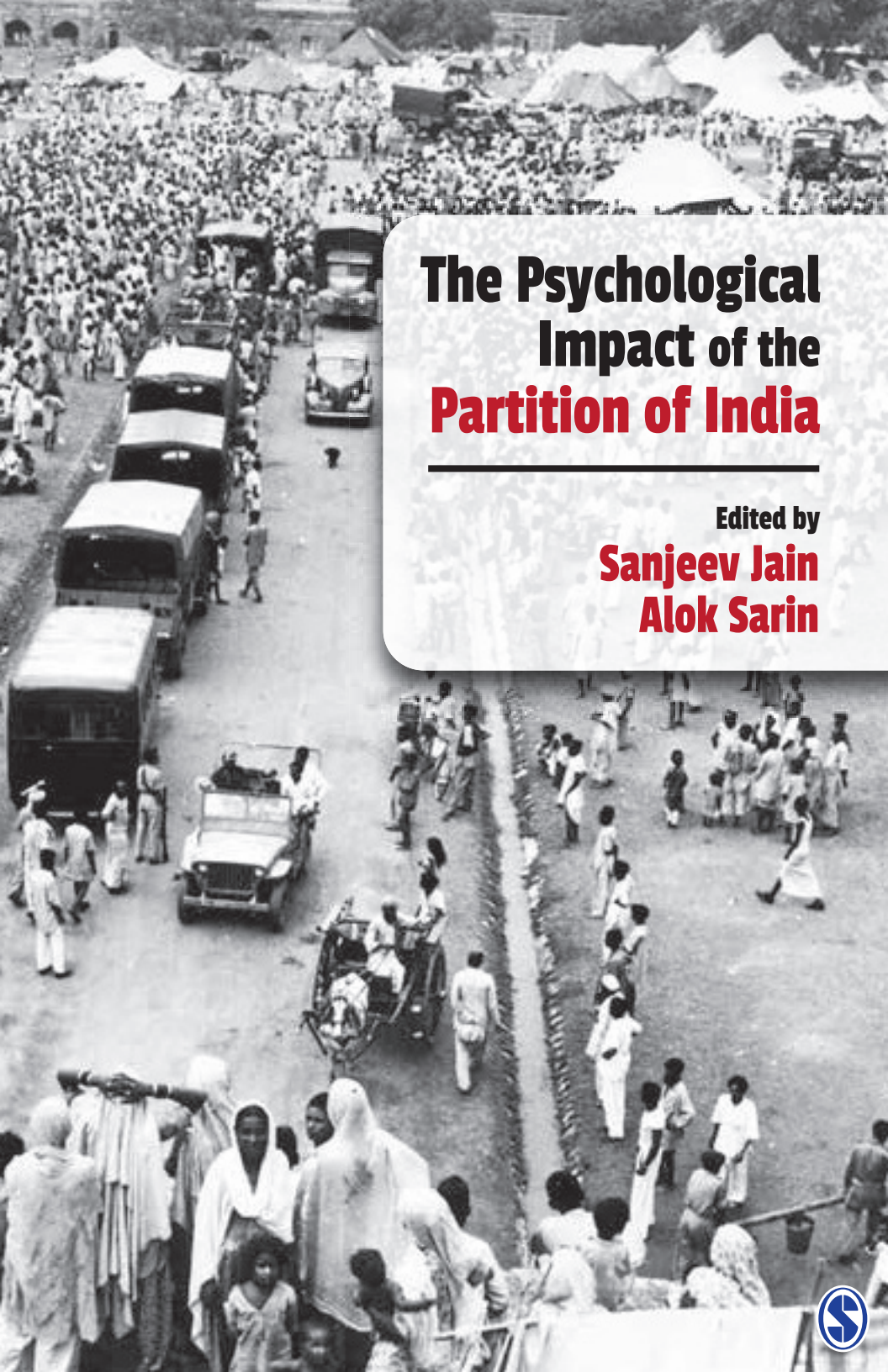

The Psychological Impact of the Partition of India

Edited by

Sanjeev Jain

Alok Sarin

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FOREWORD

The growth of psychiatry as a caring profession in the Indian subcontinent, and its evolution from a relatively under-regarded but necessary service to a respected medical field, has been an interesting journey.

Psychiatry has changed from a rather peripheral presence, mainly in the mental hospital, to a mainstream medical discipline which also lays emphasis on the psychological and social aspects of ill health. It thus engages with disease, distress and disorder in society. The uniqueness of the discipline lies in its potential ability to integrate the medical aspects of disease with psychological and social constructs, thus making it a medical discipline embedded in the societal matrix.

In its growth as a discipline, psychiatry tries to be self-reflexive, and looks at its own history and development.

Despite the discipline of psychiatry having turned its gaze towards the explorations of its history and evolution, the same cannot be said about its gaze and attention towards society and its transformations. While there have been some exceptions which have found some reverberations in the psychiatric discourse, such as the suicides among farmers and students, natural disasters, the changing patterns of addiction, to name a few, such discourses have been few and far between.

One example of this is the happenings of 1947, the birth of independent India and Pakistan, and the convulsive upsurge of horrific violence that accompanied the Partition of India.

Much has been written about the psychological impact of the Holocaust, and other ideas and events in the twentieth century, and the psychological impacts of these. However, mainstream

Indian psychiatry has been strangely silent on the gruesome and multiple traumas within India, and on the rather obvious fact that these would have generated a particularly large amount of psychological fall-out.

It is also now becoming clear that there is an intergenerational transmission of trauma.

Personally, as somebody who has lived through those days, and having experienced first-hand the fears and difficulties of the translocation, this is an event, I feel, that has definitely impacted me as a person, and the lives, attitudes and persona of those around me. For a generation that remembers the year 1947 as a marker of the Partition, as much as that of Independence, the events of that year have moulded their thinking, whether they be Indians or Pakistanis.

There are obviously many reasons why the medical discipline has, in a manner, not addressed this rather complex and large subject. One wonders if the trauma was so intense that it led to a stunned silence among professionals who were also deeply affected by it. It appears that the next generation has now been able to bring these events back into public scrutiny.

The question also remains as to how it is best addressed.

Should it be a primarily medical gaze, or should the historical and sociological views inform the medical gaze?

If so, how is this best done?

Should it be a psychological understanding and help of the individual victim, or should it be an exploration of how societies negotiate trauma and healing?

This is admittedly a complex and large area and will need much thought both within the discipline and in society.

I personally think that the time is now ripe to attempt an exploration of the multiple psychological and sociological impacts of the Partition, and welcome this effort by the editors of this book.

This book is an interdisciplinary effort, which brings together practitioners of psychiatry, history, literature and sociology to try and connect how such different observations can help us understand those events. And I also hope that this awareness inoculates us against a recurrence of the same pathology.

Having a multidisciplinary gaze on social events allows these events to be understood from many vantages. The strength of this book lies in such an approach. This is a reminder to the discipline of psychiatry that it must remain broad-based and multifaceted in its approach to address mental problems and human suffering.

The book certainly does not attempt to provide definitive answers either for psychiatry or society, but if it succeeds in generating conversations both within and between disciplines, then, I think, it will have done what the editors have attempted to achieve.

I have known Alok Sarin, Sanjeev Jain and Pratima Murthy over many years, and I regard very highly their academic abilities and, in particular, their capacity for looking at issues in very diverse fields of study and integrating this into their work. This, specially, is a project close to my heart, and I hope that it will be read and debated by all those interested in mental health, not just of the individual but also of society.

—Dr Narendra Nath Wig
Emeritus Professor of Psychiatry
Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research
Chandigarh, India

PREFACE

The book emerges from the clinic, as it were, through the teaching, discussing and practising of psychiatry. Having studied and worked at two of the larger institutes in the country (the All India Institute of Medical Sciences [AIIMS], Delhi, and the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences [NIMHANS], Bangalore), we have been trying to understand the psycho-social backdrop to the various issues of mental illness, across the spectrum, in the clinic and the community.

Being a 'refugee' was a kind of an affectless status for most of our personal lives, though it did seem a very emotive issue for the extended family. There were physical emblems all around, in terms of clothes, books and photographs from the 'other side', and memories galore; and it was the proverbial 'boring' conversation that some of the elders indulged in. Occasionally, this labelling would intrude through a kind of off-hand banter. Browsing in a second-hand books shop in Shankar Market in New Delhi in the mid-1970s, the owner wanted to know where we were 'from', and on being told, dismissed us as being 'mere refugees'. For the bookshop owner, true citizenship of Delhi, and civilisation as he knew it, ended somewhere just beyond Hailey Road!

During postgraduate studies, one was expected to become familiar with the works of Frantz Fanon, Michel Foucault, Primo Levi and Viktor Frankl, in addition to the usual medical textbooks. This forceful, almost polemical, discourse of the nature and meaning of psychiatry in its social context, it was expected, would prepare us better for our work. The memories of trauma, resilience and humanism of the human spirit were to be learned through Frankl and Levi, and the 'rage against the machine' from Foucault and Fanon. It became quickly apparent that there had been little writing of a similar nature from within the Indian

experience. The events of the mid-twentieth century, which had a significant impact on psychiatry in Europe and America, had little influence on practice here. Though a generation of doctors and psychiatrists had lived through the Independence movement and the Partition, there was hardly an account of the experience or a considered response to the events. In our own clinical work, we were often confronted by depressive symptoms, and other forms of psychological distress, as experienced by individuals who had been caught up in riots, 'slum clearances', strikes, various forms of exclusions and discrimination, and the many ways in which the tyranny of small differences, all too evident in the public discourse, impacted their day-to-day life.

The family of the schoolteacher who had been murdered by a mob led by one of his students for being part of the wrong 'group'; the woman who became depressed when asked to stand in a separate line at the municipal water tap as she was now seen to be from a 'different community'; the concern a mother felt when her son began insisting that he was the new representative of God, and how neighbours and others would react to this! These commonplace vignettes from the clinic illustrate how psychological symptoms intersect with borders and identities that have become part of the lived experiences of people around us. There was almost nothing in the medical or psychotherapy literature, within our context, that would help us understand the experience of these individuals, or indeed, the social response to them.

At another level, browsing through records and libraries, and accounts of psychiatry and asylums in India of the past two centuries, it became evident that many of these issues had begun to be debated and discussed. One realised that the lunatic asylum of Delhi was where the Maulana Azad Medical College now stands, and that the asylum was the first building of Delhi that the soldiers from Meerut encountered on their march to Delhi in May 1857. The asylum was forced open and all the inmates were released. While the storming of the Bastille has an iconic value in the European consciousness, the storming of the Delhi asylum has

been almost forgotten. The forgetting of the 'insanes' of Delhi, who escaped in 1857 and were never found, and the real partitioning of the Lahore asylum in 1947, which is now remembered more by its fictive account, can also be read as a metaphor for the forgetting of psychiatry itself, where the mentally ill and their care is hardly a matter of concern in social debate.

On the other hand, in the larger space of public consciousness, the consequences of the divisions that engendered the Partition smoulder on. While these are reflected in literature, cinema, social theory, gender studies and even wider critiques of political analysis, their impact on psychiatric and psychological health is not as well articulated. There has been little discussion between streams of public consciousness, social theory and the practice in the clinic.

The period between the mid-nineteenth and the mid-twentieth century saw rapid changes in the science and technology of medicine, including psychiatry. The secularisation of the human mind and the urge to understand the human brain (from genes to social behaviour) placed psychiatry and mental health care as some of the intellectual challenges that needed urgent attention. The disruption in medical services and research in South Asia had its own consequences in derailing this trajectory. The pioneering work of Bose, Sen and Siddiqui on the effective use of drugs to treat insanity, perhaps for the first time ever, which began in the 1930s, could not be followed up, as the scientists were now in different countries. The suggestion by D. Satya Nand (the first Professor of Psychiatry at the AIIMS) to develop a design for a 'New Man' for the new age, in India, because the 'prevailing politico-socioeconomic state (of the country) [was] caused by defective and immature community-ego development, and the low state of political, social, and economic integration' implied an awareness that the fissured state of the nation had had a profoundly negative impact on the minds of men. Psychiatry, which relied on the empirical sciences as much as on the social, was much the poorer for this.

A discussion planned around this theme, which found no place in the official programme at a psychiatry conference at Lahore, but which turned into a long evening of sharing and catharsis, made the unspoken needs even clearer. Interactions with colleagues in Bengaluru, Kolkata and Delhi followed. These included researchers from gender studies, media, literary theory and political science, in addition to clinicians. A fellowship from the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library and a grant from the Wellcome Trust allowed us to research these themes further and collate this work.

We offer this collection of essays from different perspectives as an attempt to start conversations both within and outside the field of psychiatry. We hope that the essays are of interest both to the mental health practitioner and to a larger societal audience, and that we can fill the growing spaces between those who were friends not too long ago.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For medical doctors to delve into areas that are often considered the domain of the social sciences was both challenging and exciting.

We would like to acknowledge various friends and colleagues who have been supportive and encouraging of the work, in particular Indivar Kamtekar, Mridula Mukherjee, Urvashi Butalia, Alok Bhalla, Sanjeev Saith, Ratnaboli Ray, Mukul Kesavan, Shobna Sonpar, Ashis Nandy, Shahid Amin, Purushottam Billimoria, Haroon Rashid Chaudhri, Ramachandra Guha, Kamini Mahadevan, Jeremy Seabrook, Anthony Ryle, David Page and Sarah Hodges. Many thanks to all of you. This would not have happened without you.

We would like to acknowledge funding support from the Wellcome Trust (Turning the Pages, WT096493MA); Professor Pratima Murthy, our collaborator on the project, for helping to organise the thoughts and processes, as we collated everything from administrative records, treatment outcomes and patients notes; and P. Radhika, Sarah Ghani, Pradipto Roy, Amrutha N. and Joanna Marbaniang, who helped at various levels in the preparation of this book. We also acknowledge the support of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (NMML), where much of the work was begun, as part of the Senior Fellowship granted to Alok Sarin. For the NMML to support this was a leap of faith, for which we are thankful.

We acknowledge the help extended by the wonderful staff at the Delhi State Archives; the National Library, Kolkata; and in London, the British Library, the Library of the Society of Friends, the Wellcome Library and the National Archives; as also the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley.

We would like to thank the Centre for Study of Developing Societies, New Delhi, for hosting a seminar on the subject.

We also thank P.S.V.N. Sharma who has helped discuss and extend many of the themes and variations reflected in the book. We acknowledge the support of professional colleagues in Delhi, Bengaluru (especially at NIMHANS), Jaipur, Kolkata and Lahore, where many interesting discussions have happened.

We thank Aditya Sarin for editorial help and critical commentary at various stages of preparation of the manuscript.

Thanks are of course due to our extended families, our 'refugee' parents, grandparents, uncles and aunts.

A very special thanks to Nupur; Kavita and Riya; and Shrabani, Sanchita and Tanaya, in London, for the gardens, the company and all the support while the book had its slow accretion. They were truly our refuge.

But most of all, thanks to the various people whom one meets in the clinic, who are still affected by the partitions, past and present.

1

Setting the Stage

The Partition of India and the Silences of Psychiatry

Alok Sarin and Sanjeev Jain

The Background

The division of a major South Asian nation state into two separate ones on 15 August 1947 was as much a partitioning of minds as that of geography. As psychiatrists, we have been intrigued by the lack of discussion, historically, in the Indian mental health discourse, on the psychological scars and damages caused by the Partition. In Europe, in the aftermath of the Second World War and the Holocaust, the psychological impact was deliberated upon in great detail, and a consensus was achieved that it would 'never again' be allowed to happen. These debates in Europe thus grappled with issues of prejudice, trauma and displacement, and tried to understand how social upheaval impacted mental health. These issues were often brought into attention by psychiatrists and doctors, and led to the development of humanistic schools of psychotherapy and greater acceptance of diversity, as well as ensured that medical services develop certain global and universal principles of practice and ethics (e.g., the Nuremberg Code) that were clearly enunciated and shared.

By neglecting the effects of trauma and violence, during the events following the creation of the nation states of South Asia, we (in India) sidestepped the notion of universality, both of understanding psychological spaces and of delivering medical care. The lack of this discourse thus has had an impact on our current predicament, wherein we pay relatively little attention to social trauma and distress and its role in mental (ill) health, as also a fractured system for providing health care.

A stable sense of identity and its relation with its social and civic surroundings is integral to mental health. Identities and affiliations of human beings are wonderfully diverse. Identity can be personal, social, cultural, gender-based, geographical, religious, linguistic, ideological and so on. While the way we think and feel undoubtedly shapes our identity, identity in turn also influences our being, thinking and feeling. Critical to one's identity is rootedness—to a geographical location, to a family, to a social milieu. As Sadarangani,[1] a teacher at Parkland College in the United States, in her essay on Partition narratives describes,

> When people ask me 'Where are you from', the answer is never simple … mainly because, as an Indian, that question is tied into another one: "What are you", that is to what regional/language group do I belong? *Where* I come from, can signal to others, specially to other South Asians, *what* I am.

It is also evident from personal experience that memories of sights and sounds from our early childhood come back to us later in life, particularly during emotionally aroused states. One goes back to old familiar tastes of food when one is unwell. Smells and sounds trigger memories and may also underlie the biological bases of anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorders.[2] Displacement and

[1] U. Sadarangani, 'Descendant of the Storm. On Being a Child of Refugees and Teaching Partition Narratives,' *Modern language studies*. The Inquisition. 38, no. 1 (Summer, 2008): 63–74.

[2] T. Sacco and B. Sacchetti, 'Role of Secondary Sensory Cortices in Emotional Memory Storage and Retrieval in Rats,' *Science* 329, no. 5992 (6 August 2010): 649–56.

uprooting can have lasting effects on our mental state. A distressing example in recent times is the experience of displacement of five sisters from an ashram in India that they had lived in through their formative years.[3] The threat of displacement from the environment which had been a part of their lives, and indeed formed their identity, meant a loss of meaning in life, leading to collective hopelessness and helplessness, eventually culminating in a suicidal attempt. Displacement of this family from a home they had lived in, or of a community of people for the construction of a dam (among many others at the altar of 'progress'), or of political refugees are all examples of the emotional impact of uprooting. Unfortunately, the economic, political, administrative and legal aspects of such events take precedence in civic debate. The mental anguish and turmoil, at a personal and a social level, and the understanding of what such events mean for day-to-day life, as well as their effects on mental health are not common subjects of discussion or discourse, let alone action.

In South Asia, there can be no greater example of mass displacement than the Partition. Several questions arise in our minds about the silence surrounding the mental health consequences of the Partition. Few people who had to endure partition have actually verbalised their feelings.[4,5] A poignant example of a literary representation of the emotional impact of the Partition is Manto's *Toba Tek Singh*.[6] There are many other texts on this subject,[7]

[3] *The Indian Express*. 19 December 2014, available at http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/aurobindo-ashram-case-two-of-five-puducherry-sisters-and-mother-commit-suicide/ (accessed on 1 December 2017).

[4] U. Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000).

[5] J.M. Sarin and P. Sarin, *Who Made Me a Refugee* (Delhi: Manas Publications, 2009).

[6] S.H. Manto, *Toba Tek Singh* (New Delhi: Penguin Evergreens). (Short stories; English.)

[7] Nisid Hajari, *Midnight's Furies: The Deadly Legacy of India's Partition* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015).

which have become a reference point for books,[8] cinema[9] and social theory;[10] but this has seldom been reflected in discussions in medical science or been the psychiatrists' concern.[11]

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 general discussion.

The Roots in History

Contemporary psychiatry grew out of the Renaissance and Reformation in Europe and spread all over the world in the last quarter of the previous millennium (1750 onwards). Asylums in India began a few decades (late eighteenth century) after the first ones appeared on the eastern coast of America (mid-eighteenth century), but by the time asylums were opened in California (almost a century later), the ones in India were well-established enough to allow the staff at the asylum in Napa (1875) to debate services in a multicultural society of California, following the experiences reported from India. Between California and Tezpur,

[8] A. Jalal, *Pity of Partition* (NOIDA: HarperCollins Publishers India, 2013).

[9] B. Sarkar, *Mourning the Nation: Indian Cinema in the Wake of Partition* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009).

[10] S. Bianchini, S. Chaturvedi, R. Ivekovic and R. Samaddar, *Partitions: Reshaping States and Minds* (London: Routledge, 2004).

[11] S. Jain and A. Sarin, 'Partition and the Mentally Ill,' *Economic and Political Weekly* XLVII, no. 29 (21 July 2012): 4.

going westwards, organised contemporary psychiatry had yet to appear by mid-nineteenth century.

At another level, the ideas of the psychiatry played a seminal role in replacing the idea of demonic and divine influences on the mind that caused illness, with the more mundane reasons of circulation and infections, and also trauma and personal and social distress. Thus, the individual's mind became one's own private space, and ideas of personal freedom, which should not be intruded upon by any power, guided notions of liberty and self-determination. This, in turn, gave strength to the reform of societal structures, as democracy and universal human rights replaced feudalism and theocracy. A better understanding of the structure and the function of the brain also helped demystify the nature of psychiatric disease. The Age of Reason, it was assumed, was to bring a new dawn to the whole of mankind. However, the whole edifice, instead, gave rise to the iniquities of colonialism, fascism and totalitarianism.

This, in a sense, skewed the whole process of the secularisation of the mind, in the South Asian context. While mental hospitals in India developed contemporaneously with those in America, and medical schools in India preceded those in Japan by almost half a century, the logic of the politics of colonial rule created a somewhat distorted situation. The population of India was subjected to statistical and experimental methods that denied their individuality, but instead saw them as groups (religion, caste, tribe, etc.). While the bodies could be measured by head circumference and traits, the mind was a somewhat different issue, and stereotypes of the native mind began to emerge by the end of the nineteenth century.

This period in European psychiatry saw dramatic changes. A deeper understanding of the brain opened up possibilities for freeing the mind completely from metaphysical restraint, and the emergence of universal theories, from Darwin's work on recognition of emotions in animals and men to abstract debates about learning theory and principles of cognition. At the

other end, the ideas of Freud and numerous other psychiatrists located psychological problems within the unique and private lived experience of each person, from which, however, general universal explanations could emerge. Occurring at the apogee of the colonial period of early twentieth century, these ideas did not have the time, or indeed an opportunity, to take root in the colonised world. Changes in economic and political power created a situation that Japan and America joined Europe in this space, and ideas of health care as a political concept began to take shape.[12] Though movements of both the right and the left fought over these issues, the basic edifice of an attempt for a 'scientific' understanding of health and illness, including those that affected thought and behaviour, remained as the backdrop.

To an extent, this blind spot in medical discourse in South Asia can be attributed to the relationship between the medical sciences and the state, during the colonial period. Medical education and services, of the cosmopolitan kind, were introduced under the British, but access to these services was restricted. Infectious disease, maternal morbidity and infant mortality continued to rampage, long after these had been controlled in Britain. Medical practice was for most entirely in the private sector, as there was almost no public provision of health care. Doctors and medical services were often seen as collaborators of the 'Raj' by a wide spectrum of the political class. Given the preoccupation with infection and somatic disease, and an urge to acquire 'modernity', medicine in India often neglected to explore the social and political underpinnings of health care, or interact with the complex events that surrounded the movement for independence.

Partition and Its Silence: Learning to Forget

Well before the Partition, one can discern such a polarisation in psychiatric practice in India. There was a pressing need for

[12] J.P. Mackenbach, 'Politics Is Nothing but Medicine at a Larger Scale: Reflections on Public Health's Biggest Idea,' *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* 63, no. 3 (March 2009): 181–84.

psychiatry to be recognised as a 'medical science', and not merely as custodial facility, or even worse, an imagined discipline. It was soon after the Partition, in 1949, that the Indian Psychiatric and Neurological Society was established and a journal initiated. In its first edition, it carried an advertisement for all medical practitioners in India and Pakistan, and others who could be interested in the study of neurological and mental disorders and the progress of mental health service in India and Pakistan, to become members of the society. The need for research in psychiatry was highlighted in the editorial in the first issue of the *Indian Journal of Neurology and Psychiatry* (*IJNP*).[13] The focus of the first few issues of the journal was on empirical, objective science as well as the psychiatric syndromes that developed consequent to the World Wars of Europe. The trauma of the Partition and the cultural consequences, or basis of psychopathology, were not part of the agenda for discussion.

It is not as if this blurring and redrawing of boundaries was not experienced by patients and the public at large with equanimity. An illustrative account of how psychopathology is deeply acculturated is the recounting of symptoms of psychosis by patient, by R.B. Davis (a Padma Shri awardee, and a psychiatrist at Ranchi and one of the founding members of the Indian Psychiatric Society) at a symposium on the earliest indication of mental diseases held at Allahabad on 5 January 1949. He describes the case of a 22-year-old male and the contents of his thought before he developed a psychotic attack.[14] As Dr Davis describes,

> The man first had dreams that he had urinated on the head of goddess Kali followed by a fear that someone might know this and punish him. He changed his name and dress, called himself a Mohammedan and got relieved of the painful idea and fear. He also started speaking in Hindi, although he was a Bengali. After

[13] Editorial, *Indian Journal of Neurology and Psychiatry* 1, no. 1 (January–March 1949): 1–2.

[14] R.B. Davis, 'Symposium on the Earliest Indications of Mental Diseases,' *Indian Journal of Neurology and Psychiatry* 1, no. 3 (July–September 1949): 129–45.

> sometime he had an idea of sexual intercourse with the wife of a great Mohammedan political leader, and the idea started disturbing him and one night in his dream, he had sexual intercourse with her. He got extremely frightened and next morning he took a Christian name and got dressed in a suit and started speaking in English. He became a normal man in this way again free from troubles. But only after some time, he had strong obscene ideas about Virgin Mary. Now he completely broke down….

The symptoms, in another patient, described at the same meeting ran the whole gamut of political belief, over a few years, from being an admirer of Subhas Chandra Bose, then the Communist party, then with welfare of the untouchables and finally a sense of guilt and a suicide attempt following the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi. The experience of psychiatric disease, in all its forms, is thus influenced by identity, sociocultural ideas and stigma, and also the politics of the day. As described slightly differently by Joginder Paul, 'a lunatic's mind is hardly empty, rather it is the onslaught of unexpected thoughts and ideas that drive him crazy.'

Why This Book

The kernel of this book began in a series of conversations and discussions around the turn of the millennium. The history of psychiatry in the early twentieth century is strongly influenced by the political changes of the period. The advances in psychiatry and neurology in imperial Germany formed the foundation of the new concepts of mental illness as formulated by Kraepelin, Alzheimer, Bleuler and many others. The interwar years saw Freud and Freudian ideas become a part of the wider cultural consciousness and influenced practice in Calcutta (now Kolkata), Ranchi, Lahore and Bombay (now Mumbai), though perhaps not as much in London and New York. The fate of Karl Jaspers (who was perhaps forced to remain silent during the murder of patients in mental hospitals in Germany as his wife was Jewish) and Karl Bonhoeffer (who had his relatives executed for disagreeing with

the Third Reich) offer both a personal and political response to the events in Europe. Specialists and scientists fleeing Europe, from Freud and William Reich to Erich Fromm and Mayer-Gross, influenced the developments in psychiatry and neuroscience in the subsequent decades.

These events had their own ripples in the rest of the world, which had been colonised by Europe. While Russia and China for many decades disallowed even the teaching of Freud or individual psychology as being inherently counter-revolutionary, the third world (post-colonial) countries did not develop a narrative of the individual, and society, in their post-colonial societies. Frantz Fanon and Michael Foucault articulated some of the disquiet with psychiatry and psychological ideas, as practised in the middle of the twentieth century, through their critiques of imperialism and colonialism. In South Asia, the medical services were rather indifferent to the psychological space itself, and psychiatry as a profession was in its infancy, and most of these debates were basically ignored.

Researching the history of psychiatry in India through the twentieth century, we were struck by how rapidly ideas and developments that had been developed in the West were incorporated into practice. Somatic treatments like convulsive therapies or lobotomy and, later, drug treatments (introduced around the first half of the twentieth century) became the mainstay of psychiatry in India. Administrative psychiatry quickly adopted ideas of deinstitutionalisation and community care, in the latter half of the twentieth century, despite never having provided either, ever. Even the idea of primary health care centres and community workers was borrowed from the experiences of South Africa, and its demise there, after the end of Apartheid rule, mirrored its gradual collapse in late twentieth century India. However, in the field of psychological interventions, there was interminable debate about the inherent unsuitability of 'Western ideas' about psychotherapy and social correlates of mental health, and the urgent need to develop indigenous ones. However, in the real world of the clinic, or the society around, there was no attempt

to document, or reflect on, the changes that the region had undergone, or develop methods to help individuals who experience social trauma and distress.

It was not as though individual psychiatrists had no recollection of these events. When we discussed these issues at conferences in Bangalore (now Bengaluru), Calcutta, Delhi and Lahore, the sessions were evocative and noisy. In some instances, it was cathartic for some to recount the events as they had seen while they were children, or remember accounts of their parents and grandparents. For many others, it was an occasion to examine the issues of psychological health through the history of the twentieth century, and not merely in the clinic. A sense of transmitted trauma seemed quite evident. More importantly, that sense of regret and apology had been encapsulated in time and space, and understanding its intimate connection with the ongoing social events was a bit restricted. Thus, while seminars could be held on post-traumatic stress disorder and social exclusion, as relevant to clinical depression, the reference points for these would be events in Germany, London and New York, and seldom, South Asia itself. The horrors of the Partition had been entombed, it seemed, and one was wary of resurrecting those ghosts. It was during these discussions that we realised, as clinical psychiatrists, that the issue that was capable of such emotive involvement was almost absent from our textbooks and clinical work. By contrast, in the wider context of literary theory, gender studies and political analysis, however, there was a constant reiteration of the negative consequences, emotional and cognitive, on both individuals and communities.

Collated and edited by psychiatrists, the book thus 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. The contributors include social scientists, literary critics and psychiatrists, who try to engage in this debate at various levels. This diversity of approach emphasises the complexity of constructing issues related to mental health, at both an individual and societal level. The primary resources used are

quite diverse, ranging from newspaper coverage, personal diaries, literary works, official accounts as well as archives. The events of the Partition had an impact on literature, fostered gendered violence and even interrupted the lives of those living within the mental hospitals. The disruption of medical services removed an essential component of civic life, and the psychological and political events encouraged social distancing and seemingly justifiable (retributive) violence. As one observer of the violence during the Partition pointed out, though it was quite obvious that the victims needed succour, but it was the 'moral abyss' in the soul of the perpetrator that would also take generations to heal. This perhaps explains, to an extent, the rapid erasure from conscious awareness. There were millions of victims, but apparently, no one was guilty!

The essays thus discuss important emotional dimensions of the Partition. Was the act of partition mindful of the emotional trauma not only to those who were directly involved but also the trans-generational effects of such an event? For a person with mental illness or 'insanity', does insanity divest the individual of personal, collective and national identity? Did the Partition unleash an insanity which persists in day-to-day life, attitude and ideology? Do political trauma and social distancing, whether by fascism in Germany or by colonialism and racism or other forms of social oppression, contribute to psychological symptoms? Equally importantly, even access to medical care, which implicitly drew its roots from the progressive movements of the previous centuries, can also be compromised by political events. These issues, though they describe events of the not-so-recent past, find resonance in current events. The seeming retreat of universal humanism and the resurgence of identity politics, as well the perpetual creation of a demonic 'other', is perhaps a sign of psychological malfunction. Avoiding this, as Vakeel and Beni Prasad pointed out in the 1940s, needed a constant and conscious effort to ensure social progress and to prevent a sliding back into Hobbesian nasty, brutish and short, and ever smaller, identities and states.

2

The Partitioning of Madness

Anirudh Kala and Alok Sarin

At the time of the Partition of India, when the colonial regime of Britain ended, the newly formed nations of India and Pakistan were created out of an earlier undivided India. As was reasonable, the assets of the subcontinent were also divided. This included the money in the government treasury and other material assets including military hardware and the rest of the machinery of statecraft. As far as people were concerned, theoretically they had a choice to stay where they were and not shift at all, but they did shift, and at a scale unprecedented in the history of mankind. This shifting was attended by violence, again at a scale unprecedented in history. While the accuracy of the figures related to this violence will forever be debated, 'thousands of women were raped, at least one million people killed and ten to fifteen million were forced to leave their homes as refugees.'[1]

This cataclysmic outbreak of violence was also associated with other kinds of divisioning. In the words of the Urdu writer Ismat Chughtai (1915–91):

[1] Yasmin Khan, *The Great Partition* (New Haven: Viking/Penguin, London: Yale University Press, 2007).

> It wasn't only that the country was split into two—bodies and minds were also divided. Moral beliefs were tossed aside and humanity was in shreds. Government officers and clerks with their chairs, pens and inkpots, were distributed like the spoils of war…. Those whose bodies were whole had hearts that were splintered. Families were torn apart. One brother was allotted to Hindustan, the other to Pakistan; the mother was in Hindustan, her offspring were in Pakistan; the husband was in Hindustan, his wife was in Pakistan. The bonds of relationship were in tatters, and in the end many souls remained behind in Hindustan while their bodies started off for Pakistan.[2]

In addition to the population at large, there were persons confined to custodial institutions in the two newly born countries that were left behind. Prisons and mental hospitals were two such main categories of institutions. The inmates of these represented the marginalised and forgotten segment of the population, and their fate perhaps represented the realpolitik, even cynical, pragmatism that dictated the events. It nevertheless makes for an interesting analysis to set in perspective the two transfers and reflect on antecedents and consequences, to understand how these divisions reflect the broader issues of the relationship between the state, society and the individual.

The Partition of Institutions in 1947

Prisoners and freedom

The transfer of prisoners happened in two tranches in April and October 1948. A total of 4,078 non-Muslim prisoners were transferred from Pakistan and 3,761 Muslim prisoners were repatriated to Pakistan. Transit prisons were put up around Jalandhar to facilitate this exchange. In fact, the number of 'under trials' to be sent to Pakistan was so high that organising such a humongous

[2] Ismat Chughtai, *My Friend, My Enemy: Essays, Reminiscences, Portraits*, trans. and introduced Tahira Naqvi (New Delhi: Women Unlimited, 2015).

transfer was difficult and seemingly pointless, particularly when everybody knew that in the absence of witnesses, most of them would be acquitted. So the local magistracy was given special powers to quickly try the ones charged with offences other than murder, kidnapping, rape, and other violent crimes, and these people were then released on this (the Indian) side of the border.[3] This situation was further complicated by the fact that with the partitioning of the country, all the central jails and most of the district jails were left in West Punjab, and East Punjab was left with an inadequate number. In addition, understandably, the prison administration system was further compromised by the loss of all major jail infrastructure and all the materials that go into the efficient running of the jail, such as prisoners' clothing and bed linen.

As a footnote to history, the premature release of 1,590 prisoners who were accused of non-serious offences, partly to relieve congestion in jails, was declared as a celebration of the founding of the Republic of India in 1950 (Table 2.1).[4]

The mental hospital at Lahore: Fictions and facts

Saadat Hasan Manto (1912–55) is widely recognised as one of the greatest short story writers that the subcontinent has produced and indeed one of the finest writers of the age. His stories have been called 'vituperative, slanderous, and bitterly ironic'.[5] As Alok Bhalla writes, they 'are terrifying chronicles of the damned who locate themselves in the middle of madness and crime, and promise nothing more than an endless and repeated cycle of random and capricious violence in which anyone can become a

[3] Kanwaljeet Kaur, 'Riots, Refugees and Rehabilitation: A Case Study of Punjab 1946–56' (PhD diss., Punjabi University, Patiala, 2010).

[4] *Punjab on the March—Police, Jails and Campaign Against Corruption* (Simla, 1951).

[5] Alok Bhalla, ed., 'Introduction,' in *Life and Works of Saadat Hasan Manto* (Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 2004).

Table 2.1 *The Transfer of Prisoners*

	Non-Muslim Prisoners Repatriated from Pakistan			Muslim Prisoners Repatriated to Pakistan		
	Convicts	**Under trials**	**Total**	**Convicts**	**Under trials**	**Total**
No. of exchanges in April 1948	1,376	1,797	2,773	448	2,422	2,870
No. of exchanges in October/November 1948	790	525	1,315	494	397	891
Total	2,166	1,922	4,088	942	2,819	3,761

beast and everyone can be destroyed'.[6] In his iconic story *Toba Tek Singh*,[7] Manto tells the tale of a Sikh gentleman, Bishan Singh, who is in the Lahore Mental Hospital. On being told that he is being transferred to India, while his village Toba Tek Singh is in Pakistan, Bishan Singh is devastated and finally dies in the deserted 'no man's land' between the two countries. His seemingly nonsensical mutterings (which in psychiatric terminology are neologisms), his despair and his fate are stark indictments of the Partition. This story in its unblinking gaze is a grim recognition of the multiple tragedies that surrounded the partition of the subcontinent.

It was while delving into the archives of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library that the authors happened to chance upon copies of the mental hospital reports of both the British Empire and newly independent India. With this came the epiphanic realisation that what had been taken as a chilling fictional metaphor for the 'madness' that engulfed society in 1947, and so vividly described in *Toba Tek Singh*, was actually based on historical facts.[8] Given the iconic symbolism that this masterpiece of a story has attained in all discourse on partition and trauma, the non-recognition of this historical underpinning is rather remarkable.

To return to the narrative of the people in custodial care: After 15 August 1947, apart from the people in prisons, there were left the people with mental illness admitted in mental hospitals on both sides of the border. In 1947, the treatment of mental illnesses was mainly custodial in nature and intent, because psychotropic drugs were still waiting to be discovered. General hospital psychiatry as it exists today was in its infancy and community psychiatry non-existent. The only effective medical treatments available were

[6] Alok Bhalla, ed., 'A Dance of Grotesque Masks,' in *Like and Works of Saadat Hasan Manto* (Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 2004).

[7] Saadat Hasan Manto, 'Toba Tek Singh,' in *A Wet Afternoon, Stories, Sketches, Reminiscences*, trans. Khalid Hasan (Islamabad: Alhamra Publishing, 2001).

[8] Sanjeev Jain and Alok Sarin, 'Partition and the Mentally Ill,' letter to the editor, *Economic and Political Weekly* XLVII, no. 29 (21 July 2012): 4–5.

insulin coma and electroconvulsive therapy (ECT). The former was a complicated and costly procedure and the latter very recent then. Unlike today, the mental hospitals used to be full.

In 1947, the country had 20-odd mental hospitals out of which most were inherited by India and three by West Pakistan at Lahore, Hyderabad (Sind) and Peshawar, which had all been established as the Empire extended westwards. East Pakistan had no mental hospital.[9] The older hospital in Dacca had been closed after the creation of a new asylum at Tezpur on the eastern fringe of the Bengal Presidency in 1876. When Assam was portioned out of the Bengal Presidency (after the reunification of the two Bengals in 1911, that overturned the partition of 1905), no new asylum was established in the eastern Bengal region. The events of 1947, thus, left East Pakistan without a mental hospital. There were a few general hospital psychiatry units in Bombay, Madras and Calcutta and the number of psychiatrists in India was, by most accounts, less than 50.

A little comment in the annual report of the Lahore Mental Hospital for the year 1945 says:[10]

> During the year under report there were two deaths among patients due to violence (Maula Bux and Santokh Singh). The police after investigation declared the death of Maula Bux as accidental and the second one as untraced murder. It appears both these patients were murdered by the same person as the modus operandi was the same. In spite of the efforts of police the murderer has not been traced. About twenty patients who were suspected by the police are being kept under special care and surveillance to prevent a recurrence.

[9] The Bhore Committee Report. Available at https://www.nhp.gov.in/bhore-committee-1946_pg (accessed 3 December 2017).

[10] *Annual Report on the Working of the Punjab Mental Hospital, Lahore, for the Year 1945* (Punjab: Government Printing, 1948). Printed by the Superintendent.

The obvious questions that this passage raises remain unanswered, and reports of subsequent years are silent on this turn of events.

In the annual report of the Lahore Mental Hospital for the year 1947, the then Inspector General of Prisons, Lieutenant Colonel S.M.K. Mallick, had this to say:[11]

> During the disturbances in Lahore in August and September, this hospital and its surroundings remained free from communal incidents, and the families of the non-Muslims were protected by the Muslim staff, and remained safe throughout. We received no outside assistance, but maintained guards and patrols by night and day, permitting the non-Muslims to work only inside the hospital precincts. Food and other supplies for the patients were maintained with great difficulty, and inevitably some articles were in short supply and diet for a time, had to be reduced to a small extent.
>
> Towards the end of September the non-Muslim staff decided, it was no longer safe for them to remain, and they departed for the East Punjab. It was not possible to persuade them to stay any longer, nor were they interested that they were leaving behind hundreds of non-Muslim patients. This of course caused some dislocation and a temporary loss of efficiency. The non-Muslim clerical staff had to be replaced with clerks with no experience of the complicated routine of this large Mental Hospital. The Medical staff had to carry on very short handed. The non-Muslim attendants staff had to be replaced by new men, mostly refugees who were themselves, naturally dissatisfied, and disgruntled. Thus there was a constant change of attendants, as they either absented themselves, or were discharged for inefficiency. However, in spite of all these handicaps, treatment was maintained as far as possible at the previous level, and modern methods, i.e. with ECT were continued practically throughout the disturbance.[12]

[11] *Annual Report on the Working of the Punjab Mental Hospital, Lahore, for the Year 1947* (West Punjab: Government Printing, 1949). Printed by the Superintendent.

[12] Ibid.

Curiously mirroring the situation with jails after the Partition, East Punjab was left with no mental hospital. A large number of patients in Lahore, Hyderabad (Sind) and Peshawar hospitals awaiting transfer to India were Punjabis, thus the responsibility of the East Punjab government. The main problem, as usual, was real estate.

> The buildings occupied by the Criminal Tribes Settlement in Amritsar appeared to offer the only immediate solution for this problem and after an inspection by the Hon'ble Chief Minister early in 1948, it was decided to remove the Criminal Tribes Establishment and to take in hand the necessary additions, alterations and repairs so as to make the premises suitable for the purpose of its use as a Mental Hospital.[13]

The future trajectory of the original inmates of the premises was, like much of this history, a matter to speculate upon. According to the *Civil and Military Gazette*,[14] the East Punjab government authorised the deputy high commissioner for India in Pakistan, at Lahore, to release all Hindu and Sikh mental patients of the hospital who had been declared fit since 15 August 1948.

The question as to whether these were patients fit to be discharged or fit to be transferred across the border remains unanswered. The corollary question also remains that if these patients were fit for discharge why were they still in hospital? The possibility is probably the latter, that they were deemed fit for transfer, though this is speculative. Lending this speculation basis, the same issue of the *Gazette* goes on to say:

> In order to reserve sufficient accommodation for Lahore patients, Government[15] permitted the medical superintendent of the hospital to admit patients provided total number in the hospital at one time did not exceed 100 (this limit was later raised to 150).

[13] *Annual Report on the Working of the Punjab Mental Hospital, Lahore, for the Year 1949* (Punjab: Controller of Printing and Stationery, 1951).

[14] *The Civil and Military Gazette*, 26 January 1949.

[15] Ibid.

According to the annual report of the Amritsar Mental Hospital, the most important event in the working of the Punjab Mental Hospital, Amritsar, was the transfer on 6 December 1950 of 450 Indian mental patients from mental hospitals in West Pakistan. The patients received from the hospitals in Pakistan were as follows:

Mental Hospital	Men	Women	Total
Lahore	223	94	317
Peshawar	45	10	55
Hyderabad	55	23	78

Of these, 282 Punjabi patients were admitted in the Amritsar Mental Hospital, while 168 non-Punjabi patients were sent by train to the Indian Mental Hospital, Ranchi. As against this, 233 Muslim patients drawn from different mental hospitals in India were evacuated in the opposite direction to Lahore. Since this was scheduled to coincide with patients coming from Pakistan, the exchange was channelised through the makeshift mental hospital at Amritsar. In the report, the medical superintendent has given figures from earlier annual reports of the Lahore Mental Hospital to support his claim that there were at least 650 Hindu or Sikh patients in the Lahore Mental Hospital at the time of the Partition.

A 1951 review of the report by Mangat Rai, Secretary to the Government of Punjab, Health and Local Government Departments, has this to say:[16]

> 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 Sind and Peshawar mental hospitals must have been worse and of these only 133 were

[16] *Annual Report on the Working of Punjab Mental Hospital, Amritsar, for the Year 1951.*

> 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.

What was alleged here was causing death of hundreds of patients through deliberate negligence by the supposed carers. The death of more than 300 patients in three years out of 650 patients does raise questions. In all fairness, however, the annual report of the Lahore hospital does at least partially address this. It states:[17] 'There were 210 deaths during the year 1947, as against 90 in the previous year.' The main causes of death are given in the following table, but the highest number of deaths was due to cholera, among the patients who were sent to the Infectious Disease (ID) Hospital for treatment. Out of the 113 cases sent to this hospital, 58 died of cholera:

Debility	51	
Diarrhoea	22	
Malaria	8	
Dysentery	17	
Epilepsy	6	
Anaemia	6	
Cholera	92	(34 in PMH, and 58 in IDH)
Pneumonia	5	
Bronchitis	5	
Total	210	

Whether any subsequent correspondence clarified this issue is not known at present. What is also not known is whether this also happened to patients who were to travel in the opposite direction. Thus, we know that the transfer of mental patients

[17] *Annual Report on the Working of the Punjab Mental Hospital, Lahore, For the Year 1947.*

took place three years and four months after the Partition. It is as if the new countries had forgotten about them, and their fate, in a sense, ranked lower than the division of the materials assets of tables and chairs in the scheme of things. The number of patients received from Pakistan was less than half of the number expected. The rest had died during this period.

We also know that while this exchange did happen, on 31 July 1947, Earl Mountbatten noted in his daily diary:[18]

> One of the few institutions that will not be partitioned immediately is the Punjab Mental Hospital. It will continue to be shared for some years. Some Hindu inmates of the asylum have protested against being left in Pakistan. They have been assured that their fears are *imaginary* (emphasis added).

It is intriguing to speculate what the concerns were that led to this point being made, because clearly it did not seem likely that voluntary choice had much to do with the fact of being in a mental hospital, and if that primary choice had been taken away, then the choice of *which* mental hospital to be in seems a distant dream. In that sense, among the multiple tragedies of the Partition, the further disempowering of an already disempowered population in custodial care is the powerful tool of narrative, both fictional and factual. The question that logically also arises is why was there not a single Muslim patient among the patients transferred to India. Out of the 450 patients received from Pakistan, 282 Punjabi patients were kept at Amritsar and the other 168 non-Punjabis were sent to Ranchi. How was this selection determined in patients, many of whom were chronic, regressed and non-communicative? Why were all the non-Punjabis sent to Ranchi?

A brief comment by S.L. Mittal, the director of Medical and Health Services, Uttar Pradesh, in the year 1951, says:

> Mental stress is the principal cause of insanity—In men it is usually due to business worry and in women due to domestic troubles.

[18] Mountbatten India Office Records L/PO/6/123 part 3/p. 222, Para 56.

> Emotional strain leads to acute mental disorders in both. A large number of cases were still being received from the evacuees of the Punjab (P) who have been rehabilitated in the UP.[19]

In the report for the preceding year, 1950, the same author says:

> During the year under report, quite a large number of cases were received on account of communal riots—preceding partition of India, specially from the East Punjab and Delhi Province".[20]

For the year 1952, he has this to say:

> A fair number of cases received in Agra Mental Hospital were from amongst displaced persons.[21]

The ways in which the Partition conflict influenced the symptoms, the diagnosis or the presentation of the clinical picture are not commented upon, nor is there any commentary on interventions based on this factor.

What also emerges is that a total of 233 Muslim patients were gathered from different mental hospitals of India and sent to Lahore as part of the exchange. How were they selected? Were they just part of a quid pro quo 'diplomatic' exchange? Perhaps they were members of families that had themselves moved across the border, and in some ways, the bureaucracy did try and reunite families. The available reports of the mental hospitals of northern India, where presumably these patients were selected from, do not seem to talk about how these patients were chosen to be sent across the border. The social and psychological world of the citizens was hidden by these files.

[19] *Annual Report of the Mental Hospitals in Uttar Pradesh for the Year 1951.*

[20] *Annual Report of the Mental Hospitals in Uttar Pradesh for the Year 1950.*

[21] *Annual Report of the Mental Hospitals in Uttar Pradesh for the Year 1952.*

As an aside, if we look at the websites of the Lahore Mental Hospital and Amritsar Mental Hospital,[22,23] which are government institutions of Pakistan and India, respectively, curiously one finds that the 'History' pages of both websites are exactly the same including the placing of full stops and commas, and the grammatical mistakes that have been made. Obviously one country 'copy-pasted' from the other, and though divided by geography, they share a lot in cyberspace!

On the Edge: The Earlier Asylums of the Punjab and Statecraft

If one delves deeper into the history of the mental hospitals in the Punjab Presidency, what emerges is a series of fascinating incidents, influenced mainly by the politics of the region. So the mental hospitals in erstwhile Punjab do not have a linear or continuous history. It is, in fact, a story of the closing of the Delhi hospital, the merging with the Lahore hospital, the restarting and another closure. In fact, the way in which the mentally ill person in custodial care has been stripped of voluntary choice makes for an interesting story.

The history of psychiatry in undivided Punjab started with Dr Honigberger, an Austrian doctor who was personal physician to Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1812. After Ranjit Singh's death, he was appointed 'in charge' of a gun-powder factory and was also asked to treat mental patients at city's general hospital 'Al-Shifa' outside Delhi gate (in Lahore), where he set up a psychiatric ward. This was perhaps the first formal, non-British facility for treating the mentally ill in India. When the British annexed Punjab in May 1849, he transferred his 12 patients to the district civil surgeon,

[22] Punjab Institute of Mental Health, Lahore, Pakistan. Available at http://www.pimh.gop.pk/history.htm (accessed on 10 February 2014).

[23] Institute of Mental Health, Government Mental Hospital, Amritsar, India. Available at http://imhamritsar.org/index-info-about.html (accessed on 10 February 2014).

Dr Smith. These patients were moved from place to place for various reasons until 1900, when the Lahore Mental Hospital was formed over 172 acres of land.

It may be remembered that both Lahore and Delhi were part of what then was the Punjab Province, which had been set up after the annexation of Punjab in 1849. By various accounts, Delhi had a mental hospital, or a lunatic asylum, as it was then called, which seems to antedate the Lahore asylum. Hospitals and asylums were often established in the territories that had been taken over by the colonial enterprise. Whether this reflected a greater civilisational intent that would confer legitimacy or an instrument of social control continues to be debated. Thus, the shifting of the western border of colonial India from Delhi to Lahore had its own consequences for the mentally ill.

The asylum at Delhi was

> A large building outside the walls of the city, on the road leading from Delhi Gate to Muttra (the city Mathura in Uttar Pradesh, is about 145 kilometres from Delhi), and about 600 yards from the river Jumna (Yamuna). It had been specially designed for the accommodation of mental patients and had been erected under the direct supervision of Dr Ross, the then Civil Surgeon of Delhi.[24]

Interestingly, on 11 May 1857, 'the whole of the insane patients escaped, or were set free and were never recovered. In all probability, the greater number of these perished miserably in the subsequent siege of Delhi or the fighting before and within the walls of the city.' As an aside, it may perhaps be noted here that the Indian Rebellion of 1857, also called the First War of Independence or the Indian Mutiny, broke out on 10 May 1857, and the ransacking or 'liberation' of the lunatic asylum is probably one of the first acts of rebellion in the turbulent events of 1857.

[24] C.J. Lodge Patch, *A Critical Review of the Punjab Mental Hospitals from 1840–1930*: Monograph No. 13 (Lahore: Punjab Government Record Office Publications, 1931).

The subsequent history of the Delhi asylum is also interesting. The erstwhile asylum was converted into a jail, because as Lodge Patch wryly comments, 'prisoners were many and lunatics few.'[25] In the backdrop of all the history that was unfolding in the sub-continent was the interesting discussion as to whether it is a good idea to have separate asylums for Delhi and Lahore, or whether a large single establishment would be more cost-effective. As a result of this, in 1861, a separate block was added to the Anarkali asylum in Lahore, and 61 patients were transferred from Delhi to Lahore, 'The staff was increased, and the Punjab Government was able to congratulate itself on a saving of ₹2 a month.'

While a detailed history of the Delhi establishment is beyond the scope of this piece, the facts make fascinating reading. The asylum was re-established in the mid-1860s at the insistence of Dr Penny who became the civil surgeon of Delhi in 1864. This hospital then functioned for the next 33 years. At this time, incredibly, history repeated itself; the official opinion again veered towards favouring a large central establishment rather than small local ones and,

> On the 1st of March 1900 the new asylum (in Lahore) opened its doors to 257 men and 61 women, and on the 23rd of March in the same year, 103 male and 35 female patients were transferred from the Delhi asylum which was thereafter finally closed.

Delhi had by then become a relatively unimportant town while the Punjab and Lahore were now the focus of attention. However, the fact that it would sooner or later need a new hospital was admitted, and one of the suggestions of Dr Edward Mapother during his visit to India in 1937–38 was that an establishment be created in Delhi that could serve the clinical needs, perhaps as a teaching hub in the soon to be independent India. Some action seemed to have been taken, and as a footnote, a site near Shahdara (near a site which had earlier been a landfill site) had been earmarked by some corner of the administration.

[25] Ibid.

The Ripples Unfold: The Consequences of the Partition of Lahore Mental Hospital

In interesting journeys through the Delhi State Archives, the official correspondence offers interesting insights into how mental illness and custodial spaces are perceived. Delhi, the capital city of newly independent India, and indeed the entire northern region of the erstwhile Punjab, did not have a dedicated facility for care of the psychiatrically unwell for the first two decades of its existence. In early 1960, it is estimated that there were 'more than a 100 mental patients in the Jail at Tihar in Delhi'.[26] The Tihar jail had itself been established in 1957, in an area vacated (emptied) of its largely Muslim inhabitants, following incidents of communal violence, and had become a resettlement area for migrants from Punjab. As was common across history, psychiatry reverted to being a law and order issue, and the mentally ill were kept in a separate ward for a few years. The inappropriateness of this was felt, and there was repeated urging to establish a new mental hospital. In June 1960, A.S. Sen, the superintendent of Medical Services, Delhi Administration, writing to the executive engineer of the Public Works Department (PWD),[27] says:

> As you know, the Ministry of Home Affairs is pressing us for early setting up of the Mental Hospital. I hope you will give this work the necessary priority it deserves.

The site at Shahdara on the outskirts of the city of Delhi had been identified, and the blueprints for construction and plans for sanction of water and electricity had actually been prepared as part of the planning in 1951, and construction had in fact been started but was abandoned because of infrastructural

[26] Letter from A.D. Pande, Chief Secretary, Delhi Administration to R.R. Bahl, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, D.O. No. F 4/11/PACS/60. Dated 11 April 1960. From F No. 8 (10)/60-M&PH. Delhi State Archives.

[27] Letter from A.S. Sen to D.S. Paul, D.O. No. F.40(3)/ 59-SMS dated 28 June 1960. From F No. 8 (10)/60-M&PH. Delhi State Archives.

difficulties,[28] namely unavailability of water and electricity. What had originally been sanctioned as a 100-bed hospital was planned in 1960 as a 400-bed hospital, of which 200 beds were planned for chronic patients,[29] with outpatient services, dispensaries, facilities envisaged for 20 paying patients and occupational therapy workshops.

The detailed correspondence of A.S. Sen,[30] the superintendent of Medical Services, and his efforts to engage with the architects, planners, the electricity and water supply agencies is illustrative of both administrative efficiency and zeal, in a time when, interestingly, the concerns of people with mental illness did not seem to be accorded very high priority.

It is a matter of fascinating record that the Outpatient Block apparently was completed early in 1957 but further construction could not be completed as the 'estimates were revised by the CPWD (Central Public Works Department[31])'. To maintain the buildings, 31 of the 54 quarters were handed over to the Directorate of Social Welfare for non-infected children of leprosy patients.

Detailed discussions on the logic of not charging rent from this group included discussions on the responsibility of the state with reference to the fact that if this accommodation had not been available, the government would have had to hire other spaces for these children.[32] How these children managed without water or electricity is not explored. The question as to why the already constructed premises continued to be unused for the purpose that they were meant for also elicited interest from the Public

[28] Letter from A.S. Sen to S.K. Bhattacharya, D.O. No. F.40 (3)/59-SMS, May 1960. From F No. 8 (10)/60-M & PH. Delhi State Archives.

[29] Letter from A.S. Sen to Secretary (Medical and Public Health), Delhi Administration, D.O. No. F.40 (3)/59-SMS, 12 May 1960. From F No. 8 (10)/60-M & PH. Delhi State Archives.

[30] Correspondence from F No. 8 (10)/60-M & PH. Delhi State Archives.

[31] Letter from A.S. Sen D.O. No. F.37(2)/64-SMS-8629, dated 25 November 1964. From F No. 8 (10)/60-M & PH. Delhi State Archives.

[32] Correspondence from F No. 8 (10)/60-M & PH. Delhi State Archives.

Accounts Committee,[33] which resulted in the 'quarters' being vacated in mid-1966.

Other critical comments that were raised in a series of correspondences titled 'Defective Planning of the Mental Hospital, Shahdara' were:

> In the opinion of the Committee the commencement of construction work without ensuring the provision of water and electricity disclosed lack of forethought and planning. The fact that the building remained unoccupied for two years after completion indicates lack of coordination between the Health Authorities and the Civic Bodies.[34]

After a series of official exchanges, it was finally decided in late 1966 that because of the high cost of cement and other building materials, and non-availability of administrative approvals and sanctions, the slow pace of construction was not surprising, nor was there any loss to the public exchequer.[35] The fact that there were unprecedented rains in 1956–58 resulting in flooding of the East bank of the Jamuna was also cited as a reason for this understandable delay. That the low-lying area was unsuited for a mental hospital had been hinted at in earlier times, as it went against the older tradition of building asylums and institutions at an elevation.

It would thus take six decades after the closing of the Delhi asylum in 1899 before the city of Delhi would have another mental hospital in the form of the Hospital of Mental Diseases

[33] Letter from P.C. Arora Under Secretary Ministry of Health and Family Planning to S.R. Gandotra, Joint Director of Social Welfare, Delhi Administration, F.13-5/65-MPT, 2 July, 1966. From F No. 8 (10)/60-M & PH. Delhi State Archives.

[34] 42nd Report of the Public Accounts Committee (3rd Lok Sabha). S No. of Appendix XV to the Report Para 2.80. From F No. 8 (10)/60-M & PH. Delhi State Archives.

[35] Letter from R.K. Baweja Secretary (Medical) to P. Johri Deputy Secretary Ministry of Health dated 15 December 1966. D.O. No. F. 8 (10)/6 O-M&PH.

at Shahdara in Delhi in 1966. This was renamed the Institute of Human Behaviour and Allied Sciences (IHBAS) and became an autonomous institute in 1993, thus complying with some of the suggestions made in 1938.

The Silence Drowned the Screams

The provisioning of care for the mentally ill in the Punjab had evolved over the past century and a half and been influenced by the politics of the region. From asylum under the Sikh Empire (Lahore) and the British Empire (Delhi), their pendulum-like existence reflected the overall response of the state to the needs of the mentally ill. During the debates around these moves, the needs of the patients to be close to their families and their cultural environment, and also the inconvenience and social cost of providing care far away from home, were often discussed. Nevertheless, the advent of easy transportation and the nature of psychiatric care in the early twentieth century did make asylum care the only option. Various doctors did try and improve things, as Lodge Patch valiantly did.[36] Indeed, when Lodge Patch was assaulted during one of freedom movement-associated riots, he was rescued by a former patient and was helped to safety by members of the public.[37]

The asylum services in Lahore tried to continue, as they were earlier, for as long as possible in 1947, but ultimately collapsed when the staff moved in keeping with new politico-religious boundaries. The patients took a while longer to be partitioned, as we have seen above. The erstwhile superintendent of the Lahore Mental Hospital, Lt Col. B.S. Nat, joined the medical services in Punjab (India) and soon devoted his attention to developing

[36] C.J. Lodge Patch, '50 Years Ago—Psychiatry in Lahore,' *The Psychiatrist* 11, no. 6 (1 June 1987): 189–90.

[37] Typescript transcript of an unpublished account of the mental hospital in Lahore in the 1920s and 1930s entitled Birth of a Hospital by Capt (later Lt Col.) Charles James Lodge Patch (b1887), British Library.

health services in Punjab and the Amritsar Medical College (to replace the Lahore Medical College, which was no longer accessible). Rudimentary services for the mentally ill were first established in tents by the legendary Dr Vidyasagar, and later a new mental hospital was built in Amritsar. The non-Punjabis from Lahore (which was a cosmopolitan city of Empire and thus had people and medical staff drawn from all over) were displaced all over India.

Most tellingly, the psychological conditions that necessitated such long-distance moves of the patients of the asylum were never commented on. Other than passing references to the impact of the communal violence on some of the admissions to the mental hospitals across northern India, not much detail is available. The case notes and descriptions of how these events played on the minds of the people, is again not reflected in the official asylum reports.

Post-script

In subsequent years, the needs of the mentally ill took a back seat compared to the needs of the displaced and other marginalised (abducted women, orphans, leprosy patients). Even the subsequent planning revealed a tendency to fall back on colonial tropes (the first facility for treating the mentally ill was created inside a new jail), and finally an expedient, poorly planned and shoddily executed mental hospital was created. Subsequent partitions of the erstwhile Punjab region into several units (Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi) also played a part in this fragmented response. While Mapother could rebuke the colonial administration in 1938 for being utterly jingoistic as far as the 'bearing of the white man's burden' reflected in the standards of care of the mentally ill, the transfer of this 'burden' to the Indian government was also fraught with difficulties, and often far from adequate.

However, the most significant silence is from the mental health professionals themselves. Why did mental health professionals

not write about these events, or about the much larger issue of psychological sequelae of the Partition? The euphoria of freedom, a new-found patriotism, the waiting for detachment to be objective and the fact that there were too few mental health professionals have all been suggested as possible explanations.[38] Whether it was the trauma inside the mind of the mentally ill within the asylums (as satirised by Manto) or in the minds of the public at large (as reflected in the literature and themes in the period, and now), it seldom found space in the professional debates and concerns. Thus, we never had a questioning of the events (unlike the response to the Holocaust in Europe, or the Truth and Reconciliation process in South Africa) or a conscious acceptance of guilt and blame. The contrast between the psychological consequences of the Holocaust and the absence of equal concern over the former subjects of the Empire has profound ironies—the racism over which such hand-wringing occurred in Europe is in evidence in the indifference towards people considered less important. In all fairness the same question, and indifference, can be asked of subsequent generations of mental health professionals with even greater validity.

[38] Alok Sarin, Sarah Ghani and Sanjeev Jain, 'Bad Times and Sad Moods,' in *Partition: The Long Shadow* (New Delhi: Zubaan Publishers, 2015).

3

Balm and Salve

The Effect of the Partition on Planning and Delivering Health Care

Sanjeev Jain

Prelude

We propose to try and describe the response, and the effects, of the Partition on medical services in India, with particular reference to northern India. The early part of the twentieth century, especially the decades between the two world wars, had seen the gradual development, apart from the politics of protest, the skeleton of civic society, which, by its institutions, would lead India into its future as an independent nation. Medical sciences and services were very much a component, with the doctor, lawyer and soldier expected to form the nucleus of a bourgeois society, as it had in Europe in the preceding centuries. This frame was still far from being robust, and the events around Independence would stretch it to breaking point. The transfer of power and its related administrative and political consequences have long been discussed. It was accompanied by sectarian violence and the division of the subcontinent into smaller nation states.

The occurrence of the communal divide had major consequences. While the working class could now be fragmented along

communal fault lines, the entire edifice of civic society (the breakdown of the rule of law, and partisan administration, that have been discussed often) could thus also be portrayed as essentially inadequate to provide help in an impartial and universal manner. The destruction of the physical infrastructure of the hospitals, migration of the doctors and assaults on patients thus had a semiotic value, the consequences of which still ripple on. In this chapter, we try and describe the interface between politics, civic life and medical care during the 1940s in India.

Medical Services and Civic Life

The historical evolution of the communal aspects of social life in contemporary India, including medical services and health care, has often been a source of worry. The introduction of formal medical care through hospitals and dispensaries, in the nineteenth century, by a trained professional class was often seen as antagonistic to the previous traditional methods of health care. The success of 'Western' medicine was quite apparent, and the crowds of patients in the hospitals, especially from the poorer sections who had never received health care before, as well as students, who clamoured to get into the medical colleges, reinforced its utility. The public hospitals, when they were established, were not divided along sectarian lines, and this was something novel in the Indian context. On the other hand, ever since the Chapekar brothers and the killing of the over-enthusiastic plague commissioners, modern medicine had an uneasy relationship with orthodoxy. Ayurvedic, Unani, Siddha and folk medicine healers were all convinced of the superiority of their respective schools, and tried to negotiate with the government for support. At the same time, the reluctance to give up traditional modes of knowledge and skills, often held within families and clans, came up against university-based standardised education. However, for the emerging Indian middle class, proving their mettle in cosmopolitan medicine, as well as provisioning of health care, became a symbol of modernity and progress and thus an essential component of nationalist politics and the freedom movement.

Despite this, access to medical education and services was restricted.[1] The imperial government was reluctant to involve Indians at the high table. The bulk of public health was managed by British officers, variously under the Indian Medical Service, Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC) or civil service. The Indian doctors who qualified could not hope to rise amongst the ranks of these services and were much more active in the private sector or in hospitals managed by benefactors. As such, there was little effort to invest in organised health care, as systems followed Harley Street rather than the National Health Service (NHS, which had yet to emerge). Criticisms of the sorry state of affairs ranged from those by the Webbs,[2] who observed many inadequacies in the health services, as well as the near impossibility of compromise between the Western medical colleges and the hakims and *vaids*, and the need for improving medical education (including opportunities for postgraduate education). This was part of a concerted effort of reform of health care, even in the UK, where F. Lawson Dodd, also a member of the Fabian Society (and a friend of the Webbs), had just suggested the same.[3] The Webbs were also impressed by many local efforts, for example, the Begum of Bhopal who insisted on reforms in midwifery and childcare. The First World War followed soon after, and many doctors from India participated and, after the War, also managed positions of authority.[4] There were troublesome signs, however, that though young Indian students studying in medical colleges in the UK volunteered to help in the First World War, sufficient numbers were also found engaged in fomenting 'ideas of independence' among the soldiers and inciting disaffection. Indian doctors thus came to be viewed with a certain degree of suspicion, both by the colonial government as well as the political leaders of India (for volunteering to help the imperial effort).

[1] Poonam Bala, *Biomedicine as a Contested Site: Some Revelations in Imperial Contexts* (New York: Lexington Books, 2008).

[2] B. Webb and S. Webb, *Indian Diary*, ed. N.G. Jayal (1988), available at webbs.library.lse.ac.uk (accessed on 3 December 2017).

[3] F.L. Dodd, *A National Medical Service* (London: Fabian Society, 1911).

[4] J. Mills, 'The History of Modern Psychiatry in India, 1858–1947,' *History of Psychiatry* 12, no. 48 Pt 4 (December 2001): 431–58.

The interwar years were characterised by gradual reform, but political events and the Great Depression, as well as reluctance to invest in long-term social commitments, precluded much systematic change. Sir Edward Mapother, the psychiatrist who was instrumental in reforming psychiatric services and teaching in the UK, visited India in 1937 and was acerbic in his criticism of the colonial government as being too pessimistic. He commented on the health care provision in Mysore as an enlightened, progressive kingdom relatively free from communal feelings, in contrast to British India. It was quite obvious that 'big thinking' in health care was being attempted by a native kingdom, rather than the imperial administration.

Communalism, Medicine and Psychiatry in Pre-Partition India

As evidence for this concern, the fact of communal violence was part of the backdrop of medical life in British India. In the riots of 1926, in Calcutta, Dr De, the police surgeon, gave an exhaustive account of the injuries and post-mortem reports but pointed out that no women or children were among those killed suggesting the 'survival of a grain of humanity among the welter of passions let loose.'[5] This is not trivial, as in a riot in Bombay in 1938, the police commissioners/hospital administrators had to go out of their way to reassure that recent attacks on a prominent hospital were the work of a few 'ruffians' and not a systematic communal violence. Moreover, participation in medical education and wielding access to it had, by the middle of the twentieth century, begun to show fissures. Many anecdotal reports about members of staff having a 'chip on the shoulder' about serving with (or under) members from other communities were beginning to emerge.

Despite all this, in the interwar years, steady progress had been made. Discussions about public health were commonplace in

[5] J.C. De, 'Medicolegal Study of the Calcutta Riots 1926,' *Indian Medical Gazette* 62, no. 9 (September 1927): 479–87.

the journals, as were discussions about advances in technology. Public participation in health care had become much more evident and the role of medical sciences in social progress increasingly articulated. Sir Weldon Dalrymple-Champneys and colleagues, who were the expert advisors on health reform in India, travelled all over and visited medical facilities in many cities. In Lahore, they enquired about the communal atmosphere, and doctors and nurses dismissed any sectarian fears, as they were confident that the existence of medical services that did not discriminate on religious grounds was a bulwark against any strife. In public speeches, Dalrymple-Champneys spoke of NHS-like health care as providing a sense of 'national' purpose and pointed out that the provisioning of adequate health care, accessible to all citizens, may well be the ingredient that will 'leaven the bread' (make India rise). However, in his personal meeting with various politicians and health ministers, he was also struck by the astonishing vehemence, significant opposition to 'Western' medicine and insistence on the intrinsic superiority of 'local' knowledge in private conversations. He was also wary (as Mapother before him about G. Bose) of the gap between private medical practitioners (e.g., the astonishingly high fees and varied business interests of B.C. Roy[6]) and public health services. Overall, he echoed the suggestions by Lord A.V. Hill on the need to accelerate medical and engineering education in India,[7] as part of the overall social progress.

Within this context, the issues of psychological symptoms and psychiatric care were not exactly in the forefront of anyone's attention. G. Bose and D. Satyanand, both familiar with psychoanalysis, were trying to address psychological turmoil in patients, mainly of the emerging middle class. Satyanand, perhaps more than Bose, interacted with subjects facing dilemmas about religious and political identity, as well as nationalism and

[6] Sir Weldon Dalrymple-Champneys, Papers/Health review of India, GC 139/H2, Wellcome Library, London.

[7] A.V. Hill, *A Report to the Government of India on Scientific Research in India* (1945), 55.

independence.[8] Berkeley-Hill commented on the psychological attributes of 'terrorists' (independence activists) and described them as quite reasonable individuals (?), as also professing rather radical ideas to actively foment Hindu–Muslim unity (the obvious need for which is quite evident to him, though, in his impish way, seen to be rather implausible).[9]

Distinct from this psychoanalytically derived questioning of the communal disharmony, other psychologists like Beni Prasad, professor of psychology at the Allahabad University,[10] suggested that social psychotherapy was essential for India. This was particularly important, he felt, because there was a 'need for a set of qualities to be brought consciously into play against older manifestations that were (more) suited to an environment of a negative and absolutist government'[11] as he warns against the political ideas being floated at that time. To him, 'to speak of Hindus and Muslims as separate civilizations is to equate the whole of civilization with religious creed, and resultant magnification of non-essentials'.[12] In this frame of reference,[13] partition is no solution as 'it is a psychological escape from the stern realities of the situation, and if persisted in, it cannot escape the corollaries of exchange of population … and a drive towards complete domination'. In preventing this, there was thus an opportunity for India, as it may have to contribute a 'humanism' of its own....[14] As Beni Prasad rather sternly warns[15] that in the situation at that time (of the mid-1940s), muddling through, drift and laissez-faire were not realistic options; communal riots provoked a reaction for 'strong

[8] Satya Nand, *The Objective Method of Dream Interpretation* (Lahore: Northern India Printing and Publishing, 1946).

[9] Owen Berkeley-Hill, *Hindu–Muslim Unity*, in Collected Papers (Calcutta: The Book Company, 1933).

[10] Beni Prasad, *Hindu–Muslim Questions* (Allahabad: Allahabad University, 1946).

[11] Ibid., 37.

[12] Ibid., 83.

[13] Ibid., 85.

[14] Ibid., 114.

[15] Ibid., 144 onwards.

government' versus 'self-government' as most prefer security over liberty. This would be tragic, as a liberal and humanitarian polity was to be the essence of a future India.

Thus, over the previous few decades preceding Independence, though the edifice of medical services had been developed, psychiatry was still mainly preoccupied with the asylum. This was a bit different in Europe and America, where social analysis and political ideas, as well as increasing scientific knowledge of the brain and its diseases, had interacted with psychiatric thought to extend the field from a purely personal disease concept to a wider questioning of the interaction between man and society, in both physical and mental aspects. These debates had just begun to be articulated in mid-century medical services and academia in India. The events around the Independence and Partition of India set this questioning back, as we describe further.

The Events: Disruption of Medical Services During the Partition

As Independence drew near, Mapother's uneasy observation of the British doctors' sense of ennui (a decade earlier) became obvious in its physicality.

'It seems doubtful that many of the British officials will wish to stay … this goes not only for the British members of the ICS and IP but for the majority of Doctors and Engineers'—this was obvious early in 1947.[16] In the months before Independence, the jostling and violence began ratcheting up. In June 1947, a bomb in Lahore targeted a prominent hospital near the Shahalmi Gate, and the police party that went to investigate the explosion had a bomb thrown at it, with several casualties. It was alleged by Bhim Sen Sachar (a prominent politician) that some Muslims

[16] Jenkins to Mountbatten, Secret #683, 15 June 1947 (in L. Carter, *Punjab Politics, 1 June–14 August 1947 Tragedy: Governors' Fortnightly Reports and Other Key Documents* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 2007), 75.

were behind this. It was clear, however, that the series of attacks had been planned, with a booby trap device in a drain preceding the throwing of a country-made bomb later. A few days later, a Muslim gardener was shot and injured while working in the lawns of the Amritsar Medical College, and a young child was killed on the way to school. Meanwhile, Delhi had already become embroiled in violence, in the old city, as well as in adjoining areas of Gurgaon, Ballabgarh and Alwar. A surgical team was sent to Gurgaon from Delhi to help with injuries among the population there. Many of the Muslim doctors at the Irwin Hospital (now Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Narayan [LNJPN] Hospital) left, seriously affecting the working of the hospital.

The attitudes of the population are increasingly seen in psychological terms as 'the *hysterical urge* of Muslims to serve in the West and of Hindus and Sikhs to serve in the East'.[17] There is also an attempt to explain the thoughts behind these occurrences using Freudian metaphors. When Nehru complained about the indifference of the British officers to the mayhem around, it was brushed off as, 'first, the British as a race do not always talk seriously about the things that they take seriously, and secondly, to use the *current psychological jargon*, the average educated Indian is compelled to *rationalize* the behavior of his countrymen'.[18] The word 'rationalize' here is used in a semi-pejorative manner to signify a faulty defence mechanism. Intriguingly, it was also hinted that a special interrogation cell had been established within the Lahore Mental Hospital where people (mainly Muslims, according to Mamdot) were being interrogated in a cruel manner. The administration, when questioned, did not deny this directly, but said that the staff of this cell was from all communities (!).[19]

[17] Jenkins to Mountbatten, Secret #696, 13 July 1947 [MSS.EUR.F. 200/123] (in L. Carter, *Punjab Politics, 1 June–14 August 1947 Tragedy: Governors' Fortnightly Reports and Other Key Documents* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 2007), 155.

[18] Memorandum by Jenkins; 4 August 1947/R/3/189 FF.212-37.

[19] Mamdot to Jenkins/2 July 1947/ Mamdot Villa, Davies Rd, Lahore [R/3/191 FF 58-68] (in *Punjab Politics, 1 June–14 August 1947 Tragedy:*

Within a few weeks, in July–August 1947, the violence started affecting the imperial enclave of New Delhi. A domestic staff of a British officer who had been on a visit to old Delhi was injured and was treated by the 'wife of Shone, who [had] a sort of little clinic in the house where she [looked] after the servants and their families'. Since most of doctors had deserted Irwin Hospital, the conditions were appalling, and a Burmese doctor (who was helping this household clinic) was horrified at the gloating by various segments of the population (presumably about the violence and indignities being perpetrated against the 'other'). Reports of cholera at the refugee camps had begun to come in, with high mortality. In the middle of it all, a child developed typhoid at the domestic hospital, and a bed was found for him at Irwin Hospital with great difficulty, with the help of the 'Hindu doctor who [looked] after [them]'.

The mood of the people was obviously fragile, with Horace Alexander, a Quaker member of the Friends Ambulance Corps and a close personal friend of Gandhi, being aware that the 'refugees (were) not in a highly nervous state though he said there was nothing easier in the world than to work them up into such a condition within a few minutes'. The distrust between the communities had become 'pathological'. The strong criticism by the British staff of the incapacity of the new Indian government was privately held to be a bit harsh as the 'mood of the government calls for a sedative rather than shock treatment' (electroconvulsive therapy had been invented a few years earlier and as a metaphor, already entered popular discourse). The understated assumption was that the new government was non compos mentis! Infectious disease continued to rise. General Thimayya, inspecting the refugee trains in Punjab, saw a number of bodies by the roadside and a number of horrific injuries to arms and upper torso, obviously received while defending oneself from attack. A number of old and ill people were left behind, who General Thimayya took to the local makeshift hospital where there was

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Governors' Fortnightly Reports and Other Key Documents (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 2007), 131–33.

an 'inoculation barrier near the bridge head and a few doctors working hard,'[20] like an advance field station in the army, attending to severed tendons and deep cuts. At the cholera hospital, deaths were down, and saline drips were being administered as fast as possible (20 minutes turnaround), but since there were only six units, it was quite slow. He noted that 'if there [were] too few doctors they [were] working overtime'. In Delhi itself, the refugee committee had organised services of doctors in the camps, and things were relatively under control, though there was lot of animosity between the communities. In the Muslim refugee camps in the Purana Qila, conditions were quite bad, with accusations of neglect by Liaquat Ali Khan, the prime minister of Pakistan. However, 'sanitation in both camps [was] an acute problem, but it [was] being coped with as efficiently as possible. Clinics and hospitals, by necessity most primitive, [were] organised and much help to the authorities [had] been given [there] by the British community.'[21]

Psychological aspects were becoming obvious, with Mountbatten criticising the ham-handed way in which amity was encouraged (vans with loudspeakers asking people to be friends) which only irritated everyone and Nehru admitting that since there was no understanding of crowd psychology, he would depute some experts (in psychology!) to the Delhi Emergency Committee.[22] In a few weeks, the medical help was getting more organised, and several local medical men had by now come forward to help out. However, sinister and threatening telephone calls to 'not help Muslims' were made to various households, especially in the context of an Indian lady doctor, and regarding

[20] 19 September 1947/Stephenson to Graffety-Smith/Amritsar-Lahore/ [in L. Carter, *Punjab Politics, 1 June–14 August 1947 Tragedy: Governors' Fortnightly Reports and Other Key Documents* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 2007), 251–53].

[21] 19 September 1947/note by Tytler/round the refugee camps [in L. Carter, *Punjab Politics, 1 June–14 August 1947 Tragedy: Governors' Fortnightly Reports and Other Key Documents* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 2007), 314].

[22] TNA:DO 142/146 28sep1947/Shone to Addison.

Lady Smith to the British officials.[23] September 1947 also saw large-scale violence, with the Tibbia Medical College being used a refugee station and Hakim Ajmal Khan's family moving to Pakistan (regretted deeply by Gandhi).[24]

Towards the end of September 1947, there was a very serious incident in which a mob of 200 in west Delhi attacked a refugee hospital,[25] killed 4 and wounded 12 (mainly Muslims). The precision with which the attack was conducted and that the identity of wards and patients were made known to attackers caused severe concern, with Nehru commenting that there was a 'core of individuals' who wanted to create trouble. Refugee hospitals continued to have fatalities, but it was the weather that cooled things down, with torrential rains and flood in October 1947. However, along the roads of Punjab, things were very bad with 'corpses and stagnant water lying around' as reported by Lady Mountbatten.[26] The concentration of Muslim doctors and patients now seemed at risk of further attack, indicating a near-total breakdown of civic life.[27]

The death toll in Delhi itself was thought to be trivial (1,000–6,000!) in the past few weeks, and was described as 'Belsen without the gas chambers'.[28] In October, the train massacres occurred, and a Hindu doctor attending to the injured in Lahore was killed, along with his sons who were helping him.[29] In the end, it was

[23] TNA:DO 142/417 Despatch No. 106 (528/47/p/39) p365/Shone to Addison/30sep1947/.

[24] M.K. Gandhi, *Delhi Diary* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1948), p. 39. (26 September 1947).

[25] TNA:DO 142/416 Secret No. 897, 898 and 899 01/10/1947 p387/Shone to Addison/.

[26] Telegram TNA:DO 142/416 Top Secret No. 978 p461-462/Shone to Noel-Baker/13 oct1947/11:40pm/top secret.

[27] p471–473/statement by Lord Ismay to UK Chiefs of Staff; UK Cabinet Commonwealth Affairs Committee Paper CA (47)6 (Extract)/14oct1947/TNA: FO 371/63570.

[28] TNA:FO 479/1 Despatch No. 111 p477-484/Shone to Noel Baker/14oct1947/very confidential.

[29] R. Tanwar, *Reporting the Partition of Punjab, 1947: Press, Public, and Other Opinions* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 2006), 425.

estimated that by October 1947, about 450,000 people had been killed, and further it was estimated that another 200,000 would die.[30] It was wryly commented that the past few months had seen the emergence of two states which were 'highly sensitive, overwrought, inexperienced and difficult new members',[31] using terminology which is quite reminiscent of borderline states.[32]

As the year wore on, the violence was succeeded by more entrenched changes. It was quite obvious that the psychological condition needed to be improved, and politicians like Suhrawardy noted that in both states, insistence on 'reiterated and fulsome expressions of loyalty … [was] fast assuming the proportions of sadism'.[33] It was suggested that mobile hospitals be provided to Pakistan, but this would have been tricky as staff and equipment would have to be moved from India, and India had just refused to provide medical help for the Malaya campaign.[34] Resentments built up to an extent that a Muslim doctor (Dr Mufti) was shot dead in Paharganj (in Delhi), and a Hindu commandant of a Muslim refugee camp was shot dead by an Indian soldier.[35] By November, almost a million people (half a million each way) had moved, but Lady Mountbatten could offer a modest opinion that 'health conditions were reasonably good though there was a shortage of medical facilities and supplies'.[36]

[30] p494/Symon to Rumbold/15oct1947/.

[31] Ibid. 23, 477–84/Shone to Noel Baker/14oct1947/very confidential.

[32] DSM5: Efforts to avoid abandonment, unstable and intense relationships, identity disturbance, impulsivity, recurrent damaging behaviour, affective instability, feelings of emptiness, inappropriate and poorly controlled anger and transient paranoid ideation or dissociative symptoms (is BPD a dynamic or a political construct?! as in other chapter).

[33] TNA:DO 142/419 Report by Graffety-Smith, Karachi 17 October 1947.

[34] TNA:DO 35/3157 No. 1048 Shone to Noel Baker, New Delhi 21 October 1947 (529/vol2).

[35] TNA:DO 142/416 Immediate Secret No. 1063 Shone to Noel Baker, 23 October 1947 (533/vol2).

[36] TNA:DO 142/416 Top Secret No. 1179 Shone to Noel Baker, 3 November 1947, New Delhi (613/vol2).

By now the Kashmir issue had started building up and much more attention was being paid to events there. In all this, the Mir of Khairpur, who was known to be mentally ill, was brought to Karachi, to thwart perceived attempts by India to have him declared sane and thus accede to India in a state of sanity (!).[37] Violence in Kashmir valley and the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) had obvious religious undertones, and non-Muslim populations in these areas were 'anxious to move as soon as possible'.[38] One rather intriguing aspect is a request to London to draft letters to Liaquat Ali Khan and Nehru differently, as the nuances of Oxbridge turn of the phrase (which only the Harrovian Nehru understood) were likely to be misconstrued by the preparatory school atmosphere of Karachi![39] In any case, identical letters copied to both heads of state only irritated 'these sensitive and over-wrought people'.[40]

The issues regarding repatriation of abducted women was also a matter of concern and though one lady (Miss Saran Bai) suggested that the women's consent (or whether they wanted to be repatriated) needed to be taken, she was overruled.[41] The division of hospital assets and equipment was another contentious issue. While the furniture of the High Court could be divided in a 60:40 ratio, medical equipment of Mayo and Wellington Hospitals of Lahore took long and added to the unsettled issue of agricultural colleges, engineering college or even the library of the Lahore University.[42] To add to the breakdown, almost 75 per cent of the

[37] TNA:DO 142/419 Secret/ Report by Graffety-Smith; Karachi 17 November 1947 (692/vol2).

[38] TNA:DO 35/3172 Duke of Graffety-Smith, peshaxar, 27 November 1947 (736/vol 2).

[39] TNA:DO 133/69 Shone to Donaldson 27 November 1947 (Enclosure 1; note by Grey, November 1947) (738/vol2).

[40] TNA:DO 35/3158 Immediate Top Secret Personal No. 1352/Shone to Carter, 30 November 1947, New Delhi (765/2).

[41] TNA:DO 142/494 and 440 Stephenson to Graffety-Smith No. PHC/29/47 7 December 1947, Lahore (794/2).

[42] R. Tanwar, *Reporting the Partition of Punjab, 1947: Press, Public, and Other Opinions* (Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 2006), 550.

trained nurses and more than two-thirds of all women doctors left Pakistan as Hindus, Anglo-Indians and Christians opted for India, causing a crisis, which necessitated an urgent recruitment of emergency nurses, often straight out of 'purdah'.[43] As an aside, the fate of 2,000 Jews in Peshawar hung in the balance after the other partition (Israel and Palestine) related issues emerged,[44] in a sense trapping the entire region from the Suez to the Himalayas in a skein of hastily drawn lines. By the end of the year, in December 1947, several thousand refugees died of cold and exposure in Lahore and sporadic riots were being reported in cities as far away as Bangalore.[45]

In summary, therefore, the breakdown of medical services, achieved through the targeting of hospital wards and doctors, as well as the transfer of medical staff itself added to the chaos. It reinforced the sense of helplessness and ennui, though there were attempts to at least maintain the bare minimum services through the tent hospitals and vaccination programs at the camps and marches. At another level, the madness of the times and the need for medical services was being articulated quite often, as the selections from Mahatma Gandhi's speeches during this period show.

Gandhi: Overview of Content of Speeches September 1947–January 1948—Madness as Metaphor

On 12 September 1947, Mahatma Gandhi reacted to the events by stating that 'let it be said of them that the inhabitants of Delhi had gone mad temporarily but that sanity had now returned'.[46] A few weeks later, when he fell ill, there were some sarcastic

[43] R. Symonds, *In the Margins of Independence: A Relief Worker in India and Pakistan, 1942–1949* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2001), 109.

[44] TNA:DO 35/3172 Note by Duke, 10 December 1947 Peshawar (818/2).

[45] TNA:DO 35/3159 No. 1462 Top Secret Shone to Noel-Baker, 20 December 1947, New Delhi (860/2).

[46] Gandhi, *Delhi Diary*, 9.

references to his 'illness' in the press, to which Mahatma Gandhi was forced to give a rejoinder that in this time of crisis, the help of Dr Sushila Nayar, Jivraj Mehta, B.C. Roy, Gilder and Ansari were not of as much help, as his physician was Lord Rama to help him with his physical, mental and moral health. On 3 October 1947, Gandhi referred to the medical issues in some detail. Sushila Nayar, along with Horace Alexander and Richard Symonds (the Friends Service Unit [FSU]), was concentrating on providing relief to the Muslim camp in Purana Qila and the Hindu camps at Kurukshetra. He was constrained to say that the suffering of humanity could have been greatly minimised if at least one of the sides had retained their sanity.[47] On 19 October 1947, he talked about the deep sense of hurt about the murder of Kidwai,[48] and the next day the murder of a Muslim doctor, Dr P.H. Mufti, who was trying to help some non-Muslim families and trying to clean up Paharganj. Gandhi was particularly upset by the fact that not enough number of Muslims could be collected for the burial itself, as most had fled or were too scared to fulfil this basic act of dignity.[49] By this time he has become quite despondent and made a remark that 'if it was the last of such crimes I should have little to say, deplorable though even such a crime would always be. But I very much fear it is a pointer'. He kept himself acquainted with the activities of Mehta and Amrit Kaur of looking after the health needs of the refugees.

In between, he found an occasion to remind the government that jails should become like mental hospitals, to correct the prisoners, as a crime by itself was a sign of a diseased mind. Jail staff should thus behave like the physicians and nurses of a mental hospital.[50] He was also upset about the harassment of Muslims of Tihar,[51] desecration of mosques in Delhi and the harassment

[47] Ibid., 61.
[48] Ibid., 99.
[49] Ibid., 100.
[50] Ibid., 113 (now mental hospital staff are expected to behave like jailers!).
[51] Ibid., 149.

of Christians in Sonipat.[52] He put his weight behind the repatriation of women and girls, without any 'question of voluntary conversion or association on the part of the girl concerned'.[53] The arrest of a Hindu doctor, and also Harijans, in Sind, also became an issue of concern.[54] In December 1947, the cold wave of Lahore (cf. above) became another issue, as the health officer in Lahore reported that the sweepers brought in from other places were being uncooperative, thus adding sanitation worries and the threat of cholera to the cold. Gandhi chastises them (the Muslim refugees from India) for not attending to the sanitation requirements themselves and expecting 'sweepers' to do everything for them.[55]

Back in Delhi, the fate of the Tibbia College, and with its demise, the loss of the hope of modernising local medical traditions, was a matter of sorrow and shame, as it had come to pass that Muslims could not enter Karol Bagh except 'at the risk of their lives'.[56] On 29 December 1947, he marked the anniversary of Hakim Ajmal Khans' death with an appeal to bury the 'present Hindu–Muslim feud' and the regret that 'communal frenzy has suspended even this non-communal (medical services) activity'. On 20 January 1948, in a message called 'A Plea for Sanity', Gandhi reminded the people of the peace pledge that had been signed a few days earlier, which was sought to be repudiated by the Hindu Mahasabha. He pointed out that the recent events were no different from lynching of Negros in America, which everyone in India found reprehensible. He was concerned about the spread of communalism to Mysore, which had hitherto been quite in the state of harmony, and was relieved to know (28 January 1948) that his fast had been quite effective in quieting things down.[57] He was assassinated the day after. The *Indian Medical Gazette* carried a funeral notice and announced that a special issue would

[52] Ibid., 194–95.
[53] Ibid., 218.
[54] Ibid., 244.
[55] Ibid., 277.
[56] Ibid., 286 and 293.
[57] Ibid., 387.

look into the psychological issues that created the background for this crime. It never appeared.

The Medical Institutions and Services

The violation of the hospitals had been a focus of the sectarian divides quite early. Communal violence had been seen at the Carmichael Medical College, and on the attached hostel during the Direct Action Day in Calcutta in August 1946.[58] In March 1947, following the riots in Amritsar, the hospitals were filled with patients bearing horrific injuries, amongst allegations that some mobs were actually organised along military lines (with doctors and stretcher carriers to help the wounded amongst the mob).[59] By August, as the Radcliffe award was getting closer, the violence at Lahore saw an increase in casualties being brought to the Mayo and Sir Ganga Ram Hospital.[60] A hospital was attacked in Sheikhupura towards the end of August, in which many patients were killed with only some staff managing to escape.[61] At the same time, doctors were trying to help at the refugee camps and described the ordeal of having to operate without adequate equipment, using scraps of cloth from tailors shops and razor blades to extract bullets and suture and bandage the horrific injuries. A few weeks earlier, a Hindu doctor had been shot dead in street in Rawalpindi, and Civil Surgeon Mr Sondhi was attacked and severely injured.[62] There is a mention of one woman who had endured severe abuse, 'the extent of her suffering had unbalanced her mind'.[63] In September 1947, by which time violence had become widespread in Delhi, Dr Joshi of Qarol (Karol) Bagh, who tried to reason with a mob, was shot dead

[58] G.D. Khosla, *Stern Reckoning: A Survey of the Events Leading up to and Following the Partition of India* (New Delhi: Bhawnani and Sons, 1989), 63.

[59] Ibid., 102–03.

[60] Ibid., 121.

[61] Ibid., 132.

[62] Ibid., 197.

[63] Ibid., 232.

by a Dr Qureshi, which had 'serious repercussions in other parts of Delhi'. Though convicted and jailed, Dr Qureshi was sent to Pakistan when an exchange of prisoners was negotiated, where he was feted as a patriot and a hero.[64]

Friends Ambulance Services and Relief Operations: Empathy and Despair

The FSU, established as an ambulance corps during the First World War, had remained active over the next decades, and revived during the Second World War. Many members were strongly supportive of Indian aspirations for independence, and the Quakers House in London was often a host to Gandhi. Horace Alexander, Angela Harrison and Richard Symonds were often intermediaries between the political and administrative circles in London, Delhi, Karachi and Calcutta, and tried to organise health care for the Partition-affected areas. The records describe some of these attempts.

In March 1946, Nehru paid a visit to the FSU headquarters and complimented them on their help during the famine, but was even more appreciative of the 'psychological approach and emotional understanding'[65] of the issues in India. The FSU established a Relief Welfare Ambulance Corps after the riots of August 1946 (Direct Action Day), and their activities chronicle some aspects of medical services, and in August 1947 they were invited (by Nehru and Patel) to assist in the medical services in the Punjab.[66] Members had been active in Lahore earlier in the year and noted the frenzied atmosphere, which was 'exacting a terrific mental toll'.[67] In an early attempt to mitigate this, colleagues

[64] Ibid., 284.

[65] A report on the visit of the Governor-General of Bengal, Mr Nehru and Mr. Jinnah with the Friends Service Unit, March 1946 (Library of the Society of Friends, London).

[66] Letter/Peg Wright-Stuart Wright, August 1947 (4708/4) (Library of the Society of Friends, London) Img-0362.

[67] Letter/Stuart Nelson to Colin Bell, American Friends Service Committee, 26 May 1947 (4705/1) (Library of the Society of Friends, London) Img0367.

had attempted to set up camp in Bengal, at the beginning of the communal riots in late 1946, as they were convinced of the 'futility of it all, the artificiality of this communal difference' and tried to work out the mechanisms of social psychotherapy. Over few weeks, they were successful in bringing together Hindus and Muslims, ironing out differences and helping to affirm that the 'sun shines on Hindu and Muslim alike and a tree does not remove itself to another part of the country if a Hindu or a Muslim sits in its shade'. A major effort was made to ensure that public involvement (repairing houses, desilting tanks, opening a medical clinic) was seen to be even-handed and non-partisan. The effort was modestly successful, because when the group decided to close down in April 1947, they received letters from both Hindus and Muslims to stay on (!),[68] though they themselves were aware that they had barely scratched the surface (as regards what needed to be done).

As they worked in the refugee camps in northern India and the riots amplified, the medical services were makeshift. The Indian helpers (such as cooks) were trained in inoculations but the 'technique [was] terrible'; the 'supply of needles [precluded] boiling or attempts at sterilization'; all of which was of little significance as they were 'inoculating 500 people a day'. A dismal reminder of the toll was a 'small graveyard [which was] constantly growing in size' due to high mortality. In September, after the initial tumult, things had quieted down a bit; however, they were aware that 'mob psychology could be whipped up easily but for now [was] rather exhausted'. Doctors volunteered all the way from Delhi (a young lady doctor) and set up a dispensary in the camp that saw to inoculations. A case of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is described in some detail as 'a little old Mohammedan lady rescued from a crowd at the railway station, in old and dirty clothes. Huddled in fear at the corner of the room … there was still a great deal of fear in her when Swarn took her some tea and bread and talked with her'.

[68] Gordon Muirhead, Summary Note dt. 8/4/1947 (4704/3).

Pettinger describes the sense of 'tragedy, disillusionment and a great feeling of loss … and that we didn't want this (the massacres)'. The problems were acute for health care, as most non-Muslims had left, and only Westerners were trusted (of which there were too few); and there had been instances of persons refusing to be inoculated by people from the other community. This was despite the fact that cholera was rife across the newly demarcated border (vibrio cholera having wisely decided to ignore the line drawn by Mr Radcliffe) and inoculation was necessary, and it was required that everyone be observed for 72 hours without diarrhoea after inoculation before being allowed to proceed across these new borders, with the consequence that the 'stream of people was dammed up', eventually resulting in a caravan 15 miles long.[69]

At the same time, the local administration was often reluctant to accept help, and the tacit feeling was to show that 'we can manage it'. They had to negotiate with the new administration in Delhi, and Symonds had to fly to Karachi, but not much explicit support was forthcoming from either side. As the refugee columns built up, the Lahore cantonment was used as a holding ground, and Pettinger '[dug] into the health department to get more inoculation supplies', and was given two syringes, with which it was managed to inoculate about 500 persons (in a crowd of 10,000). By September, it was obvious that the experiences of the people were 'symptoms of an underlying pathology' and that the 'disease [was] essentially the same that is worldwide and most obvious in the international scene'.[70] In particular, he was concerned about the intersection of the stressed religious angle as related to the great economic forces at play and the goals and ambitions of men as individuals and as groups (which 'are not as high sounding as they seem when they work at the level of the individual'). At a simpler level, infighting between the district and provincial governments, unwillingness to ask medical students to volunteer

[69] Bob Pittenger, Excerpts from letters of 5, 16, 17 October 1947, from Nakodar, near Jullundur, East Punjab (marked CONFIDENTIAL NOT FOR PUBLICATION).

[70] Ibid.

in the camps and resentment at 'foreigners' making suggestions all slowed down the process of health care, so things had to be done with tact to create the impression that 'they [were] the ones getting done what [was] getting done'. He was aware that the local administration had actually had very little responsibility in the (colonial) government, and in crisis, were actually unable to do anything, and preferred to call on the army rather than rely on, 'by habit, the pattern that [had] been administered over them for the past century plus'.[71] On 22 September, he and his team helped one of the trains coming to Amritsar; the count was 54 dead and 250 injured. They remarked that the results of the 'terror and suffering will not be soon forgotten; and most people had knife injuries', (implying attack from close quarters). Because of this, 'it was impossible to imagine the thought processes or emotions of those who attacked the train. It [would] take no less long for them to recover from such an experience than for those who suffered at their hands'. They 'felt stymied' as by now they had lost the friendship of the top leaders, who were still smarting from comments about their inability to stem the chaos, from London. Other organisations such as National Christian Council and the Ramakrishna Mission also started medical relief, and Swarn Sarin, one of the lady volunteers with the FSU, tried to work through the confusion in the government and get some plans for welfare and rehabilitation going, but it was likely to be several months away.[72]

Meanwhile, back in Calcutta, riots began and stopped, as Gandhi fasted, but the staff in the ambulance came face to face with rioters and were shot at. The papers said 'confidence is restored', but this sounded quite hypocritical to Peg and Stuart Wright,[73] who described the psychological issues in some detail. They wrote:

[71] Ibid.

[72] Swarn Sarin, Report on conditions in Amritsar (E Punjab)-FSU Period Covered September–October 1947 (4120) (received 11 November 1947).

[73] Excerpt from a letter by Peg and Stuart Wright, September 1947 (4709/3).

> The emotions of the masses are apparently so unstable that they can throw their arms around one another for a week and be killing each other eight days later. There is a kind of bankruptcy of ideas, of spiritual leadership in the city and elsewhere … despair in face of evil they cannot name … not only do they have no confidence in others, but are afraid of themselves as well.

They go on to warn that 'the evil is much deeper, and that India will be fighting it for years to come'. As a small effort, they decided to set up work committees (based on the experience in post-war reconstruction in Europe, and during racial violence in the USA) by which members of both communities would share in cleaning up and helping each other, and equally importantly, establish a free dispensary.[74]

Agnes Maclean, one of the Friends volunteers, kept some notes and these describe some of the chaos. By December 1947, a large number of refugees had arrived in Bombay from Karachi. They were often sullen and uncooperative, as they felt that the 'government' had created the mess, and thus was responsible for looking after them. In this atmosphere, doctors amongst the refugees who offered to help in the camps were boycotted by the others.[75] The only silver lining was that the common kitchens were pointedly antithetical to caste distinctions, and that ex-INA soldiers were helping run the camps with some discipline. Moving on to Delhi, she found the Humayun Tomb camp very depressing, with the 'hospital tents very untidy, and the doctor himself unshaven and dirty'. There were lots of volunteers to run the OPD, including Europeans, Muslim refugees and Hindu citizens, but lacked any supervision.[76] Visiting the Kurukshetra camps, she was struck by 'very inadequate arrangements' but was quite appreciative of the work being put in by students from the Tata School of Social Work, Desh Sevikas from Bombay as well as health visitors from Bengal and other parts. This was obviously a high-profile camp, with visits by Rajkumari Amrit Kaur (the health minister) and

[74] Ibid.
[75] Agnes Maclean, Diary 4712/7.
[76] Ibid., Delhi 13 December 1947.

various doctors such as Lt Col Bhatia, Basu and Khanolkar (all ex-IMS) who were trying to organise the medical services better. The camp, which by now housed almost 30,000 refugees, had been subdivided into four towns, each with its own health services, hospitals and infant care centres, with Col Bhatia being in charge of medical issues. It seemed that that the Government of India had put all its resources into organising the Kurukshetra camp. By now the Kashmir issue had added to the problems, so there was some concern about the same organisation (the FSU) working on both sides of the border. Her work consisted of mainly helping the nursing services get better organised and visiting the camp for orphans and stranded women, child welfare centres and camps for the voluntary relief workers from the different organisations. Further onwards, on a visit to refugee camps and medical services in Jammu (which served both as a civil and a military hospital), while interviewing refugees from Mirpur, she observed that their 'mental condition was very pitiable, for they were filled with anxiety and sorrow as a result of being separated from men folk and other children',[77] and other details of the rapine and pillage.

Other Accounts

A doctor of the RAMC posted to Delhi in 1946–47 kept some accounts of the events, through newspaper clippings, as well as personal documents.[78] The clippings reflect the growing unease of the leaders, with Nehru, Patel, Rajendra Prasad and many others issuing statements to preserve peace and promising safety for the minorities. Madness was a metaphor used across the spectrum of leaders, from Master Tara Singh (*Times of India*, 24 September 1947, Amritsar) to Nehru who angrily condemned the 'maddened populace … [which had] gone completely mad and behaved as only mad people can do'. In addition, the officer noted the details

[77] Ibid., Agnes Maclean, 'The Evidence of the Refugees from Mirpur,' 10 January 1948.

[78] RAMC 810/2 (Wellcome Library, London).

of the riots in Delhi in September 1947, which centred on the Lodhi Road area, and focused on government staff trying to get to work in the secretariat, and the fact that fires could be seen on the horizons of Delhi. His superior officer dismissed the officers' statements as being too partisan. Sri Aurobindo lamented the fissured and broken freedom, and hoped that this would not diminish the drive towards the 'unification of mankind' that was inevitable. Mr M.S. Sengupta regretted that the politics of 'Bengal [had] ceased to be civilized and Hindus and Muslims [were] no longer decent people' (letter, 2 August, Calcutta). Anis Kidwai's account of work at the Humayun Tomb camp and interactions with various hospitals, doctors and medical services is replete with accounts of staff being asked to leave on grounds of identity, erratic supplies of simple things like blankets and the immense struggle to preserve a sense of purpose.[79] There are several accounts of trauma and psychological distress of the abandonment of the elderly and children left orphaned; and the need for succour was keenly felt.

Epilogue and Conclusion

Unlike the Holocaust in Europe, the psychological impact of which has been discussed through political, psycho-dynamic, humanistic, Marxist and even genetic explanations, the discussions and debates around events of the Partition have not been as extensive.[80] One could perhaps assume that the psychological trauma of non-Europeans was not likely to be of sufficient academic concern in the West, while the numbers of the intelligentsia in India were too small to really comprehend and comment on the events.

What is striking in these details is the fact that there was significant awareness of the psychological issues leading up to

[79] A. Kidwai, ed., *In Freedom's Shade*, trans., 1974 (New Delhi: Penguin, 2011).

[80] A. Sarin, S. Ghani and S. Jain, 'Bad Times and Sad Moods,' in *Partition: The Long Shadow*, ed. Urvashi Butalia (London: Penguin, 2015).

the violence that ensued. From using madness as a metaphor, both in its manifestation and treatment (sedatives rather than shock treatment), to larger issues of individual psychology and group psychology (highlighted by Satyanand and Beni Prasad), the fact that the psychological consequences would be severe and long-standing was well understood. This awareness was often reflected in initiatives of the 1950s. The immediate crisis caused by the influx of people in Delhi, Calcutta and Bombay, as well as Lahore and Karachi, caused a severe strain on public services. Their rehabilitation became a focus, and strident efforts were made to provide health care. This division of population included those in mental hospitals and jails. Shuffling several hundred mentally ill across borders would have preoccupied the mental hospital based psychiatrists (who would in addition have had to cope with staff movements). These events also effectively put an end to any plans for NHS (variations of which, it was expected, would be the natural order of things for most of the British Empire and Commonwealth, after the War). Since nation states and boundaries were now fluid, health services could no longer follow the whimsical redrawing of borders.

The documenting of the psychological trauma, and providing relief, were left to the family and community networks, and the few charitable organisations. The breakdown of social cohesion and inclusive politics cast a long shadow on the emergence of a 'psychological commons', of the universal humanism, which was expected. In addition, since modern 'Western' ideas about the nature of man had proved so palpably false and ineffectual, a sense of 'Indian' values was reaffirmed and even resurrected. This was perhaps necessary to provide a sense of stability in face of the chaos, though it was often recognised as being a very slippery slope.

However, over time, this distancing from contemporary events had several consequences in thinking about psychology and mental health in South Asia. Individuals thus became redefined as part of community and clan networks, rather than autonomous persons, as a perverse reaffirmation of the colonial

gaze. Psychotherapy itself became focused on older memes of guru–chela, and using religious ideas as valid explanatory models for mental symptoms re-emerged (participation in religious practices as being necessary for psychological well-being, as well as treatment). Moreover, as was the case with the response to the refugees, it became a dictum, as well as insistence, that families and 'local' communities find answers to issues of care and social welfare themselves. Ripples of this can now be found in most rehabilitation efforts, from chronic mental illness to disaster, where help is often planned for communities rather than persons. Other fields of bio-medicine, which were more technology based, did not get as affected by this disruption, and the unambiguous adoption and use of the latest X-ray equipment or blood tests, from the West, did not cause disquiet, unlike suggestions for widespread use of psychoanalysis or existential humanism. Though Indian bodies could be seen as similar to others, the Indian mind was somehow construed as being very different. Defining this became embroiled in many other controversies,[81] which rumble on to contemporary times.

The disruption in medical services, and thinking and planning for health care, by events of the mid-twentieth century in India thus had a profound impact on medical services. Fractionated and silo-based services became the norm instead of a unified health care. Unlike other civil services, the Indian Medical Service was disbanded and thus, administratively and conceptually, doctors were no longer at the heart of the planning of health care. Since neither access to health nor psychological wellbeing was seen as a common shared given, there was no need to develop a template of ideal civic existence. Medical care soon began to revert to medieval forms, of individual reputations of particular doctors and family-based expertise (in business, if not medical skill!). Psychiatric training would familiarise professionals with cognitive therapy, psychoanalysis, humanistic school, etc., but

[81] A.K. Ramanujan, 'Is there an Indian Way of Thinking? An Informal Essay,' *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 23 (1989): 41 (doi: 10.1177/00699668902300100).

at the same time emphasise their essential incompatibility with 'Indian' life. There was no introspection of the violence and trauma, or awareness of the warning that the 'consequences of the partition violence would be felt for years to come'. The 'degradation of human life, in both colonial and post-colonial modernity (exploitation) and the loss, and withholding of a collective selfhood "at peace" with itself', is the essence of what the Partition led to,[82] and had many consequences. The suffering this entailed, the suppressed sense of tragedy and fear and hate, and contorted recovery of personhood in our times have impacted our thinking about mental health, psychological distress and its amelioration, even now.

[82] A. Mufti, 'Towards a Lyric History of India,' *boundary 2* 31, no. 2(2004): 245–74.

4

Partitioning of Minds and the Legitimitisation of Difference

Moushumi Basu

Between 7 and 8 September 2013, Muzaffarnagar district in western Uttar Pradesh in India saw riots break out between Muslims and Jat Hindus, in villages and small towns that had for a major part of history, including the tumultuous years of the Partition, been relatively free of communal tensions. The violence that marred the area over the next few days saw 62 dead and approximately 40,000 people from about 140 villages fleeing their homes and taking shelter in makeshift relief camps in neighbouring districts of Shamli and Bagpat.[1] In the past, skirmishes between communities had been largely localised. However, this time around, events took such a turn that Muslim families that had until now been living together with Jat Hindus did not feel confident of returning back to their villages, even after several months. At the centre lay a latent fear of the *other*, built around the perceptions of irreconcilable 'differences' and the fear of annihilation, made real by actual acts of violence of one community

[1] Anjali Mody, 'A Separation: How the Muzaffarnagar Riots Tore a Village Apart,' *The Caravan*, March 2014, 59–71.

against another.[2] For many of the elders who had witnessed the 1947 Partition, Muzaffarnagar in 2013 marked the resurgence of the very ideas that had resulted in the division of British India into two sovereign states, India and Pakistan in 1947.

The Partition is often seen as one of those decisive events in twentieth century history that determined the fate of approximately 384 million people living in undivided British India.[3] On 23 March 1940, the All India Muslim League had passed the famous resolution at Lahore demanding the partition of India on religious lines into two separate states. A year before that, M.S. Golwalkar of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh in his book *We or Our Nationhood Defined* (1939) adopted a similar viewpoint, by projecting Hindustan, the land of Hindus, as the desired model for the future. While religion became an important factor in the creation of two separate states, it nevertheless failed to provide a strong enough foundation for nation building in both Pakistan and India.[4] In Pakistan, the bonds envisaged began to weaken almost within a decade of its formation, with the call for

[2] In 2012, similar acts of violence had marred the peace between Muslims and Bodos residing in Kokrajhar district of Assam. Purchase of land by immigrant Muslims in Bodo heartland created a fear psychosis among the Bodos that eventually boiled over in uncontrolled violence in Kokrajhar.

[3] B.R. Ambedkar, *The Partition of India*, 3rd edn. (Bombay: Thacker, 1946). See the appendix.

[4] An interesting point is made by Ambedkar in his book on the Partition:

> It is a question to be considered whether integral India is an ideal worth fighting for. In the first place, even if India [remains] as one integral whole, it will never be an organic whole. India may in name continue to be known as one country, but in reality it will be two separate countries—Pakistan and Hindustan—joined together by a forced and artificial union. If by reason of some superior force the dissolution does not take place, one thing is sure to happen to India—namely, that this continued union will go on sapping her vitality, loosening its cohesion, weakening its hold on the love and faith of her people and preventing the use, if not retarding the growth, of its moral and material resources. India will be an anaemic and sickly state, ineffective, a living corpse, dead though not buried.

'self-determination' by the people of East Pakistan culminating in the formation of Bangladesh in 1971. One might say, looking back at history, that the questions of 'majority–minority' populations, 'insider–outsider' or 'us and them' made both India and Pakistan particularly susceptible to demands of self-determination and independence. However, these developments were in no way peculiar to either of the two. The twentieth century has been privy to many such partitions.

Partition as a term has often been used to describe the division of a unified territorial entity into separate parts, such as the Korean or the Vietnamese partitions of the 1950s. While division itself may be an objective reality reinforced by physical barriers, as scholars it is imperative to go beyond the official narrative and delve into the circumstances that led to the phenomena of partition itself. This in many ways calls for a shift from the actual act of *partition* to the process of *partitioning* itself. Such a shift calls for importance to be given to ideas that give rise to the demands supportive of such a division than the very event of the partition itself. Seeking to dwell on the processes that lead people and states to build upon subjective notions of differences that justify the delineation of designated spaces, the chapter tries to make a larger argument regarding partitions by focussing on four different cases: (a) rise of ethno-nationalism and dismemberment of Yugoslavia in the 1990s, (b) conditions leading to the 2003 genocide in Darfur, (c) continuing tensions over immigration in Europe and (d) the state's handling of the Maoist insurgency in India.

The selection of the above cases follows a certain logic—by choosing to focus upon cases such as these, the chapter seeks to draw attention to the 'everydayness' of the partition discourse, the world over. 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. The construction of a concrete wall in the village of Bhagana in Haryana in 2012, restricting access of lower caste households to the common grazing land of the village,[5] or the process of ghettoisation that follows in the aftermath of riots, or the 'Love Jihad' campaign launched by the right wing Hindu forces against young Muslim men are all examples of everyday phenomena of partition, silently chipping away at the core values that define the modern Indian polity. The phenomenon is not unique to India; rather, as the chapter argues, it is representative of a larger universal trend.

The second point that the chapter seeks to make in regard to partition-related debates concerns the issue of violence. In all these constructions, even if there is no overt act, there is however a strong undercurrent of violence that underlies the very idea of partition. In cases involving large-scale killings, the violence unleashed cannot simply be treated as the handiwork of some 'mad men' in charge of affairs.[6] To read such events as isolated occurrences, driven largely by the madness of a particular historical moment, is to miss out, as the chapter argues, on the larger processes at work that transcend the lines differentiating the past from the present.[7]

[5] See Joint report of PUDR and AFDR, *This Village Is Mine Too: Dalit Assertions, Land Rights and Social Boycott in Bhagana* (Delhi: PUDR, 2012).

[6] Dr Douglas Kelley was the investigating psychiatrist associated with the Nuremberg Tribunal. In his book he makes an interesting observation:

> insanity did not offer an explanation for the violence unleashed by the Nazis: They were simply creatures of their environment, as all humans are; and they were also to a greater degree than most humans are—the makers of their environment…. I believe that the psychological bent of the 22 Nuremberg Nazis will be readily apparent if we refresh our memory by recalling the cultural matrices by which they were conditioned. [Douglas M. Kelley, *22 Cells in Nuremberg: A Psychiatrist Examines the Nazi Criminals* (New York: Greenberg, 1947)].

[7] A number of scholars writing on partition such as Paul Brass or Ishtiaq Ahmed see the violence associated with the Partition as having similarities

Addressing Issues of Differences

Movements in history are often the cause and the effect of ideas. Be it the justification of slavery or caste-based division of labour or the colonial exposition of the inherent superiority of the White race—history is full of examples of the construction of structured discourses around ideas of perceived 'difference', between and amongst different human societies. The mind, it is argued, is the storehouse of ideas and experiences that shape how we think and act. Human interactions within and across societies lay the basis for the construction of multiple identities. Shared stories nurture a sense of belongingness that paves the way for the construction of identities and the categories of 'us' and 'them' in the course of social relations. These boundaries may not necessarily be always divisive. For example, people may choose to organise in different capacities as aggrieved citizens, members of religious congregations, ethnic groups, suppressed nations, etc., not all of which are necessarily contentious.[8] However, the decisive question is who decides on the veracity of these narratives, and whose claims are to be given importance.

In the modern state system, such a task by its very nature falls upon the state that through the powers delegated to it ultimately decides upon what may be considered as virtuous, permissible and hence legitimate in the context of a given society. Particular readings of history, identity and culture help build a repository of laws that delineate the dominant morality governing behaviour and practices, within each state. For example, in the contemporary scenario of the 'war against terrorism', not just acts of terrorism alone but propagation of ideas and thoughts seen as aiding and abetting such acts of violence have been legally sanctioned as 'unlawful' warranting criminal prosecution in many countries, including India.

with other episodes of genocide and ethnic cleansing practised in the twentieth century.

[8] Charles Tilly, *The Politics of Collective Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 31.

The responses of the state in dealing with the asymmetries of power existing between communities and the kind of rationality that drives the choices that states make become important points of concern. On the particular question of difference, it must be reiterated that not all theorisations are inherently negative. Scholars like Iris Marion Young have emphasised on the positive aspects of a political culture that addresses differences as they exist in a given society. For example, in many Scandinavian countries such as Sweden, Iceland and Norway, there is an official list of names that parents of Scandinavian origin must adhere to while naming their children. Such an official policy of naming is justified by these states as mechanisms that seek to eliminate potential chances of discrimination within these societies. On the other hand, there are states that do not have any such formal policies specifically addressing questions of difference, but nonetheless recognise it as an important facet of social and political life of their citizens.

In this chapter, the focus is on situations where questions of differences are factored in the regular process of governmentality towards, what one may classify as, nefarious ends: one example from recent history being the Nazi propaganda and the official vilification by the Third Reich of the Jews as blood-thirsty people seeking to advance a project of political, economic, ethnic–racial, religious conquest through the establishment of a Jewish state under Jewish leadership. What is important in this are the images—not of how Jews actually presented themselves but rather of what Hitler and his associates depicted them to be. Historically, people have always conjured an image of themselves, leading some to argue that this process of engaging with difference is both natural and unique to human beings; but at the same time, these very thoughts themselves have also been the formative grounds for incriminating acts of violence by one set of people against another for a large part of human history. One may recall that the two main ideologues of Serbian nationalism, Radovan Karadzic and Jovan Raskovic, were both psychiatrists by profession who used their professional skills to serve their political beliefs, by building up a hysteria that helped

create and deepen the wedge between communities. In 1992, for example, Raskovic is stated to have admitted—'if I hadn't created this emotional strain in the Serbian people, nothing would have happened'.[9] The next segment delves further into this, by exploring the complicity of professionals in aiding a discourse that significantly builds upon a particular conceptualisation of difference.

Processing Difference

Controlling the mind, which is the edifice from where all actions spring, is an important part of governmentality. In a situation whereby technological advances have made it possible to experiment in myriad ways on the functioning of human brains, there exists a whole class of professional technocrats, including psychiatrists, who have made it possible for modern states to actually engage in a plausible discourse on difference as it exists within a given polity. To give an example, in July 2012, the state government of Jharkhand (India) awarded a research project to the government-owned Ranchi Institute of Neuro-Psychiatry and Allied Sciences to help out with the 'problem' of left wing extremism by using the technique of brain mapping on arrested Maoists! Having employed the technique of narco-analysis to illicit information from prison detenues, the government had no reservations about experimenting with brain mapping as a method in its attempt to bolster the validity of its actions against the Maoists.

The personal and the professional roles that psychiatrists don, therefore, make for an interesting point of enquiry. Like other health professionals, psychiatrists too have similar obligations with respect to medical codes and practices. For example, Section 1(2) of the American Psychiatric Association's, *Principles*

[9] Stevan M. Weine, *When History is a Nightmare: Lives and Memories of Ethnic Cleansing in Bosnia and Herzegovina* (Rutgers: Rutgers University Press, 1999), 91.

of Medical Ethics,[10] explicitly states that a psychiatrist should not be a party to any type of policy that excludes, segregates or demeans the dignity of any patient because of ethnic origin, race, sex, creed, age, socioeconomic status or sexual orientation. The code further calls upon psychiatrists to uphold the standards of professionalism and refrain from abusing the professional skills at their disposal, even explicitly debarring psychiatrists from participating in torture.

In this context, it is important to also see how the code that guides the professional behaviour of psychiatrists has been routinely violated in different cases in the course of the twentieth century. The abuse of psychiatry in the execution of the Nazi pogrom is probably the most well-known of them all. However, abuses of a similar nature have been reported in other countries as well. For example, in the United States of America, the Central Investigation Agency (CIA) routinely made use of psychiatrists in extracting confessions from alleged suspects. For instance, CIA's Operation Artichoke relied primarily on the use of sodium pentothal and hypnosis to extract information from individuals during interrogation.[11] Declassified papers related to the recruitment process of possible collaborators reveal interesting insights about the motives that drove medical professionals to serve in these missions.

> Q. Would you be willing to act as a Consultant to this Agency?
>
> A. Yes I feel that we are at war and if I can be of any help whatsoever, I shall be glad to give my time. If you need me on any given case, I will be glad to come.
>
> Q. Would you accept pupils for private coaching?
>
> A. Yes, I think I could train an individual or at least give him a substantial background in two weeks, working out with him three times a week.

[10] American Psychiatric Association. *The Principles of Medical Ethics*. Arlington, TX, 2013.

[11] See http://www.paperlessarchives.com/FreeTitles/ARTICHOKECIAFiles.pdf for details of Project Artichoke.

> Q. Do you have any ideas that hypnotism could be used as a weapon?
>
> A. Yes, I have thought about this often. It could certainly be used in obtaining information from recalcitrant people particularly with drugs.[12]

Health professionals including psychiatrists, as the above extract shows, are equally vulnerable, like other citizens, to political ideologies that states or non-state actors may profess.[13] In situations where personal beliefs dominate, the use of professional knowledge that could otherwise be employed for treatment and research of the mentally ill is used for purposes of torture and is extremely problematic. This is even more so, because states themselves are unwilling to give up these practices. For example, unlike Nuremberg, in the Tokyo trials, the US was particularly interested in biological weapons developed and used by the Japanese scientists (that involved among others the release of live plague bacilli over Chinese cities) and these scientists were granted immunity from prosecution in return for sharing their research and expertise with the Americans.[14] Therefore, while there have been many condemnations including those by psychiatric societies themselves of these malpractices, the fact that states continue to rely on psychiatrists for coming up with new, more

[12] Central Intelligence Agency (1952), Interview of Mr R.L. Bannerman and Mr Morse Allen, February 25, Doc.A/B,III,6,7, Project Artichoke, available at http://www.paperlessarchives.com/FreeTitles/ARTICHOKECIAFiles.pdf

[13] For example, during the Holocaust, of the estimated 600–700 psychiatrists practising in Germany at the time, while there were some like Irmfried Eberl, personally responsible for putting to death approximately 280,000 individuals, on the other hand there were those such as Martin Hohl, Hans Creutzfeldt, Gottfried Ewald and Karsten Jasperson, who publicly refused to participate in the official pogroms. [Rael D. Strous, 'Psychiatric Genocide: Reflections and Responsibilities,' *Schizophrenia Bulletin* 36, no. 2 (2010): 208–10.]

[14] Adam Jones, *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2006), 535.

'scientific' techniques of torture and mind control points to the abuse that continues to happen, despite the criticism.

Four Different Cases

The selected cases, although different from each other, focus upon similar points of concern that arise around the idea and question of difference. While violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina of former Yugoslavia and the conflict in Darfur are of one type, the other two are somewhat different as in both, the immigration debate and the Maoist case study, the discourse is one that is still in evolution which has not yet reached the levels where states no longer care for the niceties of democratic governance. In other words, in the latter cases, the discourse is visible in some acts of the state but not all, largely due to resistance expressed by groups, both domestic and international. It is this pressure of forcing states/communities to exhibit restraint that is an important lesson that flows from each of the four cases.

The resurrection of past 'injustices' to lend credibility to the idea of oneness vis-à-vis the other is a strategy common to both Yugoslavia and Darfur cases. For example, in Yugoslavia, the Serbs regarded the Ottoman period as an age of occupation, whereas for the Muslims it was an era which saw the creation and subsequent prosperity of their own elite. For decades, these contradictory perceptions coexisted, but by 1990 the rise of Serbian nationalism had turned history into the purveyor of hatred.[15] Given these circumstances, therefore, it was easy for the leaders to evoke past horrors and awaken in the Serbs a desire to avenge the sufferings of the past. In March 1937, little did anybody imagine that an idea expressed by the Serb philosopher Dr Vaso Cubrilovic would ever become the underlying force for an aggressive policy of Serbian nationalism of the type that ultimately led to the disintegration of Yugoslavia in the 1990s.

[15] Laura Silber and Little Allen, *Yugoslavia: Death of a Nation* (London: Penguin, 1995), 230.

Calling for the creation of a fear psychosis backed by 'the brute force of an organised state' as the solution for reclaiming lands colonised by the Albanians from the Serbians, Cubrilovic was able to whip up a hysteria that led Serbians to selectively burn Albanian houses, causing them to flee and secure their removal from Serbian homeland.[16] This was the beginning of the strategy of ethnic cleansing, infamously practised in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the 1990s, designed to render the territory ethnically pure whereby Muslims and Serbs could never live together. Such an exercise was also undertaken by Raskovic, a psychiatrist whose endeavour of documenting and communicating survivor's stories of Serbian suffering helped create a collective memory and propel a mass movement targeting non-Serbian populations. The Srebrenica slaughter of July 1995, where approximately 8,000 Bosnian Muslim men and boys were rounded up and shot by Bosnian Serbs, represented one of the most horrific incidents of mass murder that accompanied the desire to cultivate a Serbian homeland rid of others. Central to this policy of attacking civilians was targeting men of 'battle age' and young women. The term 'genocidal rape' was coined in the context of Bosnia to stress the centrality of sexual assaults to the broader campaign of cleansing.

Proceeding papers of the International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia (ICTY) provide an important documentation of the crimes committed by leaders and other high-ranking officials. The Tribunal held that important leaders such as Slobodan Milosevic, the President of Serbia, and Radovan Karadzic participated in a joint criminal enterprise. Milosevic was charged for murder, deportation, persecutions on political, racial or religious grounds, genocide and other inhumane acts, under existing statutes of international criminal and humanitarian law.

The violence in Darfur also follows a similar trajectory. Darfur, located in the western part of Sudan, captured international attention in 2004. For decades, Arab pastoralists had made their

[16] Weine, *When History Is a Nightmare*, 87.

way to this region from the north, without facing much resistance from the local African population (the Furs) settled here. However, with the onset of recurring drought over the 1990s, tensions built up between the Arab pastoralists and the African agriculturists. Community leaders who had never before referred to themselves as Africans now donned this new identity, leading to a newly constructed and highly polarising political dichotomy:

> The Arabs claimed the Fur had started the whole thing by attempting to extend the 'black African belt' (*ifrigia al souda*) or 'Negro belt' (*al hizam al Zunji*), aimed at excluding Arabs who, as citizens—and in keeping with the constitution—should have enjoyed equal rights of access to natural productive resources at a time of crisis. The Fur pointed to the coming together of twenty-seven tribes in a single alliance inspired by 'the Arab Gathering' demanding an extension of the 'Arab belt'.[17]

Feelings such as these fuelled the establishment of two rebel groups—the Sudan Liberation Army and the Justice and Equality Movement. Rebel attacks on Sudanese government offices provoked an indiscriminately violent response from the military government in Khartoum led by General Omar al-Bashir. The Bashir government armed a vigilante Arab militia group called the *Janjaweed* to instil fear amongst the local Africans. The assaults on the Fur villages were carried out with the help of Sudanese military forces.

Like the genocide in Yugoslavia, in Darfur too, there was an attempt made by the state forces to cleanse the territory of all Africans. Adult male non-combatants were rounded up and murdered and African women raped on a large scale by assailants who called them 'black slaves' and raped them so that they would bear Arab children.[18] In 2005, the crimes came up for trial before the International Criminal Court (ICC). In March 2009, after much deliberation, the ICC issued an arrest warrant in the

[17] Mahmood Mamdani, *Saviors and Survivors: Darfur, Politics, and the War on Terror* (New York: Doubleday, 2009), 233.

[18] Jones, *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction*, 372.

name of Omar al-Bashir, President of Sudan, for war crimes committed under his rule.

The other two cases, of anti-immigration debates in Europe and state responses to the Maoist activities in India, point to another variant of a similar type of challenge. Both these cases represent a more covert form of underhand handling and targeting by state agencies of specific communities in the name of securitisation and maintenance of public order. In Europe, the interface between the debate on immigration and the equally important concern of terrorism has led to a narrative that invariably targets a specific community of immigrants as potential terrorist suspects. In India, similarly, with the identification of Maoist violence as a serious threat to internal security, a policy decision under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, has been taken, equating Maoism with terrorism. In both Europe and India, the laws passed seek to empower state agencies in their fight against terrorism, by clamping down on probable suspects (immigrants and Maoists in this case) in the name of law and order. The legislations undertaken in both cases break standard procedures by seeking to explicitly deem a person as criminal based not just on actions but thoughts and ideas that may have been expressed leading to commitment of such acts by others.

A careful reading of the situation clearly throws up the anomalies that exist. In both these cases, the assumption that a particular constituency of people is more prone to commit acts of violence based on their cultural or ideational proclivities is both dangerous and disconcerting. If one looks only at the constituency of immigrants arrested under charges of aiding and abetting terrorism in Europe, the figures clearly point to a specific community being explicitly targeted. According to UK Home Office figures for the period 2002–04, the number of suspects charged of terrorism registered an increase of 302 per cent, with the vast majority of suspects being Muslims.[19] This is very much true for not just the rest of Europe but India as well. A scientific basis to

[19] Prodromos Loannoie Panayiotopoulos, *Immigrant Enterprise in Europe and USA* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 6.

these policies is provided by professionals, including psychologists and psychiatrists along with counterterrorism experts, to construct mental images of suspects based on the fundamental idea of difference.[20] What is important in this development is that ideas, and not actions, become the focal point of attention. The narrative produced thus seeks to legally criminalise thought in a very major way, as is evident in the laws that have been legislated in this regard.

At the level of individual countries, many of the European states have had a previous history of dealing with incidents of terrorist violence. However, post bombings in Madrid and London in 2005, there has been a change in policies that one needs to take note of. What was earlier more or less temporary has now been transformed into a permanent state of alert. This is apparent in the way anti-terror legislations have come to be accepted as part of the existing law of the land, giving the state increasing powers to stop, search, detain and arrest individuals on grounds of mere suspicion. For example, exactly two months after the twin tower attacks in America in 2001, the British government introduced an Order announcing that it no longer intended to uphold the right to liberty under the European Convention on Human Rights in certain terrorism-related circumstances.

On 12 November 2001, the Anti-Terrorism Crime and Security Act 2001 was introduced as an emergency legislation and rushed through parliament in just over one month. Under this, the period of pre-charge detention in terrorism cases was set at 7 days. In 2003, the Criminal Justice Act extended this period to 14 days. In 2006, after a failed attempt to increase the period to 90 days, the Terrorism Act increased the period to 28 days—subject to annual renew. In 2008, there were again attempts made by the government to increase the period to 42 days—a proposal which was overwhelmingly defeated in the House of Lords and

[20] D.H. Hoffman, *Report to the Special Committee of the Board of Directors of the American Psychological Association: Independent Review Relating to APA Ethics Guidelines, National Security Interrogations, and Torture* (Chicago, IL: Sidley Austin LLP, 2015).

later withdrawn by the government. In 2011, the legislation was allowed to expire, meaning the pre-charge detention limit reverted back to 14 days. However, 14 days is still the longest period of pre-charge detention for any comparable democracy in the developed world. In USA, the limit is 2 days, in Ireland 7 days, in Canada 1 day and in Italy it is 4 days.

In India, under the existing provisions, the periods of detention under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and the National Security Act are 180 and 365 days, respectively. Under both these acts, persons suspected of anti-national and unlawful activities from Maoists, members of religious organisations, peasant and trade union representatives and cultural activists have been incarcerated and subject to prolonged legal cases in various jails of India.[21] The systematic use of narco-analysis tests and brain mapping methods by state agencies on detenues seem to reiterate the false belief of both terrorists and Maoists having brains functionally different from others, to the extent that the government has actually commissioned and funded brain mapping exercises to give a scientific edge to such beliefs.[22]

The present framework that guides security policies in both Europe and India poses several threats and challenges. First, it provides for a dangerously broad definition of terrorism which applies to action taken to advance any 'political, religious, racial or ideological' cause designed to influence the government of any country or international organisation or to intimidate any member of the public anywhere in the world. Many offences are linked to this definition of terrorism, which means that large numbers are potentially criminalised (or criminal behaviour politicised, as the case may be). Moreover, new speech offences such as 'encouragement of terrorism' which encompasses making statements that glorify terrorist acts, even if it's unintentionally done, have the potential to seriously infringe free speech rights,

[21] Coordination of Democratic Rights Organizations, *The Terror of Law: UAPA and the Myth of National Security* (New Delhi: CDRO, 2012).

[22] Peoples Union for Democratic Rights, *Narco Analysis, Torture and Democratic Rights* (New Delhi: PUDR, 2008).

and by implication, criminalise thoughts and ideas. The banning of non-violent political organisations, amounting effectively to state censorship of political views, has the potential to drive debate to another important point of consideration. The power given to a constable, immigration officer or customs officer at a port or border to question, detain and (for the police) to take the DNA of anyone entering or leaving the country to determine whether they are involved in some ways in acts of terrorism—powers that can be exercised without any reasonable suspicion of such involvement—are also open to abuse.

A distinction has been drawn by scholars between state security, that is military, political, economic and environmental threats to sovereignty, and societal security which relates to threats to a cultural identity. Threats to a cultural identity may be manifested through different languages, ethnicities and religions. According to Waever, survival for a society is a question of identity, because this is the way a society talks about existential threats: If this happens, we will no longer be able to live as *us*.[23] The notion of *us* implies homogenous values, traditions and beliefs within society. However, societies are rarely homogenous and in effect composed of a mixture of groups having different values that are constantly changing with time. Therefore, when such issues and concerns get expressed, it is fundamentally a question of how relative numbers interact with the absorptive and adaptive capacities of society.

Concluding Remarks

There are a few points that come out from the above discussion. First, partition as a theme has an element of everydayness which we need to acknowledge. The idea of difference that forms the fundamental basis for partition exists at different levels of everyday life. While an interest in difference is quite natural to

[23] Ole Waever, Barry Buzan, Morten Kelstrup and Pierre Lemaitre, *Identity Migration and the New Security Agenda in Europe* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1993), 25–26.

human beings, when such thoughts come to be accorded scientific legitimacy by institutions that command a certain degree of authority within societies, this becomes problematic. In the chapter, the attempt has been to show how the idea of difference plays across a spectrum of different social contexts to create situations that defy the basic norms of civilised living recognised in modern societies. The chapter looks at four different levels and cases of partition to understand how discourses get formed, how they are played out and the varied effects that they have on the body politic.

The second point of concern that the chapter seeks to highlight is the role played by states in this process. In all the four cases, it is evident that the state is very much complicit in the act of partition. For example, in both Yugoslavia and Darfur, one finds a broadly similar trajectory of events. Both cases witness historical narratives being dug up to add to the truth and substance of the idea of difference prevalent between communities, culminating in blood curdling cries of war against one another. In both, the roles played by state functionaries and community leaders are suspect. Similarly, in the other two cases too, preconceived notions of threats emanating from certain individuals/situations point to the serious schisms that the state voluntarily creates and participates in. The widespread use of professional knowledge and personnel (both medical and non-medical) to give a scientific basis to such ideas and practices poses another serious concern. In this respect, one is simply reminded of the political use of medical professionals by the Nazis to understand the dangerous path that we may end up following if similar attempts at partition happening within our political spaces are not questioned or resisted effectively.

To conclude, one can only state that the possibilities of recurrence of such events in the future always remain as long as the social and political conditions exist for personalities to take advantage of the situation by exploiting the vulnerabilities that exist between individuals and communities at a given space and time.

5

Borderline States and Their Interface with Psychiatry

Sanjeev Jain

Introduction

The development of contemporary psychiatry over the past millennium was characterised by a gradual, but progressive, growth of empirical science and decline of mystic-religious ideas about insanity. This secularisation of the mental space began soon after medieval scientists began to explore the physical space of the human body (dissection, microscope, etc.) and revolutionised medicine. Soon, the gaze turned inwards into the mental world, and over the succeeding centuries, mental illness was recognised as being universally shared and having qualitatively similar expression, and most importantly, something that would sooner or later be decipherable by the methods of science. It also became evident that there were no cultures that did not recognise these diseases, though explanatory models did differ considerably.[1] The rapid advances in medical science made it quite apparent that despite the protean variety of microbes and humans, illnesses were quite

[1] G.E. Berrios, *The History of Mental Symptoms: Descriptive Psychopathology Since the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

consistent. The converse, that this indicated a common shared universe of causation, was thus implicit. However, mental illness could not conform to this logic, as in this case, the cause was often seen to be the interaction between the self and other humans and society, and the illness manifested itself predominantly in one's relationship with others and society. This ambiguity still persists. Ideas about the causes of insanity, and understanding this primal 'other', the madman, however, became critical to understanding the human condition. In a sense, it reflected in ways that entire societies could be seen as 'simple', 'lacking understanding' or even 'savage' (and thus by extension, like madmen)[2] and the systems that were created for care as being 'paternalistic' or exploitative.

The social and political differences, represented in their starkest forms by imperialism and colonialism and also evident in many other social constructs (religious, linguistic, ethnic identity, etc.), find a reflection in our notions of what constitutes psychological ill-health and disease. The impact of this on concepts and practices in psychiatry has been often discussed.[3] The construct of the 'native mind' (or the 'other' mind), incapable of deep psychological or political thought, remains an unresolved problem for defining 'mental health'. This distancing, subtly developed and reinforced, gradually becomes a self-evident truth and is then used as a basis for further discussion and action. However, the tension between models of a shared, universal pervasive humanistic

[2] F. Fanon and C. Farrington, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (reprinted) (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1969); M. Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (New York: Vintage, 1988); K. Doerner, *Madmen and the Bourgeoisie: A Social History of Insanity and Psychiatry* (Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1981); F.M. Mai and H. Merskey, 'Briquet's Treatise on Hysteria: A Synopsis and Commentary,' *Archives of General Psychiatry* 37, no. 12 (1 December 1980): 1401–05; A.T. Scull, *Social Order/Mental Disorder: Anglo-American Psychiatry in Historical Perspective* (University of California Press, 1989).

[3] S. Mahone and M. Vaughan, eds., *Psychiatry and Empire* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

perspective on humans and society[4] and intensely local, group identity based perspectives, in many ways, continues to persist. The effects of this are damaging to both psychiatry and to society.

The Development of the Psychiatric Gaze in South Asia

In early writings on psychiatry from India, the 'native' mind makes a rather late appearance. European terms of insanity and madness were deemed to be equivalent to unmada and deewangi, and were the appropriate translations, as far as the early doctors were concerned. The early reports and anecdotal accounts suggest that the perception of insanity and its symptoms was actually quite similar to that being described in the UK. Thus, the need for asylums for the East India Company (EICo) soldiers and staff or that for the natives as directed by John Underwood (and later T. Dalton) in Madras in 1797 and Beardsmore in Calcutta (which survived till the middle of the nineteenth century)[5] did not reflect any differences in perception about the nature of mental illness. Anecdotal accounts of various surgeons and doctor–travellers (e.g., Buchanan Travels in Mysore and Malabar),[6] who describe their encounters, have cases of delirium tremens, possession states, ganja (cannabis) related problems as well as acute 'mania' being observed. Right from the beginnings of asylum reports, the practitioners are quite insistent that the symptoms of insanity are no different from those seen in Britain. However, T.A. Wise (Superintendent, Dacca Asylum), who writes the first 'formal' notes on psychiatry in India (Bengal) in the mid-nineteenth century, comments upon the 'uncivilised' nature of Indian society; and why the people became insane, when faced

[4] Richard W. Kilby, 'Universals in the Self-processes,' *Journal of Social Psychology* 62, no. 2 (1 April 1964): 253–72.

[5] Beardsmore, *Calcutta Monthly Journal and General Register* (1838), 586.

[6] F. Buchanan-Hamilton, *A Journey from Madras Through the Countries of Mysore, Canara, and Malabar* (London: Cadell, 1807).

with too rapid an exposure to modernity.[7] Even otherwise, the intellectual equivalence of Indian society, whether in India (the setting up of the Asiatic society and the observations about illnesses and their treatment by various EICo doctors) or in Europe (the early fascination with the artistic and technical skills of India was quite apparent), was acknowledged, though gradually the skewed opinion that Indian society was somehow 'primitive' was becoming strident.

Honigberger, the Austrian physician, who was a physician at the court of Ranjit Singh and who established the Lahore asylum, travelled to Calcutta on his way home, to meet James Esdaile, who had been practising mesmerism there. Honigberger believed that the practice had much to offer and was hopeful of using it in his own working later. These attempts in Calcutta and Lahore were discussed with equal fervour, as they were being discussed in Europe. There, by the early nineteenth century, Franz Mesmer had been expelled from the French Academy of Sciences, by a committee that included Lavoisier, J.I. Guillotin and Benjamin Franklin, for being untrue to the spirit of enlightenment and peddling superstition about the human mind.[8] However, the idea of magnetism had widespread appeal, and the spread of 'hysteria' and 'magnetic influences' served as a method of democratising identity and even gave a voice of protest, especially to the poor and dispossessed (especially women). In a way, by focusing on the scientific disproof of mesmerism, it was given a back-handed legitimacy, and the concept of the mysterious (but universal) mind was established. In this context, the work of Esdaile and Honigberger, on mesmerism in India, their avowal that it did not differ in essence from the various faith healers in India, of holding public 'performances' on these on the same stage with Indians, thus had the potential of acceptance of the native (unconscious)

[7] T.A. Wise, 'Practical Remarks on Insanity as It Occurs Among the Inhabitants of Bengal,' *The Monthly Journal of Medical Science* 4, no. 42 (1852): 661–66.

[8] T.J. Kaptchuk, C.E. Kerr and A. Zanger, 'Placebo Controls, Exorcisms, and the Devil,' *Lancet* 374, no. 9697 (10 October 2009): 1234–35.

mind on equal footing. Mesmerism became popular with the 'rajahs and baboos' of Calcutta, and the use of mesmerists in the hospitals, by both Indians and Europeans, suggested a kind of psychological 'equivalence'. Moreover, as in France, its congruence with progressive ideals (in this case, of the EICo) had to be certified by a local committee headed by O'Shaughnessy, who gave it a very guarded approval. However, the practice continued and became part of the folklore of psychiatry and popular culture in India, well into the end of the twentieth century.

In contrast, T.A. Wise[9] had a very different view of Indian society. In his view, rates of insanity were low and the illness milder in India, because of a lower level of civilisation, the credulous attitude and the strain of having to adapt to a sudden civilisational change (contact with the West). Forbes Winslow,[10] on the other hand, pointed out that the Indian society could not be considered inferior to the European in science, arts or architecture, and these claims were unwarranted. T.A. Wise was otherwise an authority on Indian medicine and had written several books on the antiquity and usefulness of various medicines, which included a summary on the treatment of unmada/madness and various drugs and other measures to control the symptoms. These ideas also attracted criticism from many other commentators, but equally, some support. By the end of the 1850s, mesmerism was abolished as being 'unscientific'; the issue of 'race' had come to dominate Indian society (as an editorial in the *Journal of Mental Science* pointed out) and all talk of a shared psychological space between the Europeans and the Indians became less frequent.

This was evident in other aspects too. By 1900, treatments for hysteria, for example, were entirely physical (drugs, shocks, etc.), whereas a few decades earlier, the use of 'faith' and religion

[9] Wise, 'Practical Remarks on Insanity as It Occurs Among the Inhabitants of Bengal.'

[10] P. Radhika, P. Murthy, A. Sarin and S. Jain, 'Psychological Symptoms and Medical Responses in Nineteenth-century India,' *History of Psychiatry* 26, no. 1 (March 2015): 88–97.

was being considered as being effective in some cases. The study of native differences had extended to details, and issues of differences between various religious groups, caste groups and geographical regions were being developed (but also discarded equally rapidly as lacking any real merit).[11] However, the very raising of these queries reflected a certain questioning of the differences in psychological make-up and, thus, resistance to mental illness. Thus, Brahmins had high rates of illness, while the tribals were 'densely sane'. Differences between Burma and Coorg, or between the plains and the hills, reflected certain societal psychological traits. In the Tezpur Mental Hospital, differences between the various tribes and migrant groups would be attributed to the cultural differences as much as the 'organic' factors.[12]

In all this, increasingly the race issue had come to the forefront. Asylum superintendents were already reporting by the 1870s that European patients had an exaggerated sense of racial prejudice and would not take orders from Indian assistants. By the end of the nineteenth century, Indian Medical Services (IMS) officers exclusively for the European staff were being considered (despite a considerable number of Indian doctors available by then), and separate wards and even buildings were developed, as was the case in the Europeans-only mental hospital at Ranchi.

By the early twentieth century, the works of Freud, Darwin, Marx and their subsequent extension had become sufficiently compelling to make many of the assumptions of the exclusive superiority of any culture or race untenable. This was not straightforward, as social Darwinism and eugenics also sprang from the work of Darwin and Galton. Freud's insistence on the individual and private world of dreams and free association as the royal road led to neglect of causes within the social reality around him, as he himself hinted at late in his life.[13] Marxist ideas

[11] Ibid.

[12] A. Sarin and S. Jain, 'The Census of India and the Mentally Ill,' *Indian Journal of Psychiatry* 54, no. 1 (January 2012): 32–36.

[13] S. Freud, *The Future of an Illusion* (London: Broadview Press, 2012).

did offer a more progressive universalism, but were often caught up in competing ideas about class and group conflicts. All these, through all their convolutions, maintained their fundamental link with the Renaissance and Reformation in Europe.

Imperialism gradually transformed itself from control of the physical world (the bodies of slaves and the natural resources of the lands) to control of the world of ideas (the so-called 'third world' of Eccles and Popper[14]). All other world views were now thought incompatible with this, and a homogenisation, which masqueraded as universalism, became evident. Universal humanism and secularisation, while ideal for the European consciousness, were gradually thought insufficient to provide explanatory models for mental and psychological illness in non-Western societies, and thus by extension, the societies themselves became to be viewed as 'flawed' and 'primitive', and patients in these societies were to be best treated with physical methods rather than psychotherapies as they were not 'psychologically minded' enough. In short, at the end of the twentieth century, there was a reversal to the mid-nineteenth century colonial position.

Social Consequences: Dividing Psychological Space

Psychological or social behaviours as a basis for nationalism (to be granted or denied) were used often enough in the retreat of colonisation: The Ireland and Palestine partitions, or the population transfers of the First World War on the basis of language and religion, and then again after the Second World war (again based on language or religion), were popular ideologies, and the creation of the 'Jewish'/'Slavic' mind served as convenient scapegoats to create national identity.

Similar themes became evident in the politics of India. In *Nationalism and Conflict in India* published by an anonymous

[14] Karl R. Popper and John C. Eccles, *The Self and Its Brain: An Argument for Interactionism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984).

author (foreword by M.A.M. Jinnah) in 1943, it is emphasised that the various social behaviours and attitudes of Hindus and Muslims were sufficient to qualify them as separate species of humans (!). The book repeatedly emphasises the unbridgeable chasm between the two communities, and at one place it even talks admiringly of the German response to the 'Jewish' question, of forcing the Jews to one given geographical location in Poland. The author quotes extensively on the experiences of Albania, Turkey, Armenia, Lebanon, the Chinese and Soviet Muslim minorities to justify that a common shared nationhood was impossible in the context of India, as it did not occur even in these historical contexts, which had a long tradition of shared coexistence. On the other hand, it is repeatedly emphasised that there is no 'shared experience' of culture or life in India, and the magnitude of differences in their presumed mental sets and their incompatibility for coexistence asserted.[15]

Thus, the division of India was being considered and guided by events in Europe and was part of a larger political process. This, by itself, reflected an extension of ideas that had been brewing in Europe. The emergence of 'folk-psychology', for example, in the work of Fouillee, which emphasised that 'constitution, temperament and mental character' were the qualities that defined nationhood, rather than anthropometric differences or economic relations or religious dogmas, which were inherently divisive, and thus unsuitable.[16] Participating in the First Universal Races Congress in 1911, Fouillee was optimistic that the spread of modernity would make these distinctions wither, while Spiller pointed out that the ideas of race superiority (or incompatibility) arose out of 'unenlightened psychological repulsion'. At the same meeting, commentaries from Brajendra Nath Seal, Sister Nivedita, Rhys-Davis, W.E.B. Du Bois, G.K. Gokhale and several from

[15] M.R.T. (with a foreword by Quaid-I-Azam Mr M.A. Jinnah) *Nationalism in Conflict in India* (Delhi: Discovery Publishing, 1986) (reprint).

[16] Klautke Egbert, *The Mind of the Nation* (New York: Berghahn Books, 15 August 2013), 42.

the Ottoman Empire, Persia, Egypt, China and Japan make specific reference to the eventual universal humanism, towards the achievement of which nationalism was just a transitory halting stage.[17] Events of the two world wars were to soon put an end to this optimism; the preoccupation with psychological traits as defining Jewishness or Aryan-ness[18] defined politics in Europe, and was extended into South Asia, where Muslim and Hindu identities were now thought to be similarly incompatible.

On the other hand, other commentators like N.H. Vakeel[19] called this clamour for constant division and subdivision by religion, caste, language and ethnicity a 'political insanity' (one of the first examples in India that specifically used insanity as a political, and not a personal, insult). Professor Beni Prasad was of the opinion that the quarrels over identity were the result of the tension between modernism and revivalism, and that, unfortunately, psychological complexes were 'writ large over Indian politics since 1930' and needed social psychotherapy.[20] M.N. Roy, from the Left, regretted that though Europe had benefited immensely from Arabic and Islamic ideas in science and medicine, in India this was less evident. Indeed, he urged that there be greater acceptance of Islamic ideas in Indian life, which could help reinvigorate society.[21] Physicians like Ajmal Khan, who had been part of the Indian National Congress, Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha, tried to enthuse efforts to revive and extend traditional medical systems, often synthesising both Ayurvedic

[17] A. Fouillee, 'Race from the Sociological Standpoint,' in *Papers on Interracial Problems: Communicated to the First Universal Races Congress, Held at University of London, July 26–29, 1911* (Westminster: P.S. King, 1911).

[18] Georges Vacher de Lapouge, 'Old and New Aspects of the Aryan Question,' *American Journal of Sociology* 5, no. 3 (November, 1899): 329–46.

[19] N.H. Vakeel, *Political Insanity of India* (Bombay: Thacker, 1943).

[20] Beni Prasad, *India Hindu–Muslim Problem* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1946).

[21] M.N. Roy, *The Historical Role of Islam* (Delhi: Ajanta Publications, 1990).

and Unani methods. However, the strict communitarian basis of much of social and political thought in India, during and after the Independence movement, by its own politicians and thinkers, did not allow for these notions of universalism to progress further.[22] Professional historians have described the events that led to this distancing in political terms (within the framework of Hindu and Muslim identities) and listed the various intrigues and machinations, but have been often silent about the impact of all this on the nuts and bolts of society: schools, hospitals and civic life. The gradual acceptance of this position and its political aspects is what we have all experienced.

The Partition and the Psychological Response

In 1947, a meeting was called in Calcutta as an 'Inquiry into the means of resolving racial, religious, class and national misapprehensions and conflicts'.[23] This was thought necessary to avoid possible destruction of the world and to arrive at a synthesis of scientific (too restricted), religious (too biased) and hopefully a better philosophical perspective. The events unfolding, in the riots, raised questions about the nature of human evil, and opinions ranged from those derived from religious roots (Niebuhr), while N.S.N. Sastry, a psychologist from Bangalore, felt that these could be based on an unresolved Oedipus complex, inferiority complex or unconscious fear (invoking Freud/Adler and Jung). Specifically, it was felt, that too much romanticism of the 'goodness' of humans needed to be avoided!

Whatever the nature of these evils may be, they had given rise to systematic economic exploitation, an evil nationalism, social arrogance and racial and religious antagonism. Thus, a

[22] K.N. Panikkar, VP Chinthan Memorial Lecture #4: Communalism in India: A Perspective for Intervention, PPH 1991, Delhi.

[23] *Basis of World Understanding: An Inquiry into the Means of Resolving Racial, Religious, Class and National Misapprehensions and Conflicts* 4708/8 (London: Friends House Library Archives).

psychological understanding (and rebuttal) of religious dogmatism (to counter the belief of a 'chosen people'), cultural dogmatism (to assert that free men everywhere will see alike in the essential matters of life, while preserving healthful differences of 'taste') and racial dogmatism (disprove any notion of superiority or inferiority) was necessary. It called for an end to political, economic, racial and religious imperialism, and equitable distribution of the 'good things of the Earth' and an outlawing of war. It was hoped that the successful resolution of the current 'evil' that was happening would help India emerge 'as a contributor to world understanding'.

This meeting, held at the Friends Ambulance Service HQ, perhaps attended by Richard Sykes, Horace Alexander, N.S.N. Sastry (later Professor of Social Science at the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore), gives us a glimpse of the horror that social scientists and psychologists felt at the events going around them. Influenced by these kinds of sentiments, which were being voiced all over the word, and in a specific effort to use the Partition as a lesson for universal application, the UNESCO requested Gardner Murphy to lead a study 'In the Minds of Men: The Study of Human Relations and Social Tensions in India'[24] to understand the psychological roots of the violence during the independence of India and Pakistan.

Applying Psychological Principles to the Partition of India: The UNESCO Effort

The report is remarkable at many levels. The major India collaborator is Pars Ram, a psychologist from the Lahore University, who requested that he be allowed to stay on in Pakistan, but moved to India when this permission was not forthcoming and became a faculty at the East Punjab University, later becoming faculty at the Delhi School of Social Work and an Associate Member of

[24] G. Murphy, *In the Minds of Men: The Study of Human Relations and Social Tensions in India* (New York: Basic Books, 1953).

the newly formed Indian Psychiatric Society.[25] He had previously trained in psychoanalysis in Calcutta (perhaps with Bose). In retrospect, the report prepared by Gardner Murphy looks very elitist, as his primary introduction to India is through people such as Zakir Hussain (who later became the President of India), the Sarabhai family, Vakil, Humayun Kabir and others, but at the same time it does reflect some of the idealism, through which they were trying to see some light in a very dark tunnel.

While Murphy himself was trained at Harvard, Yale and Columbia as a humanistic psychologist, he had a deep belief in parapsychology and afterlife, and was sometimes described as one of the major American psychologists with the most impact (after Freud). Murphy and his colleagues tried to apply the general psychology principles of the mid-twentieth century to evaluate the tensions in Aligarh in 1951. As Pars Ram writes:

> An analysis of the rumors, gossip and fantastic evaluation of persons current in a particular community can be a fascinating study in its own right. More than that, such an analysis reveals the hierarchy of relations in the given community and of the roles which the various sections of the community take upon themselves at a time of stress. Every rumour, according to Gordon Allport and Leo Postman, has its public, and consequently every rumour reveals the social structure of its public. Since rumours serve as clues to the problems and perplexities of the rumour-affected sections of the community, a careful note was kept of the various rumours having a bearing on group tension in the town of Aligarh. Though the lack of adequate facilities has stood in the way of an exhaustive analysis, the following account throws light on the needs and attitudes of groups and the functional value that rumour, gossip and fantastic evaluation of persons can represent.[26]

At the end of this, Pars Ram observed that Hindus and Muslims have grown apart socially only in the past two decades, and many

[25] 'Proceedings of the 2nd Annual General Meeting, Second Day's Meeting', *Indian Journal of Neurology and Psychiatry* 1, no. 1 (1949, supplement): 13–23.

[26] Murphy, *In the Minds of Men: The Study of Human Relations and Social Tensions in India*, 130.

now grew up without meeting the other on a 'friendly or personal basis' and are unlikely to have a common response to a shared hardship. This was re-affirmed by Dr Vakil in Bombay where different communities 'enter different ideological and cultural worlds, read different newspapers, think different thoughts … and a pervasive provincialism, which (thus) needs to be replaced by a sense of common destiny'. Spread over interviews in the north, west and south of the country, patterns of religion, caste, language, class and status are identified and their impact on social distancing and even violence addressed.

Certain random observations offer interesting asides: Rates of violence are low in places where children of all communities play together; a firm insistence that separate taps for different communities (as was the practice earlier) would no longer be allowed in certain mills and, though initially deemed provocative enough for a strike, is successful in asserting non-discrimination in independent India; and amusingly, an Adivasi commiserates with the American visitor for his lack of pigment. Murphy feels that there is a natural resistance to both Western (US–UK) notions of superior wisdom and the Soviet-inspired public management, in the Indian intelligentsia. Notions of Western liberalism have, however, become firmly established, as he hopes that this will allow future developments to be sanguine enough, to not allow the mistakes of the past, and a rash for social welfare processes: from empowering trade unions, to improved education, clothing, housing, etc.

Acknowledging the give and take between India and the rest of the world, he suggests that 'good mental health can (not) attend this conception of America like Horatius at the bridge, holding the line against all dangers'. And that the indigenous roots of strength, faith and continuity that exist in Indian society would need to be protected and nurtured, especially as in the name of development, 'literacy may be increased to 90%, but will the deeper literacy of understanding remain?'

To Murphy, all the talk of historical and persistent animosity between groups reflects real life issues being transformed

into prejudices and apprehensions, and this could be prevented by appropriate social engineering, which they hoped that India would embark on. However, almost every aspect of public life that they suggested needed positive encouragement (shared schools, community spaces, shared sense of purpose, etc.) have now been compromised. In essence, the narrow provincialism that Vakil detected has become the established norm, and the intensely local ('culturally appropriate') model of individual existence has become well ensconced. The fond hope that UNESCO expressed that the 'social policy of legislators and administrators will be increasingly based on the results of work in the scientific field'[27] was quickly belied.

Balkanisation of the Mind

Mid-twentieth century thinkers in psychiatry as diverse as Freud and Karl Jaspers had warned against some of developments. In his short essay 'The Future of an Illusion', Freud described the terrifying effect of infantile helplessness arousing the need for protection (by a powerful father figure or God) as a thinly veiled allegory on fascism.[28] Karl Jaspers, who laid the foundation of most of current psychopathology, could assert that all notions of historical consciousness could only develop if we accepted the unity of mankind, which alone could 'impart the satisfaction of affinity in the midst of the alien, and of the community of the human running through all peoples'.[29] In India, though few psychiatrists entered into these discussions, these views were the accepted wisdom, and prominent academicians could proclaim that the terrors and fears of the Partition had been assuaged and that the good work of national integration (across religious and

[27] J. Bernard, T. Pear, R. Aron and R.C. Angell, *The Nature of Conflict* (Paris: UNESCO, 1957).

[28] S. Freud, *The Future of an Illusion* (London: the Hogarth Press, 1949).

[29] K. Jaspers, *The Origin and Goal of History* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1953).

ethnic identities) in one secular Indian nation-state could not easily be undone.[30]

At the end of the twentieth century, however, another set of partitions after those during the mid-century decolonisation was set into motion. The partitions of Yugoslavia have been discussed enough in political and strategy aspects (Cold War and EU real-politik). However, the issues related to the misapplication of psychological ideas, as a logical continuum to the hyper-locality being promoted, are of concern.

Dusan Kecmanovic analysed[31] papers by Croatian and Serbian psychiatrists in the 1990s and observed that the language of the un-understandable and primitive other had been adopted to justify ethnic nationalism. He noticed that the numbers of non-ill people coming to his office increased in the 1990s and they reasoned that 'one could only be crazy when the times were crazy'. In the late twentieth century, in this supposedly European context, ethnic and religious differences were not very obvious. The region had a long history of coexistence and had not had an ethnic conflict for more than 200 years. Intermarriages were common and the region had a complex interweave of cultures, and sociological polling (similar to that done in India by Pars Ram and others) showed a high level of tolerance. A deeper projection of the hostile other, which relied on psychological rather than physical differences, thus became the battlefield, overturning the famous Elizabethan motif (of not wanting to make windows into mens' souls) that had begun the process of reform.

Thus, Croatian psychiatrists identified Serbs as being 'militarist' who are 'aware of their lower level of civilization and culture' which they overcome by 'defenses such as negation and

[30] V.K.R.V. Rao, *Modern India: Six Talks Broadcast over Australian Broadcasting Service in Oct–Nov 1959* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1960).

[31] D. Kecmanovic, 'Psychiatrists in Times of Ethnonationalism,' *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry* 33 (1999): 309–15. doi: 10.1046/j.1440-1614.1999.00544

projection'. Other Croat psychiatrists portray Serbs as 'paranoiac and pathologically possessive, with a nihilistic drive for self-destruction', while Croats are votaries of peaceful coexistence. Serb psychiatrists, on the other hand, affirmed that the Serbs are clever, resourceful and spiritual people, and being Orthodox, are never militant and are disinterested in the material things of life. Psychological models are stretched to implausible limits, with assertions that Serbs regress in the face of stress, by using splitting and failure to integrate good and bad parts of the self to a schizo-paranoid position, while Croats do so to a depressive position (a process similar to that described for borderline personality disorder). The fact that Karadzic, one of the major personalities involved, was himself a psychiatrist, trained at Columbia and the Tavistock Group, and a large number of psychiatrists (led by Jovan Raskovic) were also part of the Srpska Demokratska Stranka (the Serbian Democratic Party) (SDS), perhaps made it easier to adopt these metaphors into political discourse.

In general, psychiatrists became willingly drawn into this quagmire. By providing a 'modern' and a seemingly 'secular' language for this partition, they negated the very essence of humanistic values that medical sciences are notionally based on.[32] They provided cognitive, psycho-dynamic and sociocultural stereotypes which consolidated prejudices and then justified brutality and physical exclusion, while diminishing any sense of personal responsibility.

Step back to the Partition of India, and the processes are quite similar. At a political level, the rosy optimism of the post-colonial projects (and socialist) had to be rudely jolted by realpolitik.[33] Identity politics that would involve the masses in petty bickering was now offered as the substitute for the universalism of the

[32] S.M. Weine, *When History Becomes a Nightmare: Lives and Memories of Ethnic Cleansing in Bosnia-Herzegovina* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1999).

[33] Bianchini, Stefano, Sanjay Chaturvedi, Rada Ivekovic, and Ranabir Samaddar, *Partitions: Reshaping States and Minds* (Oxford: Frank Cass, 2005).

previous generation. This loss of hope was essential to thwart any competition to the civilisational superiority of the West. Unlike the Nuremberg trials and the memorials, remembrance of these events is memorialised in India and reinforced as 'us' and 'them' (beginning with religious identity, but equally applied to caste, language, tribe, profession). The lack of responsibility, guilt and remorse in the Indian setting was (and is) perpetuated by the fact that these stereotypes of the other have been ceaselessly reinforced and the notion that 'they deserved it' or that 'they deserve no better' (whoever 'they' may be) has become realpolitik.

The Aftermath: Drawing Borders Through Space and Mind

We thus see that over two centuries, the politics of colonialism, imperialism and Balkanisation emerge as a battlefield between universal humanism and hyperethnicity.[34] Promises of liberty and independence rapidly become transformed into a limited provincial autonomy (with the provincial mentality) and limited self-governance: It is thus questionable whether this is a continuation of divide et impera or a genuine urge to autonomy.[35]

At another level, this also signalled the death of a universal health service for the South Asian region, as also a shared consciousness. Medical services have always transcended human divisions, and were thus an integral part of serving, controlling, understanding and acknowledging the other. This is even truer of psychiatry and mental health services. But this is a dynamic and chaotic process and prone to as much subversion as human disingenuousness permits. It is estimated that two-thirds of the current members of the UN had at one time been colonies of the British Empire. It reminded one of the sardonic quote attributed

[34] F. Stewart, D. Holdstock and A. Jarquin, 'Root Causes of Violent Conflict in Developing Countries,' *BMJ* 324 (2002): 342–45.

[35] D. Page, *Prelude to Partition: Indian Muslims and the Imperial System of Control 1920–32* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1982).

to Richard Symonds by the Lt Gen. S.S. Hamid, the military adjutant to Lord Mountbatten, 'the British are a very fair people … they left India in as many pieces as they found it.'[36] This urge to carve up the world (and the minds of the people) into ever thinner slices of humanity is often thought necessary, without allowing for the benefits of a large, stable, cohesive social milieu. That milieu is now reserved for only certain ex-imperial powers, while the others remain eternal subjects (for study, if not for rule).

Expression of dissent with this (e.g., debates about the division of Nigeria or Sudan on religious grounds, often referred to as the Pakistanisation of Africa) or the carving of West Asia will again raise the same debates. Though this is a misuse of the language of psychiatry (e.g., in Yugoslavia), which Reich[37] described as the mass psychology of fascism, and is now combined with ideologies of religion, caste or colour; it should be evident that the craziness that underlies all this should be kept at bay. Self-determination of people, with scant regard for the self-determination of the individual (which is what mental health is defined as), will always call into question the tension between group identity and individual autonomy. Preventive psychiatry may thus need to be politically informed, and vice versa. And, hopefully, 'Toba Tek Singh' will never have to be written again.

[36] S.S. Hamid, *Disastrous Twilight: A Personal Record of the Partition of India* (London: Cooper in association with Secker & Warburg, 1986).

[37] W. Reich and V.R. Carfagno, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1970).

6

Writing and Rewriting Partition's Afterlife

Creative Re-enactments of Historical Trauma

Tarun K. Saint

The moment of the Partition in 1947 was marked by unprecedented disruption of accepted norms, especially in North and Northwest India, even as at least one million people were killed and 10–15 million were forced from their homes in the biggest mass migration in history. Women and children were extensively targeted during communal rioting as mutual attrition took place on a scale never seen before. What followed was a comprehensive break with established modes of conduct and value in both public and private domains, even as the composite culture of the subcontinent seemed to implode. The after-effects of widespread collective violence during the event became manifest as historical trauma, experienced in different ways by perpetrators, victims, bystanders and witnesses across the boundaries of class and community.[1] In Dominick LaCapra's terms, 'The approach to trauma,

[1] On the concept of historical trauma, see Dominick LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 76–82.

including its rendering in narrative, has long been accompanied by a paradox or double bind: the traumatic experience is unspeakable, yet calls for endless speech.'[2]

For instance, after migrating from Bombay to Lahore, the acclaimed Urdu writer Saadat Hasan Manto was for two months unable to write narrative fiction—extremely unusual for such an otherwise prolific author. Remarkably, his eventual response to the Partition violence was in the form of short stories, published in Urdu in 1948 as 'Siyah Hashiye' (trans., 'Black Margins' (Manto in Hasan ed., 88–101)), praised by Ali Sethi for the way these vignettes capture the rough-edgedness of the Partition trauma.[3] In these brief and at times even single-line anecdotal narratives, Manto renders with scathing irony the pervasive inversion of ordinary assumptions about morality and ethics during the Partition, as in the case of 'Sa'at-i-Shireen'.[4] 'It is

[2] Dominick LaCapra, *History, Literature, Critical Theory* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2013), 54.

[3] Ali Sethi, 'The Seer of Partition,' *The New Yorker*, 30 August 2012. Available at http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/books/2012/08/the-seer-of-pakistan.html (accessed on 1 December 2017). According to Ayesha Jalal, Manto's first short story written in Pakistan was 'Thanda Gosht' (trans. 'Cold Meat') (Ayesha Jalal, *The Pity of Partition: Manto's Life, Times, and Work Across the India–Pakistan Divide* (NOIDA: HarperCollins Publishers India, 2013), 152). This version differs from Leslie Flemming's account, which places *Siyah Hashiye* (published in 1948) as his first response (see Leslie Flemming, *Another Lonely Voice: The Life and Works of Saadat Hasan Manto* (Lahore: Vanguard, 1985), 77). Manto had to later face trial for alleged obscenity after 'Thanda Gosht' appeared in print in 1949. 'Toba Tek Singh' is, of course, Manto's most well-known Partition story; this story achieves a Foucaultian intensity in its interrogation of the madness–sanity binary. See Saadat Hasan Manto, 'Toba Tek Singh,' in *Black Margins: Stories*, ed. Muhammad Umar Memon (New Delhi: Katha, 2003), 212–20. Trans. M. Asaduddin 'Toba Tek Singh,' 2001, also Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (Cambridge: Random House, 1987). 1961: trans. 1967.

[4] Saadat Hasan Manto, 'Sweet Moment,' in *India Partitioned: The Other Face of Freedom*: vol. 1. *Black Margins*, trans. and ed. Mushirul Hasan (New Delhi: Roli Books, 1997), 89. First published in 1995. Trans. of 'Sa'at-i-Shireen' from 'Siyah Hashiye'.

learnt that sweets were distributed at several places in Amritsar, Gwalior and Bombay to rejoice the death of Mahatma Gandhi'[5] Manto here depicts such perverse exultation after the murder of the apostle of non-violence amongst sections of the Hindu right, in the form of a dead-pan statement of fact. The shock of this revelation is heightened by our awareness of the possibility that Gandhi's philosophy of ahimsa may have met its demise with its chief proponent. In a savage irony of history, the opponent of India's vivisection had become its scapegoat, while Gandhi's moralistic idealism had seemingly been laid to rest for good by the calculated cynicism and ideologies predicated on hatred.[6] Manto seems prescient in his anticipation of the role that such ideologies might play in future, once given an adequate organisational form.[7] Furthermore, the monstrosity of such actions lies in the everyday form they take, in the form of banal rituals such as the distribution of sweets. The ironic title 'Sa'at-i-Shireen' may in such a context seem to take on the lineaments of everyday forms of psychopathology, indeed. However, Manto, craftsman par excellence, was never content with simply replicating the discourses of journalese or political rhetoric, let alone rehearsing the tenets of Freudian psychoanalysis. Rather than resort to clichés, he devised a mode of testimonial fiction that enabled the reader to grapple with the material and social basis of Partition violence as well as its traumatic after-effects, in effect a language of resistance.

The description of the Partition as an episode of 'madness', or a temporary aberration which could be recovered from as normalcy was re-established, was commonplace in the writings of the period, as Gyanendra Pandey has shown in his work 'The

[5] Ibid.

[6] On the spread of cynicism and disillusionment towards his ideals in the last years of Gandhi's life, see Raghavan N. Iyer, *The Moral and Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1973), 382–83 (reprint 2000).

[7] I am indebted to Raza Rumi for this idea (personal communication).

Prose of Otherness'.[8] In G.D. Khosla's *Stern Reckoning*, the following appears: 'Madness swept over the land in an increasing crescendo, the reason and sanity left the minds of rational men and women, and sorrow, misery, hatred, despair took possession of their souls….'[9] The use of such shorthand can even be noted in Gandhi's admonition to rioters at Beliaghata (during the Calcutta violence in 1947) to not counter madness with madness.[10] Journalistic accounts, historical narratives and leaders' speeches often sought to frame the rupture of 1947 in terms that were inherited from the colonial discourse, where the epidemiological framework was often invoked to explain 'communal violence', as Deepak Mehta has argued.[11] Thus, 'outbreaks' of rioting were to be controlled by the presumably benevolent colonial state, and psychic contagion was to be contained by the application of security measures such as the cordon sanitaire around 'inflamed' areas and communities. Collective fines imposed at first were perhaps regarded as vaccines to forestall the spread of the communal 'virus'. However, as we now know, such rhetoric and measures based on such an understanding were inadequate to the task of either forestalling the spiralling of violence out of control or the later re-establishment of peace and

[8] Gyanendra Pandey, 'The Prose of Otherness,' in *Subaltern Studies VIII: Essays in Honour of Ranajit Guha*, eds. David Arnold and David Hardiman (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), 192 (originally published in 1994).

[9] G.D. Khosla, *Stern Reckoning: A Survey of the Events Leading up to and Following the Partition of India*, in *The Partition Omnibus*, ed. Mushirul Hasan (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002), 3–4 (originally published in 1949).

[10] Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandhi: The Last Phase*, vol. 2 (Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1958), 366.

[11] Even in nationalist reporting on the riot, as in the case of a Congress Bulletin cited by Mehta, the riot is a 'plague', a 'temporary madness' propelled by its agent, the hooligan. The riot becomes a public spectacle in such accounts, a disease staged publicly that demands the intervention of the state. See Deepak Mehta, 'Documents and Testimony: Violence, Witnessing and Subjectivity in the Bombay Riots—1992–93,' in *Reading Bourdieu in a Dual Context: Essays from India and France*, eds. Roland Lardinois and Meenakshi Thapan (New Delhi: Routledge, 2006), 259–98.

harmony. Furthermore, a deterministic view of human action was imposed as a result of such an explanatory framework, denying the possibility of agency to the 'other'.

In Ishtiaq Ahmad's study of genocidal violence in the Punjab, several interviewees invoke the metaphor of madness as a shorthand for processes and events that seem inexplicable. For instance, Communist leader Sardar Shaukat Ali initially attributes the outbreak of violence in Lahore to the backing extended to goondas and badmashes by politicians. Ali describes attempts by left-leaning Muslim Leaguers to attenuate the killing and looting before admitting that 'The violence and insanity I saw during those days continues to haunt me even now'.[12] Shaukat Ali goes on to acknowledge that breaking up the country on the basis of religion was a bad idea, since it gave recognition to religious fanatics who used the opportunity to spread religious hatred.[13] Significantly, the notion of spectrality and of being haunted by memories and effects that seem to defy resolution through rational means comes to the fore here, a theme I pursue later in the essay.

Some writers of fiction did fall prey to such prevalent forms of rhetoric, including B. Rajan in *The Dark Dancer*,[14] as I have argued elsewhere.[15] Anis Kidwai's memoir *Azadi ki Chhaon Mein* (written in 1949 but published in 1974)[16] indicates how the conflation of fear of infectious disease and the psychic 'other' may have been a by-product of the unchecked circulation of such modes of discursive violence. After her husband's murder (while attempting as an administrator to safeguard Muslim evacuee

[12] Ishtiaq Ahmed, *The Punjab Bloodied, Partitioned and Cleansed: Unravelling the 1947 Tragedy Through Secret British Reports and Eyewitness Accounts* (New Delhi: Rupa, 2011), 423.

[13] Ahmed, *The Punjab Bloodied, Partitioned and Cleansed*, 423.

[14] Balachandra Rajan, *The Dark Dancer* (London: Heinemann, 1959). First published in 1958.

[15] See Tarun K. Saint, *Witnessing Partition: Memory, History, Fiction* (New Delhi: Routledge India, 2010), 104–13.

[16] Anis Kidwai, *In Freedom's Shade*, trans. Ayesha Kidwai (New Delhi: Penguin, 2011). Trans. of *Azadi ki Chhaon Mein*, 1974.

property in Mussoorie), at Gandhi's suggestion Anis Kidwai began working with refugees at Red Fort and Humayun's Tomb, the locations of camps where outward-bound Muslim refugees stayed before departing for Pakistan. Social work and activism became a way of coping with personal loss, initiating a process of recovery that enabled her to make a considerable contribution to the rehabilitation efforts afoot, while drawing on her subjectivity as a Muslim woman of ashraf background. At this critical juncture, Kidwai helped form the Shanti Dal and participated in peace marches through riot-affected areas of Delhi.

Rather than providing another account of a collective lapse from primordial innocence, in her memoir, Kidwai shows us in contrast the rampant degradation of values considered integral to the continuation of society in her description of greed and sexual opportunism in the treatment of abducted women from the minority community by bureaucrats and government officers. Kidwai unmasks the hypocrisy of officers who at times took advantage of the situation to seize the most attractive women for their own purposes, leaving the rest for those lower down the governmental ladder.[17] Her testimony, along with that of Kamlaben Patel and other participants in the rehabilitation efforts, has been invaluable in contesting the normalisation and naturalisation of the Partition rupture as an epidemic of irrational behaviour.[18] The drive to control and possess and the untrammelled exercising of power to fulfil yet-to-be satiated desires predicated on phantasmal constructions of the other (as taboo, yet compelling objects of fascination) were at stake here, rather than any outbreak of collective 'madness'.

I next turn to a caustic memoir of the Partition days written in Urdu in 1948 by Fikr Taunsvi, pseudonym of Ramlal Bhatia,

[17] Kidwai, *In Freedom's Shade*, 147.

[18] Also see Pandey, 'The Prose of Otherness,' 192–93. A more detailed discussion of Kidwai's, Patel's and Taunsvi's memoirs appears in Tarun K. Saint, 'Exorcizing the Ghosts of Times Past: Partition Memoirs as Testimony,' in *Revising India's Partition: New Essays on Memory, Culture and Politics*, eds. Amritjit Singh, Nalini Iyer and Rahul Gairola (Lexington: Lanham, 2016), 73–90.

a satirist from Lahore who eventually migrated to India in November 1947, titled 'Chhatta Darya' (trans.: 'The Sixth River: A Diary of 1947').[19] The title of the extract in translation refers to the new, sixth river of hatred and blood that had begun to flow in the Punjab during the Partition. On 11 August 1947, Taunsvi observes the consequences of an act of arson; a building (owned by Bishan Das) had been set on fire where printed copies of the holy Quran were being bound. Taunsvi describes the absurdity of the situation in a matter of fact way. While on the upper floor Bishan Das' son's body was being extricated from under a girder, on the ground floor the Quran embodying God's law was going up in flames, even as Hindus and Muslims struggled to douse the raging fire together. 'Two swords in one scabbard!' is Taunsvi's ironic riposte.[20] The satirist becomes chronicler of this history of interminable divisive politics and unending societal rifts, a tragic farce which culminates in such a grotesque joining of forces in the midst of a social catastrophe, for which the stricken edifice becomes a metaphor, both at the level of base and superstructure.

On 12 August, Fikr finds himself at his friend Jagdish's house (described here as a lover of Iqbal and votary of Urdu). Jagdish declares his intention to leave Lahore, a city which he has loved all his life. 'But now it is like a mad dog.'[21] He asks Taunsvi if he will accompany him to India, given the arrival in Lahore of scores of refugees from Punjab who had stoked the fires of vengeance and begun attacks on the Hindu community. When Taunsvi shares his plan of going to Multan instead, Jagdish is astounded, given that hundreds have been reportedly killed there. He then offers Taunsvi all his possessions for a mere hundred rupees. This causes Taunsvi to flee his friend's house, thinking all the while about what else could be put up for sale, adopting a mocking tone towards his prospective readers.

[19] Fikr Taunsvi, 'The Sixth River: A Diary of 1947,' in *Lahore 1947*, ed. Ahmad Salim (New Delhi: India Research Press, 2001), 13–28. Trans. of extract from *Chatta Darya*, 1948.

[20] Ibid., 16–17.

[21] Ibid., 20.

> Do you want Lahore? The waves of the Ravi? Eight annas for every wave. Ranjit Singh's mausoleum? Ten annas for a brick. Sitla Mandir? Six annas for every idol. The Mall itself? I'll take a rupee for every furlong. Speak up. What do you want to buy?'[22]

Taunsvi feels he cannot live in this maddening atmosphere, in which even intellectuals and writers had not been able to come out of their homes, after the closing of the coffee houses. In his writing of this unsettling fictive memoir, Taunsvi thus captures the horror of the Partition moment anew, with fear and apprehension appearing as predominant affects. The consequent debasement and instrumentalisation of human relationships, as well as closing of spaces for dialogue and exchange of ideas, are aspects of the violent transformation afoot, unsparingly depicted here through this atypical mode of ironic testimony.

Despite such attempts by first generation writers to creatively re-enact the Partition trauma (running counter to prevalent nationalist euphoria), the afterlife of the event remains with us.[23] The failure to achieve resolution of this traumatic history becomes evident in the moments when memories of collective violence are replayed to justify reprisal, when phantasms from the past seem to become tangible in the form of hate speech, or the targeting of minority communities, often with the complicity of the state. Sectarian and communal violence since 1947 has often been triggered as a result of facile references to the 'unfinished business' of the Partition.[24] Such recrudescence of forms of extreme violence such as in 1984, 1992–93 and 2002 may be symptomatic of failures to adequately engage with the psychic debris left behind after 1947 at the societal level or in imaginative terms.

[22] Ibid.

[23] On the afterlife of the Partition, see Suvir Kaul, Introduction, in *The Partitions of Memory: The Afterlife of the Division of India*, ed. Kaul (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2001), 3–8. On creative re-enactment, see Erikson's masterful analysis of Gandhi [see Erik Erikson, *Gandhi's Truth: On the Origins of Militant Non-violence* (New York: Norton, 1969), 132–33)]. Also see Saint, *Witnessing Partition*, 10–60.

[24] Pandey, 'The Prose of Otherness,' 15–17.

Contemporary writing has sought to make up for this lack, intuitively sensing the importance of revisiting the moment of rupture and the founding trauma. 'Dera Baba Nanak', a short story about the Partition written in Urdu by Joginder Paul in the 1990s (published in 2000),[25] returns to the terrain mapped earlier by Manto in his short stories. The story begins in the retrospective mode, invoking a memory from half a century ago. 'When an incident breaks through the confines of the body and takes hold of the soul, it remains with it for a lifetime.'[26] An uncanny dream has haunted the narrator for 50 years—about a herd of cows, behind them radiant children and following them the aged with snow-white beards aflutter like birds, and at the column's end … someone else. He then recounts the context for this dream. During the Partition violence, his family had been displaced, arriving at village Dera Baba Nanak from Sialkot. Though they had reached their destination, they felt as if they had been dismembered and scattered in all directions. A nameless mentally ill fellow was with them, who would start screaming 'Don't kill me. I am a Hindu, look!', while loosening his pajama strings, at other times shouting out that he was a Muslim.[27] At one point, the man nearly throttled himself, while insisting on retribution for his lost loved ones; he then had to be physically restrained. The narrator observes his strange behaviour, and notes that a lunatic's mind is hardly empty; rather, it is the onslaught of unexpected thoughts and ideas that drives him crazy.[28] The man next began to pick up scattered body parts and arranged them in the form of a monster, which terrified him. This Frankenstein-like construct, though inanimate, horrified him so much that he dashed away towards the refugee column passing by. It is this sight which haunts the narrator till this day. The cows were placed in front of the caravan of refugees, since the refugees knew that Hindus

[25] Joginder Paul, 'Dera Baba Nanak,' trans. Naghma Zafir, in *Stories of Joginder Paul*, trans. Sukrita Paul Kumar and Naghma Zafir (New Delhi: National Book Trust, 2003). Trans. of 'Dera Baba Nanak,' 2000.

[26] Ibid., 11.

[27] Ibid., 12.

[28] Ibid., 13.

would not attack them; then walked the children, then the aged, followed by the middle-aged men and women. At this point the narrator notices the lunatic with this group of refugees going, what seems to be, the wrong way; however, all his efforts to draw the attention of the guards to this are in vain.

In my reading of the story, we can sense the looming presence of Manto's ironic vignettes here, especially 'Taqseem' (trans., 'Fifty-Fifty'),[29] as well as his masterpiece 'Toba Tek Singh',[30] especially in terms of the invocation of the metaphors of dismemberment and madness. However, Paul's tale also reinvents such tropes. In my view, the story captures brilliantly the surfeit of traumatic memories, amounting to hypermnesia that may result from catastrophic events such as the Partition, figured forth in the frantic attempts by the madman to reassemble fragments of body parts.[31] He first mistakes these to be his own, and then seeks to reassemble them to make the whole intelligible. What results is a monstrous parody of humanity, a spectral image so grotesque that it sends the lunatic into a flight which sends him back across the border in the direction from which he came. This Frankenstein-like entity (though in this instance not animated by means of electro-galvanism, as in Mary Shelley's novel) becomes a telling metaphor for the fragmented parts of the two partitioned nation-states that refuse to pull together once split asunder. The narrator's attempts to intercede at the end are in vain; he continues to be beset by this dream 50 years later, a sign of the persistence of survivor guilt and the way an episode like this can malignantly seize hold of the inner self. For he (and by inference

[29] Saadat Hasan Manto, 'Fifty-Fifty', in *India Partitioned: The Other Face of Freedom*: vol. 1. *Black Margins*, trans. and ed. Mushirul Hasan (New Delhi: Roli Books, 1997), 93. First published in 1995. Trans. of 'Taqseem' from 'Siyah Hashiye'.

[30] Manto, 'Toba Tek Singh,' 212–20.

[31] On hypermnesia, see Sebald's discussion of Jean Amery's essays about his experience of being tortured in Auschwitz, and the resurfacing of such memories in later life. W.G. Sebald, 'Air War and Literature,' 'Against the Irreversible,' in *On the Natural History of Destruction*, trans. Anthea Bell (New York: The Modern Library, 2004), 1–105, 145–50. First published in 1999.

the reader) can envisage the chilling outcome of the lunatic's misdirected choice of path, whether as a result of death at the hands of a mob or a re-institutionalisation and likely negligent care at the hands of medical authorities, who might treat him as someone belonging to the 'other' community.[32] Such a contemporary recasting of the Partition trauma allows for an exhumation of such images, however macabre, and renewed engagement with traces of disturbing memories.

I next take up for analysis two novels in English that rather uncritically rehearse the metaphor of madness. In Sorayya Khan's *Five Queen's Road*,[33] the story opens with the decision of an amiable but eccentric Hindu named Dina Lal to not leave Lahore at the time of the Partition. 'He was staying put and everyone who knew him thought him mad because of it.'[34] The only compromise he makes is to shift from his childhood home in the old city of Lahore to the house of an Englishman named Smithson at Five Queen's Road. Smithson, then Chief of North West Railways, insists before finalising the transaction and departing for good that Dina Lal retain the *malis* (gardeners) that looked after the extensive gardens, as well as an elaborate miniature model of the railways routes that he had built. Soon after, loads of massacred bodies rumble down the tracks of Smithson's railway system from one side of the border to the other. For Dina Lal, the explanation is that 'Madness had descended when the line of Partition, inexact and incomplete, was penciled in on the Englishman's maps'.[35] We see the tired metaphor of madness being deployed here, even as Dina Lal converts to Islam; despite being stabbed and even after his family's departure to India, he remains ensconced in the mansion at Five Queen's Road, engaged in interminable disputes with his tenant Amir Shah, a migrant from east Punjab. In Manto's story, as Leslie Flemming points out, a transition occurs from

[32] Anirudh Kala's work (see his article with Alok Sarin in this volume) bears out the indifference towards and neglect of mental patients who were left behind on the wrong side of the border.

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

[34] Khan, *Five Queen's Road*, 14.

[35] Ibid., 23.

the initial black comedy pertaining to Bishan Singh's persistent questioning about the prospective location of his village Toba Tek Singh to the depth of feeling at the end, with its delicate ambiguity.[36] Bishan Singh's quest for knowledge brings about his doom, as he (seemingly along with his village) gives up the ghost in no-man's land in a moment of tragic irony. In comparison, the figure of Dina Lal is simply a caricature in his obstinacy and self-destructive will not to budge. Manto's language of resistance is rendered banal in this version, indicative perhaps of an exhaustion of the trope of madness, as well as an identitarian turn in some recent writings about the Partition.

While the identitarian thrust is less marked in Amit Majmudar's novel *Partitions*,[37] a similar recourse to the motif of collective madness is notable, ironically in the voice of a doctor. Dr Ibrahim Masud, a refugee from Punjab (described as an innocent, free from the prejudices and political biases rife at the time),[38] becomes a witness to fiendish cruelty meted out to women, including the inscription of perpetrator's names on their bodies. When he and other refugees reach a camp on the Pakistani side of the border, one of the boys accompanying him asks if he is going to build a hospital there, given that they would not be able to return to Amritsar, where he once worked. His response is 'This madness will end soon, boys. We will all go back home.'[39] The boy Ramzan queries him further as regards whether that meant that he would treat everyone, whether Hindus would be treated by him there as well. Masud's answer, 'That is what doctors do',[40] causes Ramzan to reject the idea of becoming a doctor, thus revealing how communal prejudice and bias had infiltrated the consciousness of the younger generation as well. While Masud here emerges as an ideal-type in his adherence to the Hippocratic oath, counter-pointed to forms of ideological exclusivism that might even have a bearing on medical practice,

[36] See Flemming, *Another Lonely Voice*, 83–84.
[37] Amit Majmudar, *Partitions* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2011).
[38] Ibid., 20.
[39] Ibid., 248.
[40] Ibid., 248.

his belief in the short-lived nature of the 'madness' prevalent at the time seems naïve at best. His decision to return is unwavering, and Masud eventually joins the relief efforts at a refugee camp in India, adopting the name Singh at the end. Even though the idealism underpinning the denouement of *Partitions* is somewhat predictable, the foregrounding of the possibility of medical negligence based on identification of the religion of patients is significant, reminding us again of the situation of mental (as well as other) patients left behind on the wrong side of the border at the time, who may have indeed faced institutional neglect based on such identification on religious grounds.

In contrast, Vishwajyoti Ghosh's graphic anthology *This Side, That Side: Restorying Partition*[41] exemplifies a new take on the event and its aftermath, encompassing second and third generation memories and re-imaginings of 1947, from vantage points across the subcontinent. Indeed, the collaborative dimension that came to the fore with writers and artists from three countries (India, Pakistan and Bangladesh) participating is unique, as graphic narratives came to be co-written across borders. A kaleidoscope-like effect resulted, with multiple perspectives on 1947 and its aftermath being conjoined and juxtaposed, the medium of cyberspace allowed for Bangladeshi poet and Dhaka-based professor of English Kaisar Haq's 'Border' to achieve a new avatar with graphic illustrations by Hemant Puri from India, for instance.[42] In this poem, the motif of border-crossing desire is articulated afresh. The speaking subject begins as follows:

> Let us say you dream of a woman
>
> And because she isn't anywhere around,
>
> Imagine her across the border.[43]

[41] Vishwajyoti Ghosh, curator, *This Side That Side: Restorying Partition* (New Delhi: Yoda Press, 2013).

[42] Also see Tarun K. Saint, 'Revisioning and "Restorying" Partition: Modes of Testimony,' in *Partition: The Long Shadow*, ed. Urvashi Butalia (New Delhi: Zubaan, 2015), 189–90.

[43] Kaiser Haq and Hemant Puri, 'Border' in Ghosh, *This Side, That Side*, 44.

A journey follows, in which the poem's imaginary addressee travels by bus and ferry to a squalid frontier town, where he is taken by a one-legged rickshaw wallah to the best room in the best hotel.

> But instead of crossing over you lie dreaming
>
> Of the woman, and the border:
>
> Perfect knife that slices through the earth,
>
> Without the earth's knowing,
>
> Severs and joins at the same instant….[44]

As the borderline runs through modest households, an element of wry humour comes to the fore, as entire families eat under one flag and defecate under another, humming a different national tune (this was actually possible on account of the situation of the enclaves in the border region on the eastern side; only recently has this anomaly sought to be resolved through a treaty at the bi-national level, easing to an extent the dilemmas faced by enclave dwellers).

> You lie down on the fateful line
>
> Under a livid moon. You and your desire and the border are now one.
>
> You raise the universal flag
>
> of flaglessness. Amidst bird anthems
>
> dawn explodes in a lusty salute.[45]

The relative fluidity and shifting contours of the eastern border becomes the basis for this poem, in which the desire for transcendence of the physical border eventually allows for the symbolic negation of hard-line definitions of the nation, as the poem's addressee raises the universal flag of flaglessness (perhaps echoing

[44] Ibid., 46–47.
[45] Haq and Puri, 'Border', 49.

Tagore's criticism of nationalism). The liminal space of the border is negotiated at various levels. There is also the wistful aspiration, perhaps doomed to failure, of unity with the beloved, located in this case across the boundary. This becomes an extended metaphor for lost civilisational unity, a theme that recurs in Haq's poetic oeuvre. Finally, though, it is the bird anthems that prevail, as dawn explodes in a lusty salute, signifying a transcendental perception, perhaps even transfiguration of selfhood at the site of the frontier, where self, desire and the border become one.

Another collaborative effort in this volume, between writer and artist Priya Sen and graphic artist Deewana, 'The Last Circus', features as central character Don Emanuelle Stanislav, now known as Dashrath.[46] His family was originally from Manila, but he was born in a circus in Lahore just before the Partition. After his birth, almost in whimsical fashion, reminiscent of Rushdie's magic realism in *Midnight's Children*, a lion named Lal came to see him, after which the lion was never to be seen again. 'And then the circus was partitioned.'[47] As a result, the family of trapeze artists to which he belonged was split up in 1947—in fact, Dashrath crossed the border riding on an elephant. An element of the fantastical enters the narrative as we read about the drunken parrot-trainer who remained in Lahore because the bulldog ran into him the previous day. Indeed, the whole world began to seem like a circus ring to him, as he encounters the vast spaces in South India where his new circus was to be situated. There remains intense nostalgia on his part for Jaanu, the girl with perfect balance who could do anything on the horses. 'Forty years later, he wakes up with her name on his lips.'[48] Dashrath continues to travel with the circus after a journey that has taken 60 years, riding on the 27th truck with two talented Nepalese trapeze artists, who speak less than the others.

[46] Priya Sen and Deewana, 'The Last Circus,' in Ghosh, *This Side, That Side*, 275–82. Also see Saint, 'Revisioning and "Restorying" Partition: Modes of Testimony', 192.

[47] Ibid., 277.

[48] Ibid., 279.

Don Emanuelle Stanislav occasionally dreams of his brothers, we find at the end of this graphic narrative. He believes they must still be closing the act, who, at the show's end, would let themselves fall as the audience applauded and cried, because they knew the circus was moving the next day 'to a faraway city in a not-so-faraway country'.[49] We can read this narrative in allegorical terms as a sensitive rendering of the experience of displacement and exile for many who, like the outsider figure of Don Emanuelle Stanislav, were forced away from familiar terrain into uncharted territory and new geographical spaces. Paradoxically enough, it is the figure of the Manila-born trapeze artist who here comes to embody the melancholic situation of migrants after 1947, compelled to come to terms with, at times, uncanny transformations of circumstance and radical attenuation of kinship ties. For Dashrath, temporal flows would be irrevocably altered and the solace of revisiting childhood memories short-lived, for one must inevitably wake from the dream. While the circus performers may be inured to an extent to a life of constant wandering, this particular journey was marked by a sharp break in the emotional continuum, symbolised by Dashrath's recollections of the artistry and agility of Jaanu. The dexterity with which his brothers seemingly mastered gravity, the symbolism of flight through the air, even at the risk of the fall, may perhaps stand in for the desire to, nevertheless, impose one's will on the brute facts of history. For Don Emanuelle Stanislav/Dashrath, the partitioned circus remains a reality to contend with, as legacy of 1947—it is also a poignant metaphor for the many ruptures endured by figures on the margins like him.

The banality of the invocation of the metaphor of madness in some instances of recent writing about 1947, as have been seen, is in striking contrast to the major early literary responses. The curse of the Partition and the historical trauma that followed seem to be repeated in such writings ad infinitum (as in Dina Lal's wilful insistence on staying on). However, in significant creative

[49] Ibid., 281.

re-enactments such as Joginder Paul's story 'Dera Baba Nanak' or Shashi Deshpande's story 'Independence Day'[50] as well as *All Passion Spent*,[51] Neelam Hussain's translation of Pakistani peace activist Zaheda Hina's Urdu novella *Na Janoon Raha na Pari Rahi*, and in the graphic narratives discussed here, a re-inscription of the tropes of derangement and madness takes place, opening up the possibility of liberation from the grip of traumatic memories and the malignancy of the mnemonic.[52]

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[50] In Shashi Deshpande, 'Independence Day,' in *Collected Stories*, vol. 1 (New Delhi: Penguin, 2003).

[51] Zaheda Hina, *All Passion Spent*, trans. Neelam Hussain (New Delhi: Zubaan, 2011). Trans. of *Na Janoon Raha na Pari Rahi*, 1993.

[52] Richard Terdiman's term 'malignancy of the mnemonic' alludes to the way in which involuntary memory may surface in the wake of traumatic events, where remembrance is not tempered by forgetting. Indeed, hypermnesia could become an affliction with serious consequences in his account. See Richard Terdiman, *Present Past: Modernity and the Memory Crisis* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1993), 196–98.

7

Refugees of the Partition of India

Trauma and Strategies of Recovery

Hina Nandrajog

In the essay 'The Death of an Empire', Ashis Nandy says:

> The 1940s introduced into the South Asian public life a new actor—the refugee. He was the uprooted, partly deracinated, embittered victim who knew suffering and had seen the transience of social ties, betrayal of friends and the worst of human depravity—his own and that of others.[1]

The violent sundering of the Indian subcontinent into India and Pakistan in August 1947 that accompanied freedom from British colonisation changed not only the geographical contours of the South Asian region but imprinted deep psychological scars on the mindscapes of the people. Ordinary people, caught in the crosshairs of politics and geography, found themselves on the wrong side of the Radcliffe line and were categorised as 'refugees' in their native land. The gruesome spiral of violence forced people

[1] Ashis Nandy, 'The Death of an Empire,' *Bruised Memories: Communal Violence and the Writer*, ed. Tarun K. Saint (Calcutta: Seagull, 2002), 11, 5–13.

to abandon their homes and hearths in search of an illusory homeland touted as a safe haven. The fight there, for survival and rehabilitation, initially pushed the psychological trauma into the background, but once lives were rebuilt, this festering past refused to recede into oblivion and began to impinge upon their present. The refugees needed to come to terms with the trauma of not just witnessing the destruction of all notions of civilised life that had forced them to flee their homeland but also of enduring the humiliation they faced in starting life afresh. Women, especially, bore the brunt of violence and were either killed or forced to convert their religion and make their home with their abductors and rapists.

Historiography suppressed the subtext of the psychosomatic trauma of the people to present, in Shahid Amin's terms, an 'uncluttered national past'. It is literature that gave a voice to the anguish of the victims of the Partition and reclaimed countless untold histories to reveal the unimaginably heavy price paid by ordinary people to secure freedom for the nation(s) as they were compelled to accept conversion to another religion, death or migration. Through a study of select literature woven around the Partition, the article explores the trauma faced by people estranged from their roots and the ways in which they sought to come to terms with it. It analyses the various strategies that the refugees resorted to, to deal with their sense of loss—not only of material possessions, but their very identity. Retaliatory violence, scapegoating, silencing and a continued sense of victimhood or martyrdom, historicising and mythicising, nostalgia and romanticisation were some of the strategies of recovery.

The Literary Memory

Partition literature has deconstructed Benedict Anderson's construct of a nation as an 'imagined community' and shown how the resonance of *watan* (homeland) transcended these divisions and led to fierce resistance to the idea of moving. A large number of people felt betrayed and aggrieved at the turn of events and

felt that they had been granted no say whatsoever in the actual transfer of power to the two sovereign nations. In Chaman Nahal's English novel, *Azadi*, Lala Kanshi Ram, a wholesale grain merchant, is hurt at the thought of leaving his home. '"Refugee, refugee, indeed!" he shouted, when he had understood the word. "I was *born* around here, this is my *home*—how can I be a refugee in my own home?"'[2] It was not just the thought of leaving an established business that angered him. 'No, that was not all—that was nothing; that was only a very small part of the whole story. The pinch was he should have to give up this land, this earth, this air. That's where the hurt lay!'[3]

The logistics of the move were itself staggering. Urvashi Butalia says in *The Other Side of Silence*, 'Never before or since, in human history, has there been such a mass exodus of people, and in so short a time.'[4] About 5.5 million Hindus and Sikhs are reported to have left West Pakistan and come into India. About 5.8 million Muslims travelled in the opposite direction. On the eastern border, refugees moved to and fro for years. An estimated population of 12.5 million people (about 3% of undivided India's population) was uprooted. Refugee trains were run to transport large numbers of people, and even planes were deployed—mainly for public servants and the rich. Shiploads of people went by sea to Bombay from Sind. Yet one of the most evocative images of the Partition is of the endless columns of people crawling across the landscape, carrying their entire lives and livelihoods with them. Massive human columns or *kafilas* began to move roughly two weeks after the Partition. Initially 30,000–40,000 people strong, the numbers burgeoned to even 400,000 people at times. The movement of these convoys was painfully slow and they could take up to a week to cross a given spot, as they would not be able to cover more than 6–10 miles in a day due to the large number

[2] Chaman Nahal, *Azadi* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2001), 108, reprint Originally published in 1975.

[3] Ibid., 110.

[4] Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India* (New Delhi: Penguin, 1998), 76.

of children and the elderly among them. In *Azadi*, Chaman Nahal reports convoys of 10 miles in both directions, with one from Rawalpindi crawling towards the Indian border rumoured to be 75 miles long. Refugee camps would be set up along the way. And more refugees would join the convoys on route, believing that safety lay in numbers. Camp inmates would work out some kind of administrative delegation of responsibility for logistics and coordination.

Initially, national leaders made frantic appeals to the people not to panic and stay where they were. But the governments soon abandoned attempts to retain their minorities as it dawned upon them that they needed vacant spaces to accommodate the incoming deluge of refugees. In a letter written to Jinnah dated 23 September 1947, Sir Francis Mudie, the Governor of West Punjab, clearly stated that otherwise they would not be able to absorb the migrating hordes. 'How can we accommodate Muslims if we don't get Hindus and Sikhs to leave to make room for Muslims forced out of East Punjab?'[5] Neither government had mapped out any plans to ensure either a safe passage for minorities or their subsequent rehabilitation. Belatedly, makeshift arrangements were made to evacuate people and place them in refugee camps till they could be attached to a convoy moving towards their respective 'homelands'. At first, the Boundary Force provided armed escorts for the refugees, but later they were made the responsibility of their respective governments. Troops were either partisan, or the local authorities prevented them from functioning effectively. The initial feeling of group solidarity among the members of the *kafilas* dissolved all too soon, and the basest and the vilest of instincts in man took over to profit from helplessness and misery.

The 'Promised Land' did not come cheap. It extracted a heavy price in terms of blood and tears. People who came away

[5] Kirpal Singh, quoted in Anders Bjorn Hansen, *Partition and Genocide: Manifestations of Violence in Punjab 1937–47* (New Delhi: India Research Press, 2002), 171.

relatively easily were very fortunate and carry few harsh memories of the migration, but the journey was extremely hazardous for the humongous hordes that underwent the horrors of trains, caravans, etc. Refugees travelling by train were butchered before the trains could arrive at their destinations. *Kafilas* were frequently and ferociously attacked. It is believed that only about half of the number of people in the convoys made it to their destinations, the rest killed by starvation or fatigue if they survived the murderous mobs encountered on the way. As the refugees reached the border to cross over to the other side—the supposedly safe, natural homeland—it is a moot point whether one was leaving, or reaching, the homeland. But at least, with the sense of loss was intertwined a sense of relief of having reached a safe haven. In *Azadi*, Nahal says the following about Lala Kanshi Ram:

> Throughout the journey he never tired of talking of Sialkot. Now Arun saw him bend low, pick up a little earth and rub it with his fingers. He saw tears in his eyes and found he was breathing heavily. The father and the son looked at each other, and Lala Kanshi Ram nodded in satisfaction and smiled.[6]

Once they reached the homeland, the refugees were confronted with the bitter reality that their troubles were far from over. More uncertainty dogged them. As it has been pointed out earlier, not only were the governments unprepared to transfer populations along with power, they were also tragically unprepared to feed and house the thousands streaming in; a fact that is borne out by innumerable accounts by volunteer workers. Initially, the refugees received sympathy, but that soon wore off and the refugees who came later faced considerable hostility from the natives. 'If they had imagined their troubles would be over the moment they reached Indian territory, they were sadly disillusioned.... There was a noisy show of sympathy but that's all there was to it....'[7] Intizar Husain's *Basti*, too, records a similar shrinking of space for the refugees. 'The houses that had given shelter to a number

[6] Nahal, *Azadi*, 283.
[7] Ibid., 288.

of families now shook the rest of the families off their necks and were home to one family alone.'[8]

Ironically, the refugees had to embark on a fresh struggle—to be recognised as refugees so that they could be allotted some land. Establishing the self-evident truth proved to be harder than one would have thought. In *Azadi*, Lala Kanshi Ram is faced with the grim truth that he would have to grease the palms of several people to get some compensation:

> It took him weeks to get the right form, and to learn the distinction between moveable and immovable property (they had to be entered separately on the form). Then you had to find witnesses to vouch for you. They must not be members of your family. They must not be too well known to you. They must be 'independent' witnesses. Then they had to testify before an officer, whose convenience must be sought on his terms.[9]

And even then the government could not compensate them until the figures of all the refugees had been put together—which would only be after the property left in India by the Muslims was added up. 'How else could you arrive at a proportionate figure? And all the while you stayed where you were and did for yourself.'[10]

Till then the Hindus in Punjab had identified themselves as Punjabis and felt a greater sense of affinity with the Sikhs and Muslims in Punjab rather than with the Hindus in other parts

[8] Intizar Husain, *Basti*, trans. and intro. Frances W. Pritchett (NOIDA: HarperCollins Publishers India, 1995), 93. First published in 1982. Even though the incoming refugees did not find so much support in the homeland as they could have wished for, at least they didn't imagine that they would have to justify their presence anywhere in India. That is why Lala Kanshi Ram is taken aback when he is asked why he was going to Delhi. He is '… highly peeved at the last question. What the hell did they think he was going to Delhi for? "I'm going there to have a meal with Jawaharlal Nehru—to celebrate azadi!" he said to the official tartly' (p. 290). He feels small and debased as he has to beg for some compensation.

[9] Ibid., 318.

[10] Ibid., 319.

of India. In Yashpal's Hindi novel, *Jhoota Sach*, Birumal cannot stomach the thought of leaving Lahore, despite the increasing violence.[11] He had been transferred to Cuttack in 1940 as a railway employee and had felt no sense of kinship with the Hindus there who had different food habits and customs; the language was 'as if one had thrown some pebbles in a pot and shaken it' and the 'women wrapped just a cloth around their waists'. He says that Punjabi Hindus may have had religious differences with the Muslims of Lahore, but they shared one language, similar clothes and the same kind of food habits. Nor was there much similarity between the Muslims of Punjab and Bengal. Religious affiliation had been a poorer guarantee than cultural bonding for a nation, but the insecurity bred by the volatile uncertainty in the run up to independence and Partition made people use religion as a refuge. This led to the building of a narrative of either victimhood or martyrdom by religious communities. In this, the 'other' community was the enemy that had always brutalised them, and the sacrifices made in order to preserve oneself and one's faith were glorified and upheld. Even the killing of the women of one's own community was legitimised in the name of saving the community's honour.

The new homeland challenged the refugees' received notions of culture and language which seemed alien, and they did not find easy acceptance—their speech, manners, dress were often sniggered at and considered contemptible. This heightened the sense of alienation. Urdu was declared as the national language of Pakistan but was not the spoken language either in Punjab or Bengal. People who migrated to Pakistan from the United Provinces spoke Urdu but were regarded as outsiders—mohajirs. Joginder Paul's Urdu novella, *Khwabru*, translated as *Sleepwalkers*, is the story of one such refugee from Lucknow, Nawab Kamaluddin Mirza, known as Deewane Maulvi Sahab, who comes to Karachi with his family. A native of Punjab, Fakir Babu, confesses that the chaste Urdu of the mohajirs intimidated him:

[11] Yash Pal, *Jhoota Sach* (Allahabad: Lokbharti Prakashan, 2002, reprint). First published in 1960.

> Your pure Urdu makes me nervous. What is important is that when we start talking to you Urduwalas we forget what we want to say and we end up speaking like you. But, what is the use of speaking chaste Urdu when what you want to say remains unsaid? ... If you ask me, I have no qualms about corrupting my tongue.[12]

Another dimension of this cultural alienation was to be taken away from their holy shrines, as Mushirul Hasan points out. Most of the Sikh shrines were, for example, left behind in Pakistan, which was a major source of grief and grievance. It was also agonising for Muslims to leave the graves of their ancestors behind. Hakim Jamaluddin, Deewane Maulvi Sahab's brother-in-law in *Sleepwalkers* is inconsolable because thieves have stolen their family chest, containing the history of the family preserved for generations. The loss of the family tree is a metaphor for the uprooting of their lives; a loss of their past and the severing of link with the land of their forefathers. The family is scattered after coming to Pakistan and an insidious realisation creeps in that the future generations would neither know nor care about their ancestors and history.

The millions of people streaming in on both sides of the border had a tremendous impact on society. Inadvertently or deliberately, they further vilified the atmosphere by recounting horrifying events. This set in motion retaliatory violence, leading to fresh instances of exodus, as hapless minorities on either side of the border became the scapegoats. The protagonist in Sidhwa's novel *Ice-Candy Man*[13] becomes a monster once he hears tales of atrocities committed on the other side. In Khushwant Singh's English novel *Train to Pakistan*,[14] when a train full of corpses steams into the village of Mano Majra, the people are enraged and roused to take revenge upon their Muslim neighbours.

[12] Joginder Paul, 'Interview,' *Sleepwalkers*, trans. Sunil Trivedi and Sukrita Paul Kumar, ed. Keerti Ramachandra (New Delhi: Katha, 2000, reprint), 27. Trans. of *Khwabru*, 1990. First published in 1998.

[13] Bapsi Sidhwa, *The Ice-candy Man* (New Delhi: Penguin, 1989). First published in 1988.

[14] Khushwant Singh, *Train to Pakistan*, in *The Collected Novels* (Delhi: Viking, 1996, reprint). First published in 1954.

Unmooring the Psyche

The physical dislocation caused mental estrangement and led to a crisis of identity in individuals. Sudhir Kakar says that the Partition victims had lost their homeland that constitutes an important, though unconscious, facet of our identity. With the loss of their homes, their sense of personal identity became, in Eriksonian terms, 'diffused'. Stephen Alter, in his travelogue, *Amritsar to Lahore: Crossing the Border Between India and Pakistan* narrates how a refugee shows him an old ration card from Sialkot for whom,

> [I]t was a record of the past, a faded symbol of identity, proof of his name, his family, his origins. His reluctance to speak about Partition came from a private sense of loss, and this document I held in my hands was probably the only tangible evidence he possessed of his former home.[15]

This reveals a compulsive human desire to hold on to a lost identity that had defined one's life for so many years; the assumption of a new identity could not lead to a total erasure of the old one.

In an article, 'How many Pakistans? An Overview', Stuti Khanna says, 'A recurring theme in Partition literature, though evoked in distinctive ways, is that of loss—the loss of the homeland leading to a similarly irrecoverable loss of selfhood.'[16] Writers shared that sense of being uprooted. Saadat Hasan Manto agonises about which country he belonged to and if what he had written in undivided India would be partitioned too. His angst is brilliantly expressed in the Urdu short story 'Toba Tek Singh', in which the governments sign an agreement to transfer the inmates of mental asylums, symbolising the absurdity of politics. He defeats the purpose of the officials by dying in no-man's land.

[15] Stephen Alter, *Amritsar to Lahore: Crossing the Border Between India and Pakistan* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2000), 46.

[16] Stuti Khanna, 'How Many Pakistans?: An Overview,' in *Translating Partition*: *Stories, Essays & Criticism*, eds. Ravikant and Tarun K. Saint (New Delhi: Katha, 2001), 106.

Another searing story by Manto, 'Tetwal ka Kutta', translated as 'The Dog of Tetwal', is about soldiers posted at the border of India and Pakistan, who shoot at a stray dog for sport, finally killing him; and this can be seen in the context of the idea of nationhood and collateral damage. Ravikant and Saint say in an article 'The Dog of Tetwal in Context: The Nation and its Victims', 'The dog's situation, thus, embodies the dilemma of all people who faced such a closure of choices because of the Partition. There could be no more room for uncertainty, and their allegiance had to be demonstrably firm and unalloyed.'[17]

As people were uprooted and thrust into an alien land, stripped of their identity and tagged as a refugee, they wandered about aimlessly, seeking to find fresh roots and affiliation. The trauma of being yanked out of the anchoring earth not merely in physical terms, but also in emotional terms, is demonstrated in *Azadi* through Lala Kanshi Ram, who carries on providing for the needs of his family but is a broken man, like countless others. He feels as if he has not been distanced just from the land of his birth, but even from his family, although they are physically close.

> That was another ruin azadi had caused. He had lost the ability to communicate with his family. He couldn't establish a contact either with his wife or with his son. The affection was there. The concern was there. Their respect for him was there, too. Yet the contact was broken. Something had driven them apart. No, he couldn't reach them.[18]

Bhisham Sahni's Hindi short story, 'Mujhe Mere Ghar Le Chalo', translated as 'Take Me Home', recounts the story of a forlorn old man who has been separated from his family. He is panic-stricken to see unfamiliar faces all around him and snivels like a lost child. The other passengers try to pacify him and ask him about his family. 'In any case the addresses of all the refugees

[17] Ravikant and Tarun K. Saint, ed., 'The Dog of Tetwal in Context: The Nation and its Victims,' *Translating Partition*: *Stories, Essays & Criticism* (New Delhi: Katha, 2001), 98.

[18] Nahal, *Azadi*, 326–27.

seemed to have gone drifting down some abyss and who among them knew what lay ahead?'[19] When a woman sits next to him and speaks to him in his dialect, he stares at her as if awakening from a stupor and then bursts into loud sobs.

Human beings, however, were going to prove more spirited; and as Kulwant Singh Virk's Punjabi short story, 'Khabal', translated as 'The Resilience of Weeds',[20] illustrates, human beings, like weeds, may be uprooted entirely, yet they manage to find fresh hope and spread their roots once again. Lala Kanshi Ram is told that the custodians who sat snugly in their seats were once refugees themselves. Soon, he himself shifts to brick barracks that are preferable to the tents and finds some work to earn money. As Sudhir Kakar says in *The Colours of Violence*, 'after a period—permanent for some—of apathy, chronic discontent, or rebellious rage at those who are held responsible for the loss of old social forms and ideals', fresh psychological and social structures emerge.[21] Gradually, people settled down and compromised with the situation. As Intizar Husain writes in *Basti*:

> The refugees told whole long epics about how much suffering … they all shared their grief, remembering those left behind. Their hearts overflowed, and their eyes filled with tears. Then they dried their eyes and began to think about the future here, and how they would manage.[22]

A remarkable short story in Punjabi 'Mainu Jaan-ney?' translated as 'You Know Me?' by Kulwant Singh Virk explores the sense of belongingness that the refugee begins to feel once the narrator

[19] Bhisham Sahni, '*Mujhe Mere Ghar le Chalo*,' in *Bruised Memories: Communal Violence and the Writer*, ed. Tarun K. Saint (Calcutta: Seagull, 2002), 3. Trans. as 'Take Me Home.'

[20] Kulwant Singh Virk, 'The Resilience of Weeds,' in *Santalinama: Partition Stories*, eds. Anna Sieklucka and Sutinder Singh Noor, trans. Hina Nandrajog and Madhuri Chawla (Delhi: Punjabi Academy, 2005), 66–70.

[21] Sudhir Kakar, *The Colours of Violence* (New Delhi: Viking, 1995), 189.

[22] Husain, *Basti*, 90.

tells him that he recognised him. The narrator finds him to be 'one very crushed specimen of humanity', with features that seemed to have been flattened into anonymity. He learns that the refugee hailed from a place called Sangla, and when he pretends to have recognised the refugee, the latter's behaviour towards the narrator becomes almost proprietorial. This casual comment is enough for the refugee to find a purpose in life as he is able to shed his complete anonymity and the indifference of the people around him. He says, 'I couldn't find any melody then. I have regained consciousness only now, ever since I came across. There was no one who knew me.'[23]

But people had to construct strategies to come to terms with the cataclysmic events they had endured. Writers, mute witnesses of the horrors of the Partition, themselves seemed to have been rendered incapable of describing the trauma. Most accounts by people and even the writers seem to think of it as a 'temporary madness' or 'aberration', notwithstanding their awareness that invisible fault lines had also surfaced during those times. There was comparatively little written about the Partition during and soon after the event, barring Manto's bald, scalding stories. Memories, too painful to bear, were repressed, and till date, one hears about people who refuse to talk about the event. This partially explains the uproar over the telecast of Bhisham Sahni's *Tamas*[24] on national television several decades after the Partition, lest the bringing up old wounds and trauma disrupted the tenuous harmony among the religious communities.[25] Especially in the case of memories that were corrosive to the psyche; for example, acknowledging the abduction of one's women by the 'other',

[23] Kulwant Singh Virk, 'You Know Me?,' trans. Hina Nandrajog, *The Languages of Punjab. People's Linguistic Survey of India*, vol. 24, part 2, eds. Omkar N. Koul and Roop Kishen Bhat (New Delhi: Orient BlackSwan, 2016), 58.

[24] Bhisham Sahni, *Tamas* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2001).

[25] In fact, the spate of writings on the Partition from multiple perspectives has emerged only in recent decades and it bears witness to the sense of urgency in recording the voices of the generation that lived through it, fearing that they will soon be gone.

repression was the preferred strategy. More often than not, abducted women were forced to make a home with the family of their abductor and be forced to consign their past lives as a forgotten memory. In *The Other Side of Silence*, Urvashi Butalia talks of the silent violence inherent in her maternal uncle's decision to stay on in Pakistan and convert his old mother to Islam:

> … what kind of silent twilight world my grandmother lived in for those nine years after Partition…. My mother has often described her mother as a 'kattar Hindu'—not a rabid, flame spouting type, but a strong believer who derived comfort from her daily routine of prayer and fasting. What must it have cost her to convert overnight to a different faith, a different routine? Did it, I wonder, bring on an even more intense alienation, a further recoil into herself, or did it bring on the reverse, a kind of cold, clear sanity and understanding of the lie she had to live till she died?[26]

A haunting Punjabi short story, 'Jaandi Vaar Diyan Haakan' by Baldev Singh, translated as 'Her Last Cries', offers a glimpse into such trauma.[27] Upon the death of an aunt, the author learns that she had been converted to Sikhism during the Partition riots. Throughout her life, no one had any indication of how she had felt about it but on her deathbed, she begins to moan and call out to her abba to save her.[28] Shauna Singh Baldwin's English short story, 'Family Ties'[29] describes how the girl-narrator accidentally stumbles upon the existence of an aunt whom the family refused to acknowledge as she had been abducted and had lived with her abductor instead of dying 'honourably'.

[26] Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence*, 43–44.

[27] Jasjit Mansingh, ed., *Time Out: Stories from Punjab* (New Delhi: Srishti, 2002). (Baldev Singh, *Jaandi vaar diyan haakan*, trans. as 'Her Last Cries'.)

[28] In Bhisham Sahni's Hindi short story 'Veero', a middle-aged Muslim woman waits for the Sikh pilgrims who come annually to Hasan Abdal, in the hope of being reunited with her family. When she tells her story to her grown up son, he tracks down her family and she and her brother are able to connect through a childhood memory.

[29] Shauna Singh Baldwin, 'Family Ties', *English Lessons and Other Stories* (NOIDA: HarperCollins Publishers India, 1999), 10–19.

Another way of dealing with this trauma was the displacement of anger onto an inanimate object. (Projection onto animate objects led to retaliatory violence.) In a Punjabi short story, 'Chattoo' by Sukhwant Kaur Mann, translated as 'The Mortar',[30] a small girl clings on to a small wooden mortar for grinding spices even while they are fleeing Pakistan. The mortar is a much-prized possession initially, but as the family finds its feet and buys new things, the mortar is consigned to the junk pile. Many years later, during the girl's wedding preparations, the uncle rummages through the junk pile for firewood and the neglected mortar is discovered. The whole family remembers affectionately how the child had clung to it and how precious it had been. Then, playfully, they load all their anger and frustration onto it and end up by carving it up into small bits, laughing all the while. The mortar is a metaphor of their own feeling of having been the sacrificial goats, and relief at having escaped a worse fate.

Some people came to terms with their upheaval through an attempt to historicise and mythicise it. Violence against the 'other' community had been viewed as yet another fresh chapter in a long history of hatred and violence; now the migration reminded them of other migrations that their ancestors had undergone. Intizar Husain agonises over how it is possible to sever oneself from a continuous civilisational stream and disown it. His mind rebels against such narrow divisions, and he claims the ancient Hindu past, in addition to the Islamic past, as his rightful inheritance. For him, *watan* was not merely a geographical construct which bestowed citizenship upon him but a larger civilisational space from which he derived his imaginative strength. Echoing the sentiments of countless migrants during the Partition, he says that he still felt like an exile who wandered between Karbala and Ayodhya. He says that the Partition split the consciousness of Muslims about what constituted the Muslim identity. Muslims suddenly found that they had to redefine who they were and what

[30] Sukhwant Kaur Mann, 'The Mortar,' *Santalinama: Partition Stories*, eds. Anna Sieklucka and Sutinder Singh Noor, trans. Hina Nandrajog and Madhuri Chawla (Delhi: Punjabi Academy, 2005).

their culture and their heritage was. Their Islamic past, including the Taj, Mir and Ghalib, was now a part of India. 'How could the Muslims of Pakistan relate to that past and use it to define their identity? It seemed to them that even history had been divided by the Partition.'[31]

Intizar Husain says that after the migration took place, it had occurred to him that the caravans of people moving across the border could, perhaps, be equated with the *hijrat* (exodus) of the Prophet and his followers to Madina; that the analogy with their exile, which was one of the foundational moments of Islam, could give to the suffering of all those who had to migrate a consoling significance.[32] He feels that the metaphor of exile finds a resonance in Hindu myths as well—the exile of Lord Rama or that of the Pandavas. The migration and violence of 1947 can acquire a meaning of some sort if it is placed within the framework of the foundational stories of the two communities as it helps people to make sense of the event. This helped them to feel the inevitability of the move and the involvement of larger inscrutable forces, beyond their ken. Rahi Masoom Reza's Hindi novel *Adha Gaon*, translated as *A Village Divided*, also records a similar sentiment. Wazir Mian says, 'Arre, bhai sahib, it's the fate of Muslims to be separated from their homeland. After all, didn't the Prophet of God himself have to leave Mecca for Medina?'[33]

This is corroborated through a short Urdu story by Bediuzzaman, 'Antim Ichchha', translated as 'The Final Wish', in which the author talks about Kamal bhai who migrates to Pakistan but feels that he has become a 'nowhere man' who belongs 'neither here nor there'. In pre-Partition days he had always been opposed by his cousin, who had espoused the

[31] Intizar Husain, *The Chronicle of the Peacocks*, trans. Alok Bhalla and Vishwamitter Adil (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002), 237.

[32] Alok Bhalla, 'Introduction,' in *The Chronicle of the Peacocks*, trans. Alok Bhalla and Vishwamitter Adil (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002), xi.

[33] Rahi Masoom Reza, *Adha Gaon*, trans. Gillian Wright, *A Village Divided* (Delhi: Viking, 1994), 40. First published in 1966.

nationalist cause. This cousin, known as Gandhi bhai, had burst out as he had watched the train to Pakistan leave, 'They are destined to remain without a homeland. Like the Bene Israel (the exiled Jewish tribes of ancient Israel), they will always roam the earth thirsting for native land and air.'[34] Kamal's wife writes that Kamal had wished to return to Gaya during his last days, as he had not wished to die in the desert of Karachi. He had wished to be buried across the Phalgu River along with his ancestors. An analogy is drawn between this and Hazrat Yusuf (the apostle Joseph) whose body was mummified because he wished his body to be taken to his ancestral land whenever possible. The narrator feels that Kamal bhai realised the same truth that Gandhi bhai had propounded:

> And then Kamal bhai's face is not one face. It is transformed into thousands and lakhs of faces, faces neither Hindu nor Musalman—the faces of human beings who have been torn from their roots and become pitiful, whom the conspiracy of narrow self-interest has consigned to a living hell.[35]

Nightmares of Things in the Past

In the struggle to settle down, the past had taken a back seat initially, but once the question of survival was met, a hankering for the past returned to haunt one. Alter says, 'Most of us have

[34] Bediuzzaman, 'The Final Wish,' *Bruised Memories: Communal Violence and the Writer*, ed. Tarun K. Saint and trans. Ravikant and Tarun K. Saint (Calcutta: Seagull, 2002), 22.

[35] Ibid., 24. For a large number of people, especially Muslims, the promise of Pakistan was the promise of a just and equitable land that would fulfil all their material and spiritual needs. Mumtaz Shah Nawaz's English novel, *The Heart Divided* points to such a reality (see Mumtaz Shah Nawaz, *The Heart Divided* (Lahore: ASR, 1990) first published in 1957). But even for those who chose to migrate voluntarily, the choice became a sort of albatross hung around their necks that could not be shaken off. Moreover, to what measure that promise was fulfilled can be gauged from Attia Hosain's English novel *Sunlight on a Broken Column* (see Attia Hosain, *Sunlight on a Broken Column* (New Delhi: Penguin, 1992), first published in 1961.

an instinctual need to physically locate the past, to set foot on the ground where our forefathers once lived.'[36] In Ajit Cour's reminiscence 'Sheher Nahi Ghoga', translated as 'Not a City, but a Shell', she recounts her feelings as she travels back to Lahore, the city of her birth and upbringing, after several decades:

> We may go and settle in any foreign country or unfamiliar city and our life may spread like a tree in any direction and in any breeze, but whenever we try and find our feet we find that they remain entrenched like roots in the soil that gave birth to us. But people whose feet are rooted in one soil and the branches spread in another environment, endure great and terrible sorrow.[37]

Her home and city have lain crouched in her belly and she yearns to revisit them to capture the innocence of her carefree childhood.

This leads us to explore another strategy for survival in an alien, hostile world—of romanticising the past. As Sudhir Kakar says, the stress of modernisation is riddled with its own inequities and repressions. Thus, there is 'bound to be a palpable grief for the values of a lost—and retrospectively idealised—world....'[38] People elided the fact that they left the homeland in hostile circumstances, blamed a temporary aberration for what happened and remembered their former homes fondly—untainted by memories of any conflict or violence, memories 'conserved as jam' (as Elizabeth Tonkin says in another context). That was the predicament of refugees who, in a desperate attempt to link that past life in some tangible way to the present, made an attempt to recreate the lost homeland at two levels. One was the transformation of the present geographical space into an imitation of the lost homeland. The second was to recreate the past life in sharing memories, reminiscences, etc. Refugees bunkered themselves in nostalgic memories that became increasingly more tenacious as

[36] Alter, *Amritsar to Lahore*, 174.

[37] Ajit Cour, 'Not a City, But a Shell,' *Santalinama*: *Partition Stories*, eds. Anna Seiklucka and Sutinder Singh Noor and trans. Hina Nandrajog and Madhuri Chawla (Delhi: Punjabi Academy, 2005), 118.

[38] Kakar, *The Colours of Violence*, 189.

their worst fear that the migration was not a temporary one, but permanent, was realised.

Joginder Paul's *Sleepwalkers* shows the dilemma and the angst of the refugees, fleeing from Lucknow to Karachi.[39] In the 'Introduction', Keerti Ramachandra says, 'The immigrants come to terms with their new location during their waking hours, but in their sleep, they throng the chowk of Ameenabad…. They carry not just memories but homes, streets, chowks, even the Mahilabadi mango, and recreate another Lucknow in Karachi.'[40] The daily grind that the inhabitants must have faced in the original Lucknow is forgotten once the people reach Karachi. Achhi Begum declares, 'Our Lucknow came alive, exactly as it had been. In fact, prettier than its earlier self.'[41]

The novel only hints at the violence that must have been the reason for migration by highlighting the fact that the people had come unwillingly and yearned for their lost homeland or 'paradise'. They locked up their houses and fled, and in Karachi they found the abandoned houses of the Hindus:

> On reaching Karachi they were stunned to see that the very houses they had left behind, stood before them. Since they had carried the keys with them anyway, they promptly went up to their homes and unlocked them. Another surprise awaited them inside. They found the houses naked as new-borns, plundered and pillaged. And not a trace of their brothers, sisters, mothers, children, friends and lovers, whom they had left behind.[42]

The trauma and escapism as a defence mechanism is suggested poignantly in these lines.

Deewane Maulvi Sahab's mind, unable to cope with the trauma of shifting, seeks refuge in a very 'sane' madness and believes that they are still in Lucknow, and therefore, finds no

[39] Paul, 'Interview,' 116–17.
[40] Keerti Ramachandra, 'Introduction,' *Sleepwalkers*, 7.
[41] *Sleepwalkers*, 16.
[42] Ibid., 47–48.

difficulty in going to his ancestors' graves to offer prayers. There is a suggestion that he is dimly, subconsciously aware that he is living in an illusion, yet he is perfectly reconciled to his delirium. For all the others it is not so easy to slip into such benign insanity, and the insidiousness of alienation troubles them. The old settlers of Lucknow in Karachi wonder, 'Even after recreating a whole Lucknow, exactly as it was, over this long period of time, why do we still have this gnawing sense of being strangers in our own homes?'[43]

Insecurity bred by the anxiety of finding a foothold in an alien environment leads people to build not just fresh bridges but erect new barriers. As a community's narrative of victimhood or martyrdom had offered solace to people earlier, later, too, a large number of refugees became fixated on the trauma and fell back on a similar narrative. People become increasingly jingoistic about country, state, religion, community, caste and the identity that they are familiar with. Such people instrumentalise religion as a coping mechanism or seek shelter in identity politics. In an article 'Ripples of Psycho-social Violence in the Aftermath of the Partition of 1947', Adnan Bashir says, 'The efforts to create a coherent pubic memory of partition have given birth to a body of poisonous knowledge that keeps on shaping the communities on religious lines.'[44] Stephen Keller's *Uprooting and Social Change* suggests that those uprooted by the Partition riots are not only more aggressive in their professional and public life but also within their families. They are more distrustful of others and, having a greater sense of invulnerability, more willing to operate at the margin of law.[45] In *Sleepwalkers*, the divide in the thinking of the two sons of Deewane Maulvi Sahab, Nawab Mirza and Ishaq Mirza, who share little affection and no common ground, embodies this:

> Just as the serpent of suspicion had stalked the streets of the Lucknow in Hindustan, so it bares its fangs in the neo-Lucknow.

[43] Ibid., 17.

[44] Adnan Bashir, 'Ripples of Psycho-social Violence in the Aftermath of 1947 Partition,' *The Dialogue* 7, no. 4 (2012): 365–73.

[45] Stephen L. Keller, quoted in Nandy, *Bruised Memories*, 12.

> Soon after the commotion of the partition abates, 'Nawab Asifuddaula's thumri' begins to clang discordantly with 'Sain Bulleshah's kafi on the chimta'.[46]

Ishaq Mirza's Punjabi neighbour Babu Fakir Mohammad tells him, 'You Hindustanis ... excuse me! You are all of course, a hundred percent Pakistani, but for us Punjabwalas, a fellow who is not a Punjabi, is a Hindustani.'[47] The author writes, 'The problem that the mohajirs in Karachi face is that they are compelled to be mohajirs in spite of being permanently resettled here.'[48]

Sleepwalkers also brings in the realisation that once migration takes place, not only the people but the places themselves undergo a drastic change. Joginder Paul recounts that during a visit to Pakistan, his friend, Muhammad Ali Siddiqui, a fellow writer in Urdu, showed him the transplanted cultures of Amroha, Gorakhpur, Meerut, Mahilabad and Lucknow. Ali asked him, '"Your whole Lucknow has walked away here into our Karachi, hasn't it? I wonder what's left there?" "The Punjabis," I told him, "who insist on speaking their Urdu in Punjabi!"'[49] Reverse settlement in places such as Delhi and Lucknow of non-Muslim Punjabis and Sindhis has changed the character of these cities as well. Not only those who willingly went over to Pakistan but also those who elected to stay in the original homeland were left with a perpetual sense of loss and alienation in their native country. They began to feel like outsiders once the refugees from the other side settled there in large numbers. '... If non-natives were to become natives, then the natives would become non-natives.'[50] Ishaq cites the example of Chandani, a Hindu judge who elects to stay on in his native Sindhu-desh, but was the only one who did not look like a native. Kulwant Singh Virk's Punjabi short story 'Khabal', translated as 'The Resilience of Weeds', also shows how the natives find it difficult to associate not only with

[46] *Sleepwalkers*, 21.
[47] Ibid., 51.
[48] Ibid., 20.
[49] Paul, 'Interview,' *Sleepwalkers*, 113.
[50] *Sleepwalkers*, 48.

the refugees, but with the river flowing through the village, as it had become alien after numerous corpses had flowed down it. In Rahi Masoom Reza's *A Village Divided*, some members of the community depart for Pakistan, leaving behind a vacuum. Hakim Sahib says,

> This Pakistan was made to separate Hindus from Muslims. But as far as I can see its separated husband from wife, father from son and brother from sister. Saddan's gone there and so he's a Muslim. I'm still here—does that make me, heaven forbid, a Hindu?[51]

Pakistan was based on Islamic principles of brotherhood. Yet neither minorities nor mohajirs were tolerated. Hindus and the Sikhs who crossed over to India, too, faced prejudice. Muslims who stayed back are often regarded as fifth columnists. In *A Village Divided*, Phunnan Miyan goes to the function of the martyr's memorial at Qasimabad, expecting to hear praise of his martyred son, Mumtaz. The speaker, Balmukund Varma, mentions many martyrs, but not Mumtaz. Incidents such as this deepen the sense of alienation and the epiphanic words of Rahi Masoom Reza echo in one's ears:

> In short with independence several kinds of loneliness had been born, from the loneliness of the bed, to the loneliness of the heart.... And the atmosphere was such that the blood of one's veins was wandering hopelessly in Pakistan, and the relationships and mutual affections and friendship upon which society was based were breaking, and in place of confidence, a fear and deep suspicion was growing in people's hearts.[52]

Through the Looking Glass, Darkly

Literature about the Partition records the pervasiveness of alienation and the permanence of exile. It becomes an immutable human condition, rather like the constant, though imperceptible,

[51] Reza, *Adha Gaon*, 284–85.
[52] Ibid., 292–93.

movement of earth plates under the surface, with occasional cataclysmic earthquakes. One's homeland turns hostile and one is pushed into a supposedly safer haven that, too, soon becomes inimical. Deewane Maulvi Sahab's Sindhi cook, Sain Baba, says, 'In truth, we are all mohajirs…. Who knows where Allah will send us after we've breathed our last...?'[53] Joginder Paul writes what happened when he narrated the story of *Sleepwalkers* to a visiting German couple. '... she suddenly let out what sounded like a sob…. But this is my story. This is the story of all of us living on either side of the Berlin Wall. Let me tell you what happened to our family….'[54]

Though it may not be charted successfully on the political map, the solution to this is suggested through a reading of these texts. As the author says in *Sleepwalkers*, 'A peaceful coexistence of these two discordant musical notes is not possible except through a sympathetic blending.'[55] The hope lies with the new generation represented by Ishaq, who is critical of the immigrants', desire to cling to the past. In a letter to Hashim Ali, Ishaq asks pertinently, '… how it is possible for us not to share the grief of our parents? But how long shall we continue to luxuriate in this mourning? For how long shall we remain mohajirs?'[56]

One day when a powerful bomb explodes near Nawab Mahal, killing Deewane Maulvi Sahab's wife, elder son, daughter-in-law and granddaughter, it is his cook, whose kinsmen have caused the havoc, who reaches out to comfort him. Ishaq shifts into his father's house with his family. Ishaq's Sindhi wife, Salma, takes the two orphan children of the elder son into her loving fold and entrusts her own Anwar, Jalil and Suveda to the care of their father. Playing and squabbling freely in Salma Begum's lap, Salim and Dilnawaz spontaneously begin to call her *ammi*. It is these children ultimately who decide where the future lies.

[53] *Sleepwalkers*, 76.
[54] Paul, 'Interview,' *Sleepwalkers*, 117.
[55] *Sleepwalkers*, 21.
[56] Ibid., 48.

Their grandfather, after being jolted out of his insanity only to fall into a fresh delusion, now believes that they are only visitors in Karachi. He makes incessant preparations to return to Lucknow. But 'Salim fails to understand which Lucknow his *bade abbu* is talking about.' As he runs, chasing a ball he has been playing with, he says, 'But this is Lucknow, Bade Abbu!'[57] *Azadi* ends with the whirring of a sewing machine, a metaphor of the continuous flow of life, '... its wheel turning fast and its little needle moving up and down, murmuring and sewing through the cloth'.[58]

The wounded past similarly needs to be sutured to lead to a future, scarred perhaps by bitter memories, but one that offers salvation once these tools of survival are acknowledged. This would enable the communities to slough off the burden of the past. Only then can the spirit of humanity raise its head from the debris and set about giving a new direction to the 'wounded civilisation'.

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[57] Paul, 'Interview,' *Sleepwalkers*, 110.

[58] Nahal, *Azadi*, p. 327.

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8

Anger Is a Short Madness

Anjana Sharma and Gopa Sabharwal

This essay seeks to read Gandhi in September 1947 through newspapers,[1] drawing on the almost daily reports on his activities and utterances during prayer meetings and other exchanges with people, where he shares his views on the world he now inhabits and of which he seems to be a stateless citizen.

September finds Gandhi in Calcutta where he has been since 7 August, seemingly self-exiled from the centre of power in Delhi, far away from the pomp and pageantry that has marked India's 'tryst with destiny'. On 31 August, after three weeks of miraculous peace and amity between Hindus and Muslims in Calcutta, trouble suddenly flares up again, taking everyone by surprise, and curfew has to be imposed.[2] Gandhi, who was

[1] The essay is part of a larger research project which focuses on the presence of Gandhi in the print media in 1947. It examines how he is represented in mainstream English language newspapers across the country. The English language newspapers on which this research is based are: *Hindustan Times* (Delhi), *The Statesman* (Calcutta), *The Times of India* (Bombay), *The Hindu* (Chennai) and *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore).

[2] 29 people die and 292 are injured during the day as per hospital figures collected by the Bengal Government, as reported in 'Sudden Flare-up in

scheduled to leave for Noakhali on the 1st, cancels his trip yet again[3] and announces the start of a fast, which he states will last until unity returns to Calcutta.

Calcutta's troubles, in fact, are only a reflection of the fragmented nature of post-Partition India: convulsed, deeply conflicted, enraged and almost completely overwhelmed by the violence, including those on both sides who are privy to the latest developments. Needless to say, the stunned and ignorant public was even more unbalanced by the unanticipated avalanche that buried and altered the contours of their lives for times to come. The resurgence of violence in Calcutta and the collapse of the tenuous peace between Hindus and Muslims puts paid to Gandhi's earlier plan to go to Punjab, where the violence is unabated and has continued to escalate post the Boundary Award. The newly formed government seeks the magic of his healing touch that had seemingly cured the madness of Calcutta in the immediate aftermath of the Partition in August. But now that the Calcutta bubble seems to have burst this no longer seems possible. As he woefully remarks to the public gathered to hear him on 1 September 1947:

> With what face can I go back to Punjab? The weapon which has hitherto proven infallible for me is fasting.... What my word in person cannot do, my fast may. It may touch the hearts of all the warring elements even in the Punjab if it does in Calcutta.[4]

Gandhi's own tryst with the Partition of the Indian subcontinent and the dawn of freedom for democratic India, as we well know today, was reflective of his deep inner conflict that the fact that—for him at least—independence from colonial rule

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Calcutta,' *The Times of India*, Bombay, 2 September 1947, 1, column 2.

[3] Gandhi was supposed to be in Noakhali on 15 August, but was persuaded by Mr Suhrawardy, the then Premier of Bengal, to postpone his departure and restore peace in Calcutta ('Mahatma's Fast,' *The Times of India*, 3 September 1947, 4, column 1).

[4] 'Grief over Recrudescence of Disturbances,' *The Times of India*, Bombay, 2 September 1947, 7, column 2.

had also brought in a fratricidal communal division. It was this unease with the new polity that made Gandhi refuse to be at the centre—Delhi—but rather move to the margin—Calcutta—before Independence. Thus, while the words of Nehru are publicly broadcast, for his mentor, Gandhi, it is a quieter, more individualistic response to what for him is not a moment of historic triumph but of deep sadness. He spends the day in silent reflection, in fasting, and what sustains him best, prayer.

Partition for him is something he experiences on the ground, and as with his long practice as the foremost truth warrior (*satyagrahi*), he relies on the time-tested tools of fasting in the face of his immediate experience of the night before. He publicly recalls an incident from the night of 31 August when some young Hindu men brought to camp a bandaged man reportedly attacked by Muslims. When Gandhi went to the door and appealed for quiet, a lathi blow missed him and a brick aimed at him hurt a Muslim friend. The police had to use tear gas to dispel the crowds. This attack, designed to hurt Gandhi, is symptomatic of how changed the times are, and point to a dilution in his symbolic value. It almost seems that this newly found freedom even devalues a sage like Gandhi; the Mahatma, as named by Rabindranath Tagore, is in Tagore's own land almost reduced to become a material, corporeal body that can be attacked and hurt by his own people.

With the launch of the fast, that body, now of 78 years, becomes the locus of the state's concern. Dr Dinshaw Mehta, the attending physician is worried given Gandhi's advanced age and his tendency to acidosis and high BP. The Governor of West Bengal C. Rajagopalachari appeals to the people of Calcutta to save the Mahatma. He cautions that the hours are steadily and not too slowly wearing Gandhi away. In an emotional statement he declares that Gandhi's life and its preservation are the moral responsibility of people of Calcutta. They have it in their power to save his life or let him die. Indeed, it would be a shame and tragedy too awful for words if these 'friends', who are disturbing the peace of Calcutta, refuse to unite and cause Gandhiji's death

in the very hour of India's freedom.[5] The deep irony of such a call to peace on behalf of the man whom millions followed in *satyagraha* needs no comment.

The Premier of West Bengal Dr Prafulla Ghosh broadcasts an appeal for the restoration of Hindu–Muslim amity on All India Radio, on a day that 8 persons were killed and 75 injured in a 12-hour period.[6] The *Times of India* says in its editorial, 'The Mahatma's life is hostage to Calcutta. More than his life—the peace of India—is at stake.'[7]

The speeches, however, seem to have the desired effect and a number of peace processions pass through city streets in the days that follow. About 5,000 students parade in the streets urging people to stop goondaism. However, it is a fragile peace as processions are attacked in two places at Bowbazar and Park Street areas.

At the end of 52 hours of his fast, on 4 September, Gandhi is weaker but cheerful. And then the Gandhi effect, which seems to be on the wane, is suddenly visible in the most unusual quarter; that morning the entire police force of north Calcutta, including the highest-ranking officers both European and Anglo-Indian, go on a 24-hour sympathetic fast with Gandhi.

Gandhi declares that since both Hindus and Muslims had fought for so long for freedom, both had the right to enjoy the fruits of freedom, notwithstanding the formation of two states. But there is a need to educate people in the idea of common citizenship. His concern is not only for Calcutta, but the safety and well-being of minorities in both India and Pakistan. He understands that this situation has been brought on by the polarising politics played out by both sides which encouraged elements that

[5] 'Hours Wearing Gandhiji Away,' *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 3 September 1947, 1, column 2.

[6] 'Calcutta Situation Well in Hand,' *The Times of India*, Bombay, 3 September 1947, 1, column 1.

[7] 'Mahatma's Fast,' *The Times of India*, Bombay, 3 September 1947, 4, column 1.

have now gained respectability. But now, since the need for India and Pakistan has ended, it is time for all peaceful citizens to assert themselves and isolate goondaism.[8]

At 9.15 PM, the same day (4 September), 73 hours from when he began, Gandhi finally breaks his fast with sweet lime juice mixed with soda, given to him by Mr Suhrawardy, seemingly one of the architects of the Calcutta riots. The breaking of the fast is announced by the Calcutta station of All India Radio in a special announcement and by the publicity vans of West Bengal Government which go around various parts of the city.

As Calcutta quietens, Delhi continues to disintegrate and that is where Gandhi heads to next. On 5 September, arson and stabbing incidents are reported in various parts of the city. Bomb explosions in Timarpur and Karol Bagh lead to a 24-hour curfew in many locations. Rajaji's claim on 5 September in Calcutta stating that Gandhiji has 'achieved victory over evil in Calcutta'[9] does not seem to work pan India, or even in North India any more.

Calcutta bids farewell to Gandhi at a public meeting on the 6th. The Mayor felicitates him in the following words:

> We know you as a great patriot, as one who has always stood up for the depressed and the down trodden as a politician who with all his astuteness never compromised with evil or dishonor … today you stand before us as the first servant of humanity. We of this generation are fortunate that you are born amongst us. Generations to come will cherish you and your example not only on this land, but in the whole world.[10]

[8] The distinction between goondaism and communal violence was discussed earlier in the day by Dr S. Radhakrishnan with Gandhi. Dr Radhakrishnan was of the view that what happened in Calcutta was goondaism and not communal violence.

[9] 'Victory over Evil in Calcutta,' *The Statesman*, Calcutta and Delhi, 6 September 1947, 8, column 5.

[10] 'Calcutta Farewell,' *The Statesman*, Calcutta and Delhi, 7 September 1947, 1, column 3.

The plan is for Gandhi to break journey for a few days in Delhi and then travel to Punjab to continue his work of restoration and healing. But Delhi claims him. The situation in Delhi is so bad that schools are closed and in a dramatic account the *Statesman* reports how Nehru himself rescues two riot-affected girls and takes them home in his car.[11]

Gandhi arrives in Delhi on Tuesday, 8 September. He announces his decision to stay in the capital till peace is restored. He detrains at Shahdara, ten miles from Delhi, where he is received by Sardar Patel (Deputy Prime Minister) and Rajkumari Amrit Kaur (Health Minister) and then moved to Birla House. Nehru calls on him immediately after his arrival, followed by Education Minister Maulana Azad and Lord Mountbatten. These encounters and possibly all the accounts make him decide to extend his Delhi stay. Delhi has witnessed pitched battles between communities and has been declared a dangerously disturbed area.

It is reported, that on arrival in Delhi, Gandhi wanted to visit riot-affected areas, but his medical advisors persuaded him to postpone the tour in view of his long train journey from Calcutta. In his first prayer meeting speech in Delhi, he indicates that he knew nothing of the sad state of things in Delhi when he left Calcutta on Sunday night. He said:

> On reaching Delhi I have been listening the whole day long to the tale of woe that is Delhi today. I saw several Muslim friends who recited their pathetic story. I heard enough to warn me that I must not leave for the Punjab until it has regained its former self. I must do my little bit to calm the heated atmosphere. I must apply the old formula, do or die to the capital of India.
>
> I am glad to be able to say that the residents of Delhi do not want the senseless destruction that is going on. I am prepared to understand the anger of the refugees whom fate has driven from Western Punjab. But anger is a short madness. It can only make matters worse in every way. Retaliation is no remedy. It

[11] 'Nehru Rescues Two Girls,' *The Statesman*, Calcutta and Delhi, 9 September 1947, 1, column 1.

> makes the original disease much worse. I, therefore ask all those who are engaged in the senseless murder, arson and loot to stay their hands.
>
> The Central Government, the ablest, most courageous and self-sacrificing team that the Union could produce, have not been in saddle for even a month after the declaration of Indian Independence. It is criminal and suicidal not to give them a chance to set their house in order. I am fully aware of the shortage of food. Mob rule is dislocating everything, making distribution of foodstuffs all but impossible. May God restore peace to distracted Delhi.
>
> I shall close with the hope that Calcutta will fulfill the promise made on my departure and which sustains me in the midst of the surrounding madness.[12]

The speech, in no uncertain terms, reveals that this is a world out of joint and the analogy with mental health, with disease, in which Gandhi as a physician is increasingly overwhelmed by a new pathology of a form that escapes both diagnosis and, even worse, possibly a curative treatment.

With the intervening distance of decades, it is almost possible to forget what Gandhi and others encountered at refugee camps, where they met and heard the nightmarish accounts and were sucked into the vortex of violence and its resultant psychosis. An example is his visit to refugee camps on the 10th. At a camp near Humayun's tomb where several thousand Meo Muslims were accommodated, they say to him, 'Mahatmaji you are our hope and our savior, you have given India freedom and now we look to you to give us safety.' He replies: 'Do not weep. Mere weeping will not solve our problems. I am your servant and the servant of all humanity I have not come here to sit at ease. I will do as God bids me.'[13] Referring to them in his prayer meeting, he later said

[12] 'Mahatma to "Do or Die" in Delhi,' *The Statesman*, Calcutta and Delhi, 10 September 1947, 1, column 1.

[13] 'Mahatma Visits Delhi Refugee Camps,' *The Statesman*, Calcutta and Delhi, 11 September 1947, 1, column 3.

that while they were excitable, they should be treated 'as fellow beings demanding treatment of a disease'.[14]

His camp visits and the endless stream of visitors with their testimonies of violence endured and hatred encountered leave him deeply disturbed and find their way in prayer and public exhortations as he seeks to comprehend and prescribe on the savage nature of this horrific blood lust.

'Let not future generations say that you lost the sweet bread of freedom because you could not digest it. Remember, that unless you stop this madness, the name of India will be mud in the eyes of the world,' said Gandhi,[15] in his prayer speech on Friday, 12 September.

But the madness is upon them with the mass migration of over 1,200,000 Muslims who have come from East Punjab to West Punjab and then onto Delhi. A newspaper recounts how many ladies clasped the Mahatma's hands and wept over the loss of their relations, and also reports many touching scenes and Mahatma's look of utter pain. Meanwhile, his presence does little to stem the blood tide and a September 14 news report states that about 1,000 were killed in Delhi 'disturbances'.[16] On the 13th, at a press conference, Pandit Nehru speaks about the millions involved in the population transfer and refers to the 'problem of refugees [as] "terrific"'.[17] The selfsame evening, that is, the 13th, Gandhi states that he is against transfer of population since it would bring even greater misery. The solution, according to him, lies in teaching Hindus and Muslims to live peaceably in their homes. It would be madness to make the

[14] 'Wean People from Madness,' *The Statesman*, Calcutta and Delhi, 12 September 1947, 3, column 2.

[15] '"Stop this Madness" Appeal by Mahatma,' *The Statesman*, Calcutta and Delhi, 14 September 1947, 3, column 3.

[16] '15,000 Killed in the Punjab, 1,000 in Delhi,' *The Statesman*, Calcutta and Delhi, 14 September 1947, 1, column 2.

[17] 'Do or Die to Improve Refugees Lot,' *The Sunday News of India* (Sunday Edition of the *Bombay Times of India*), 14 September 1947, 1, column 1.

present estrangement permanent. He says he has no desire to witness the 'mad fratricide, this national suicide, their betrayal of their own Government. May God help them to regain their lost sanity.' He was here to 'do or die'.[18]

Continuing to stand against population transfer, he has message read out on it on his day of silence (the 15th) by Rajkumari Amrit Kaur: 'For me the transfer of millions of Hindus and Sikhs and Muslims is unthinkable. It is wrong…. I hope I shall have the courage to stand by it, even though mine might be the solitary voice in its favour.'[19] This statement is yet another assertion of his essential solitariness. He wonders if the citizens of Delhi have lost their minds and love for their own kind. He asks people to trust their government to defend every citizen.[20]

Gandhi is undergoing intense mental strain and of that there is ample data even in the newspapers to document this. He talks about his sleepless nights:

> During the night as I heard what should have been soothing sound of gentle, life giving rain, my mind went out to the thousands of refugees lying about in open camps in Delhi…. I was sleeping snugly in a verandah protecting me on all sides. But for the cruel hand of man against his brother, these thousands of men, women and children would not be shelterless and in many cases foodless. In some places they could not but be in knee-deep water. Was it all inevitable? The answer from within was an emphatic No. Was this the first fruit of freedom, just a month old baby? These thoughts have haunted me throughout these last twilight hours. Have the citizens of Delhi gone mad? Have they no humanity left in them? I must be pardoned for putting first blame on the Hindus and Sikhs. Could they not be men enough to stem the hatred?[21]

[18] 'This Suicide Must Stop,' *The Times of India*, Bombay, 15 September 1947, 1.

[19] 'Surrender Arms and Trust Government,' *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 16 September 1947, 1.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid.

Sleeplessness, helplessness, anxiety, a deep sense of being at variance with an environment that is no longer knowable, all of this and more read like the diary of a victim of an indelible trauma. Yet, today, when we write or speak or visualise the narrative of the Partition, we rarely speak of Gandhi as also being its victim; a struggling survivor attempting to hold onto the thread of a reality that is fast vanishing. He, too, is like Manto's fictional Toba Tek Singh: a citizen of no country, stateless and permanently in exile.

But history has cast him in the role of the sage, the saviour, the wily politician who won India its freedom. The shape, however, of this freedom is what undoes Gandhi. But, he is a public figure and his trauma also has a canvas that is utterly public.

He laments, to a gathering of the RSS at the Bhangi Colony that if the vast bulk of Hindus wanted to go in a particular direction, even though wrong, no one could stop them. But, asserting his identity even when it was threatened with erasure, Gandhi lays insistent claim to being that single individual 'who had the right to raise his voice against it and give them warning, and that is what he was doing'.[22]

This plea though has little effect, since the very next day, in another meeting in Kingsway Camp, he has to abandon his prayer meeting since a minority of Sikhs demonstrate against the reading from the Quran. The meeting had begun calmly when the prayer began, but halfway through when there was a recitation from Quran, a number of men shouted that the Quran should not be recited since followers of the Quran had butchered their brothers and sisters in Pakistan and were responsible for their own sad plight.

Gandhi pleads with the demonstrators as do the refugee women to keep quiet, but it has no effect. He leaves without finishing his prayer or making his speech. But, even in his departure he reveals that he is Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, with

[22] 'Gandhiji's Advice to Sangh Volunteers,' *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 17 September 1947, 2, column 7.

a unique response: he said he was glad of the experience. Let it serve as a warning to enraged parties that the solution lay through quiet and dignified suffering. He, for one, could not be deflected from the course he had adopted. He must remain the friend of all communities of India and he recommended it to all the lovers of freedom.[23]

The next day, 18 September, post the Lahore Conference, newspapers carry fresh reports of killings in Pakistan. The attacks on Hindus and Sikhs have been carried out by both Pakistan troops and Muslims mobs. The spirit of defeat echoes in Gandhi's words on receipt of this fresh setback and his prayer speech reflects this: 'I have no desire to live to see the win of India through fratricide.'[24] More significantly, and betraying his utter depression of spirits, he publicly declares that God should take him away from this world before any such calamity descended on this fair land. For the first time, departing from his hitherto hope-filled narrative, he sees no option but war between India and Pakistan if they did not acknowledge their guilt vis-à-vis the minorities.

But while there is conflict, resentment and increasing dissonance between Gandhi's world view and that of others, the crowds continue to come. There is a big gathering of workers from Delhi Cloth Mills in the spacious courtyard of Ganesh Lines (17 September). Gandhi repeats his call to subdue resentment and decides that he would not offer public prayers unless the audience wants them in their entirety. He avers that he never imposed anything on anybody and thus was hardly likely to impose such a spiritual thing as prayer on anyone.

On Thursday, 18 September, Gandhi succeeds, by a show of hands to a continuation of the recitation of the Quran with a single rider: If even a single Indian objected to recitation, he

[23] 'Demonstrations at Prayer Meeting,' *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 17 September 1947, 2, column 4.

[24] 'No Desire to See India Ruined by Fratricide,' *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 18 September 1947, 7, column 6.

would not hold his prayer in public. In an address to Muslims of Daryaganj the same day, he counsels the Muslims in India that if they lived as honest, loyal and law-abiding citizens, they had a definite place and no one could touch them; those Muslims who wished to go to Pakistan were free to do so. But he did not want a single loyal Muslim to leave for Pakistan because of fear of Hindus and Sikhs. He reiterates his resolve to see communal harmony restored in Delhi before he leaves for Punjab. But he realises that he cannot succeed unless he can secure justice for Muslims in Delhi. In his mind, Muslims had lived in Delhi for generations, and if Hindus and Muslims could live like brothers again, he would proceed to Punjab and do or die in Pakistan. But the condition of success was that those in the Union must keep their hands clean. Hinduism was like an ocean; oceans must never become unclear.[25]

The sight of deserted houses and shops, some of them looted, led Gandhi to say that his spirits are oppressed. He recounts how about a 100 Muslims, gathered in the house of Asaf Ali Saheb, told him that they wanted to be loyal to the Union but they wanted assurance of safety, particularly after the partisan behaviour of police. His advises them to be brave and not leave their home, no matter what. This for Gandhi was their home, even if the maps and mobs said otherwise.

In this fragmented world, for Gandhi there is only God for succour. His response now takes on darker undertones and he intones that he would do what he could. He had pledged himself to do or die in Noakhali, Bihar, Calcutta and now Delhi. Death, it seems, is the only fitting response in a world gone awry. Casting a long look at his life, he recalls that he was evermore a friend and servant of all Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs and he would not rest till all were restored to their homes. He had served Muslims for a lifetime in South Africa and then in India and could not ever forget the unity of the Khilafat days. The possibilities of

[25] '"Hindus and Muslims as Brothers" Mahatma Gandhi's Prayer,' *The Times of India*, Bombay, 20 September, 7, column 3.

lasting friendship between Muslims and Hindus is what he lived and worked for.

On the 19th at 5 PM, he visits the Hindu pocket of Kucha Tarachand surrounded on all sides by Muslims and tells them to be calm and fearless. After that he visits an orphanage at Pataudi House where he is told that there were about 70 young boys and 40 girls. But, on 7 September, there was a shower of bullets from adjoining Muslim homes killing one child and wounding another. A local Muslim elder and other Muslims who accompanied Gandhi promise him that they would do no further harm to the inmates. Gandhi however, uncharacteristically, seems averse to bringing back all who have been frightened away. This, remarkably enough, is the same person who constantly spoke of not giving up one's home no matter what, thereby displaying an ebbing confidence in his own beliefs or his powers to change things as they are.

Meanwhile on the 19th and 20th, following a conference of representatives of both dominions, in New Delhi a declaration is made of joint all-out efforts to restore peace which promises full protection for minorities and prevention of publication of inflammatory writings and speeches. On the 20th evening, Gandhi endorses this in his evening speech:

> To drive every Muslim from India and every Hindu and Sikh from Pakistan would mean war and eternal ruin for the country. If such a suicidal policy was followed in both the States it would spell ruin of Islam and Hinduism in Pakistan and Union. Good alone could beget good. Love bred love.[26]

As for revenge, says Gandhi, leave it to God.

But the glimpse of the politician is there when he wonders aloud as to how the Pakistan Government could allow this carnage and sees it as contrary to the assurances given to the minorities by Quaid-i-Azam himself. That said, he is baffled how could

[26] 'Gandhiji Pained by Plight of Refugees,' *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 21 September 1947, 1, column 5.

brothers whose blood had mingled in Jallianwala Bagh be enemies today. As long as he had breath in his body, he would say that this should not be! In fact, the prayer meetings become a space for personal therapy where he shares his anger, his anguish and his loss of faith in human goodness. He tells the waiting, willing public how in the agony of his heart he cried daily, hourly to God to bring peace; if peace did not come he would pray to God to take him.[27] He refers to the 57 mile long convoy of refugees moving on foot from West Punjab into the East as a phenomenon unparalleled in the history of the world and says it should make them all hang their heads in shame.

On the 21st, Gandhi drives to areas that had many 'disturbances'—Qutub Road, Paharganj, Sadar Bazar and Pul Mithai. At Pul Bangash, he is escorted to a balcony to speak from and is greeted by the sight of Muslims in large numbers standing on the road and housetops in the vicinity filled with burqa-clad Muslim women. It is almost as if, now, where other communities question him, the Muslims claim him as their messiah, their last defence. So the Muslim cheer him on and shout out 'Mahatma Gandhi zindabad,' 'Father of Independent India' and 'Pride of the Nation'. Long lines of Muslim on either side give him military-style salutes.[28]

But, he is not the saviour of one community alone, and as his car leaves, he is stopped by a large number of Hindus at Pahri Dhiraj who rushed towards the car for *darshan*. In his speech (21st), he says that so long as he had breath in his body he would continue to advise against any idea of banishing all Muslims from India. This is sheer madness, madness to think that 4 crore Muslims could be banished to Pakistan or wiped out. The evening prayer address is marred by a single person's objection to the reading from the Quran and the atmosphere is so surcharged that Gandhi thinks it right to respect the view of even one objector.

[27] 'Gandhi's Advice to Dominions,' *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 21 September 1947, 7, column 2.

[28] '"Live with Brotherly Feeling" Gandhijis Advice to Muslims,' *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 22 September 1947, 1, column 1.

He says that one thing everyone should take to heart from such objections was that those who were anxious to serve must have endless patience and tolerance.[29]

He turns to personal testimony and narrates how he had gone with Indira Gandhi to a locality where a large number of Hindus lived near a large number of Muslims. Hindus greeted him with 'Mahatma Gandhi *ki jai*', but they little know that today there could be no victory for him and nor did he wish to live if Hindu, Sikhs and Muslims could not be at peace with one another. He was doing his best to drive home the truth that there was enough strength in unity and weakness in disunion. Turning to his own body, he remarks that just as a tree did not bear fruit when withered, so also would his service be useless if his body also did not bear the expected fruit: the fruit of amity and peace. He said he was only explaining facts since one was bound to work without attachment to fruit. It was a fact that a body (i.e., his body) which outlived its usefulness would perish giving place to a new one while the soul, however, was imperishable and would continue to take new forms for achieving salvation through acts of service.

Life however for Gandhi is to soldier on in the face of the impossible and at these times what is often the unspeakable, and he returns to the question of the refugees. He voices the hope that when Hindu and Sikh anger had subsided, they themselves would bring back Muslims with honour to their own homes. What he expected the government to do was to hold the vacated houses in good order and trust for the evacuees. Commenting on the role of the media in these uncertain times, he shares the fact that some newspapers had actually published articles urging people to either kill or banish all Muslims in India. For him this is a form of national suicide and a way to actually destroy Hinduism. Making a moot point—one whose echo is even louder in the times we live in now—he says: Can such newspapers actually exist in free India? Did newspapers have right to poison the public mind? If

[29] 'Gandhiji Opposed to Population Transfer,' *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 22 September 1947, 1, column 4.

this is what they wanted, it was better to ask for government's resignation since the world which has looked up to India now would actually then cease to do so.[30]

Living as we do in a world now that is defined by media in its multiple dimensions and where even the most revered newspapers are closing down or changing their avatars to stay digitally relevant, we may fail to understand how defining was the role of the newspaper in an India struggling to win its freedom, first from Imperial Britain and later from those within who were now the apparent 'rulers'. Yasmin Khan's *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan*[31] reminds us that there were 'various vocabularies of freedom that were in circulation in the late 1940s' and that the newspapers were critical in shaping opinion in the newly emergent print culture in defining the public sphere.[32] Its consumers, as Khan shares in her introductory remarks, were the South Asian middle class, 'urban wage earners'.[33]

Gandhi, the consummate manipulator of media fully aware of its reach, is ever alert to have his voice 'heard' in the public beyond that which gathers to hear him at his public prayer meetings. Thus, on Mondays, his day of silence, the evening's discourse written in Hindustani is read out. On Monday, the 21st, he says, 'If India fails, Asia dies. India has been aptly called the nursery of many blended cultures and civilizations. Let India remain the hope of all the exploited races of earth whether in Asia, Africa or in any part of world.'[34] He reminds people that 'to be worthy of the liberty we have won … let us bravely face all the difficulties that confront us…. Facing them squarely will make us fitter and nobler.'[35]

[30] Ibid.

[31] Yasmin Khan, *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan* (New Delhi: Viking/Penguin, 2007).

[32] Khan, *The Great Partition*, 5.

[33] Ibid., 8.

[34] 'Hidden Arms Must Be Found Says Gandhiji,' *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 23 September 1947, 1, column 2.

[35] Ibid.

Given his understanding of realpolitik, Gandhi uses his statement to re-examine his decision on the 21st to allow an objection to withhold his prayer. He redefines the notion of the 'public' in the context of his prayer meetings:

> The prayer was public only in the sense that no member of the public was debarred from attending it. It was held on private premises. Propriety required that those only should attend who believed whole heartedly in prayer, including verses from the *Quran*. Indeed the rule should be applicable to prayers held even on public ground.
>
> A prayer meeting is not a debating assembly. It is possible to conceive prayer meetings of many communities on same plot of land. Decency requires that those who are opposed to particular prayers would abstain from attending meetings they object to…. Freedom of … public speech would become a farce if interference became the order of the day.[36]

It isn't only Gandhi's daily activities and his speeches from the prayer meetings that make to the press, his writings in the *Harijan* also often find their way into the media. Two of his pieces dated 21 September are reproduced in the press. In one, he sets out his absolute dislike of the proposal to have a statue of his installed in Bombay. Gandhi has written,

> I have a dislike even for being photographed; nevertheless photographs have been taken of me…. Notwithstanding this inconsistency, I must dissent emphatically from any proposal to spend any money on preparing a statue of me … especially at a time when people do not have enough food and clothing.[37]

In another piece title 'Task Before Ministers', Gandhi has responded to the many letters he has received criticising the apparent luxurious lifestyle of the ministers, as also their nepotism and favouritism. He says that the Ministers should not be

[36] Ibid.

[37] 'Gandhiji Dislikes a Statue for Him,' *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 22 September 1947, 5, column 5.

sensitive since much of this criticism comes from ignorance, but it does indicate that the critics expect much more from their ministers, 'in the way of simplicity, courage, honesty, and industry.' He says also that 'The whole purpose of this note will be served if on the one hand the Ministers profit by valid criticism and the critics learn to be sober and precise about their facts. Inaccuracy or exaggeration spoils a good case.'[38]

On the afternoon of the 23rd, there is a three-hour meeting of the Congress Working Committee in his room at Birla House to discuss the threefold problem of maintenance of law and order, evacuation of minorities and the relief and rehabilitation of refugees. The Punjab problem is central, particularly the mass exchange of populations. It seems untenable to facilitate the exchange of over 70,000,000 since, among other things, the costs are astronomical for a fiscally strained state.

In his evening address, Gandhi reiterates his desire to go posthaste to Punjab. He confesses how the unending cycle of violence in Delhi is keeping him from his task of healing the people of the Punjab and other places in Pakistan.

Refusing to accept that the Partition has forever created a divisive and communitarian society, he asserts that he would go to Pakistan without any protection; he was in God's protection. Turning once again to the now recurrent theme of death and personal extinction, he adds that if he had to face death, he would do it with a happy smile.[39] Chillingly, given our knowledge of his death by fundamentalist fanatics some months later, he speaks of what must be the fitting response from the people of India: while he may die without protection, he warns the people that if he dies during his mission people should restrain their wrath.[40]

[38] 'Gandhiji's Advice to Ministers,' *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 22 September 1947, 5, column 5.

[39] 'Delhi Keeping Gandhiji from Punjab,' *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 24 September 1947, 1, column 2.

[40] Ibid.

He advises the Hindus and Sikhs left in Rawalpindi and Wah camp to be prepared to die to a man, rather than leave their homes. 'The art of dying bravely and with honour did not need any special training, saving a living faith in God.'[41] For himself, he repeated, he would:

> go as a friend of the Muslims as of others. His life would be at their disposal. He hoped he would cheerfully die at the hands of anyone who chose to take his life. Then he would have done as he advised all to do.[42]

On the 24th, Gandhi at Birla House meeting reminds people that Pakistan would not have come into existence if the Congress and the British had not come to an agreement. In the struggle for freedom, he asserts, the chief fighter was the Congress. Hence, in a public rebuttal to those who argued that since Hindus and Sikhs had been driven out of Pakistan, the same method be applied to the treatment for Muslims in India, especially in Delhi, Gandhi says that to undo Pakistan is to undo *swaraj*.[43] People should leave matters to their own governments and the spirit of revenge and retaliation will get no one anywhere.

But his own world is crumbling and he shares that he had never believed that such things could happen. Partition, awful, bloody and sectarian, was the reality and a new self has to evolve to meet this new, internal challenge. There was no going back on it now.

The backdrop to Gandhi's words is not just what is happening in North India. By September 22, there is another script that consumes the national imagination with the news of Junagarh acceding 'without warning' to Pakistan, ignoring facts of geography. The state is largely Hindu majority, governed by an armed force who are all Muslim. The small surrounding little states

[41] 'Gandhiji's Prayer Speech,' *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 24 September 1947, 8, column 1.

[42] Ibid.

[43] 'Daily Toll of Lives a Criminal Waste—Gandhiji,' *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 25 September 1947, 1, column 5.

are also in a state of anxiety and neighbouring Kathiawar rulers appeal to the Centre for protection.

In his prayer speech on the 25th, referring in an oblique manner to this, Gandhi states that while it the bounden duty of the Indian Government to ensure safety of Hindus and Sikhs in Pakistan, Muslims in India too should prove themselves absolutely loyal; if Muslims proved traitors, their treachery would kill them. In his mind, the biggest offence in any state is treachery. The only way to not succumb to all of this is for all citizens to support government initiatives. Drawing an analogy which is now commonly associated in the Partition discourse of the two countries being born through a bloody caesarean operation, Gandhi describes India as a baby, only 1 month and 10 days old; the mad career of retaliation would kill it in babyhood.[44]

Reminding the public of who they were not so long ago, he says that they were brave men who had stood up to the British Empire till recently. Why had they become weak today? The brave, for him, fear no one but God. The task now which lies before him is immense: how to quench the flame of hatred and revenge.

As September draws to a close, Gandhi like the rest of the government is struggling with more of the same issues: protection of refugee trains which are attacked on an almost daily basis; evacuation of Muslims refugees from state territories; resettlement of non-Muslims refugees in other states; and the acute shortage of food in the country.[45] The matter gets complicated when he comes down with the flu. Ever since his fast in Calcutta his body has had no chance to recuperate. This 'illness' is ascribed by his doctor as resulting from heavy work due to the present 'disturbed' conditions in Delhi, and the public is requested to

[44] 'India Bound to Protect Hindus in Pakistan,' *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 26 September 1947, 1, column 4.

[45] The number of evacuees from West Punjab between 17 August and 15 September is 17 lakhs. They have travelled by air, train or marched in caravans—the largest number being moved on foot.

postpone interviews with him to enable him to recover. The diagnosis clearly indicates the roots of the sickness to be not physical strain but severe psychological distress. The disturbances in the body politic are not external to Gandhi; rather, they are housed in the very body and mind of this veteran of many battles, but one, who is wholly unprepared for the last, traumatic battle of his life where brother turns on brother, on sister, on mother, on father and even on the children.

But refusing to succumb, he soldiers on as a peacetime warrior and once again publicly announces (at 26th September's prayer meeting) his deep desire to go to West Pakistan as he pleads with the Hindus and Sikhs in Delhi to help restore peace. Enduring peace being won here, he will go 'with fresh strength'[46] to Lahore, Rawalpindi, Sheikhpura, North West Frontier Provinces and Sind. He says he will not rest until every Hindu and Sikh who has been driven away from Pakistan returned to his home with honour and dignity. He admits he had been an opponent to all warfare. But, if Pakistan government refused to mend its way, then there was no option but war. War was not a joke and that way lay destruction, but he would never advise anyone to put up with injustice. In what is now becoming a familiar strain, he says that there was a time India had listened to him; however, today he was a 'back number'. Sharing his anguish with those who still came to learn life's lessons from him daily, he voices the plaint that he was told he had no place in the new order, where they wanted machines, navy, air force, etc. He could never be party to that. If they had courage to say that they would retain freedom with the help of the same force with which they had won it, he was their man. His physical incapacity and his depression would vanish in a moment. 'Depression' is the word that he uses to describe his malaise in public.[47]

About being called a 'miracle man' by a refugee, a day earlier, who asked him after the prayer meeting, to show his miracle and

[46] 'Gandhiji's Prayer Speech,' *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 27 September 1947, 7, column 5.

[47] Ibid.

put out the fire in the country, Gandhi had replied that he was neither 'Ramchandra nor Shankaracharya; I do not claim to possess any supernatural power. I am just an ordinary man'.[48] He retorts that he never claimed to be a 'Mahatma';[49] he is ordinary. Nevertheless, there is one key difference between him and other common mortals: His faith in God was perhaps stronger than theirs. This urge to deify him is not just there with the ordinary displaced persons who speak to him as their father–counsellor at the public meetings but is, as in the past, best imaged in the most curious manner, by revealing in public the intimate details of his material body, a body whose signification and worth are often represented through its opposite, his fragile state of health. This trope of using the body as the strongest, most trusted weapon to alter public discourse is of course the creation of Gandhi himself, but over time, this very same tactic of inserting the private into the public is taken over by many others, in this instance, a physician.

On 27 September, he begins his public address by acknowledging that the news item regarding his illness has hurt him since it had appeared without his knowledge; it should not have been given too much importance. He clarifies that Dr Dinshaw Mehta was not his personal physician and he had told Gandhi that he was not responsible for the newspaper describing him as such. In fact, displaying his anger, he tells the public that Dinshaw Mehta had come to him not as his doctor but because he was troubled by some spiritual questions.

This attack on Dr Mehta reveals, very publicly, the swirls and eddies of the coterie around Gandhi and their own divisive politics. So much so that Gandhi publicly asserts that Dr Sushila Nayyar had been his personal physician and Dr Jivaraj Mehta, Dr B.C. Roy, Dr Gilder and late Dr Ansari had all helped him with medical advice. But none, Gandhi makes clear, had ever given anything to Press before first showing it to him. And then

[48] 'I Am Not a Miracle Man Says Gandhiji,' *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 26 September 1947, 1, column 4.

[49] 'Gandhiji's Prayer Speech,' *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 27 September 1947, 7, column 5.

in a complete disassociation with all of this kerfuffle, he suddenly says that now his only physician was Rama. As the devotional song or *bhajan* sung during prayers said: he was the curer of all ills, physical, mental and moral.[50]

There is a reprieve on the 28th and a welcome headline announcing a day of complete peace in New Delhi marred by some stray assaults and some arms recovered along with an attempt to desecrate a place of worship. This hiatus allows Gandhi, for almost the first time this month, to look beyond and engage with his old combatant. The day's other headlines proclaims in bold: 'Gandhi Refutes Churchill's Allegations'.[51] The articles refer to Churchill's speech at Snaresbrook, Essex, on the 27th where he is reported to have said that the

> [F]earful massacres which are occurring in India are no surprise to me … the future will witness a vast abridgment of the population throughout what has for 60 or 70 years been the most peaceful part of the world and that at the same time will come a retrogression of civilization.[52]

Gandhi refers to those remarks and responds thus:

> Mr. Churchill has rendered a disservice to the nation of which he is a great servant. If Mr. Churchill knew the state that would befall India after she became free from the British yoke, did he for a moment stop to think that blame belonged to the builders of the Empire rather than to the 'races' in his opinion endowed with capacities for the highest culture.

Castigating the British leader, Gandhi asserts that the dismemberment of India by the British constituted an unconscious invitation to the two parts to fight amongst themselves.

[50] 'Gandhiji Condemns Religious Hatred,' *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 28 September 1947, 11, column 4.

[51] 'Gandhiji Refutes Churchill's Allegations,' *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 29 September 1947, 1, column 1.

[52] 'Horrors in India,' *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 29 September 1947, 1, column 2.

> The free grant of independence to the two parts as sister Dominions seemed to taint the gift.... The British step to withdraw from India was a noble step taken with consent by all parties. Now, Mr. Churchill and his party were expected not to say or do anything that would diminish its value.[53]

He turns to the audience and points out that many of these listeners had provided a handle to Mr Churchill to make the comments he had. He did not conduct his prayers as two members of the audience objected. Gandhi let them know that he is disappointed with their intolerance which displayed the 'symptoms of distemper which was visible in the country'[54] and had prompted the remarks from Mr Churchill. However, it was not too late to mend their ways and falsify Mr Churchill's foreboding. It is reported that he later held his prayers in his room with only members of his party.[55]

Nature too seems to be participating in the general climate of doom and disaster and to add to the woes, on the 29th, the river Jamuna is in spate, reverting to its ancient course along the Red Fort leaving hundreds of villages submerged. On Monday, a day of silence (the 29th), Gandhi's written message is read out at the prayer meeting:

> My reference to the possibility of war between the 2 sister Dominions seems, I am told, to have produced a scare in the West. I do not know what reports were sent outside by newspaper correspondents…. Summaries are always a dangerous enterprise…. An unwanted summary of a pamphlet … about South Africa in 1896 nearly cost me my life…. I hold that not a single mention of war in my speeches can be interpreted to mean that there was my incitement to or approval of war between Pakistan and the Union unless the mere mention of it is to be taboo….

[53] 'Gandhiji Refutes Churchill's Allegations,' *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 29 September 1947, column 1.

[54] Ibid.

[55] 'Gandhiji's Reply to Churchill,' *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 29 September 1947, 8, column 5.

> I claim that I rendered a service to both sister States by examining the present situation and definitely stating when the cause of war would arise between the two states. This was done not to promote war but to avoid it as far as possible…. India knows, the world should, that every ounce of my energy has been and is being devoted to the definite avoidance of fratricide culminating in war. When a man vowed to non violence as the law governing human beings dares to refer to war, he can only do so as to strain every nerve to avoid it. Such is my fundamental position from which I hope never to swerve to my dying day.[56]

While the floods ebb on the 30th, having rendered some 20,000 homeless and destroying crops, the human world continues to be in violent spate. As the month draws to a close, on the eve of Gandhi's birthday, his first, and sadly only, birthday in free India, there is news from various parts of the country on proposed celebrations and of special broadcasts on the All India radio celebrating 'Gandhi Jayanti'. Gandhi himself, can only narrate that evening what the morning's visitors told him, that those left behind in Mianwali may be forcibly converted, starved or murdered and their women abducted. The best way, according to him, to protect minorities is for the Quaid-i Azam, Jinnah, to inspire the minorities that they do not have to look to the sister dominion for protection. And, there should be no forcible conversion.[57] In effect, he is using his own example as a mirror before Jinnah and shows him wanting. Gandhi's response to his birthday celebrations is to declare that he will spend the day in prayers and in spinning and asks that there should be no decorations and illumination[58] ending the month on the same note he had started with.

This account, almost in the form of diary, is not just a record of times past, of violence stemmed, of ruptures healed and of a historical moment that is a memory of a past trauma brought on by

[56] 'No Incitement to War,' *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 30 September 1947, 1, column 3.

[57] 'Evacuees' Property Pakistan's Trust—Gandhiji,' *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 1 October 1947, 1, column 4.

[58] 'Gandhiji to Fast on Birthday,' *Hindustan Times*, 30 September 1947, 10, column 3.

the largest, organised, assault on a hapless people who only asked for one thing—their freedom. Indeed, as is amply evident even in this short account of one month, the trauma of the Partition, the neurosis that it engendered, the trajectory of hatred and violence that it unleashed, and the level of distrust it created in people and in institutions such as the police and the army which were meant to safeguard people, would not be undone easily and still live on. But, now there is no Gandhi who will rise above the fault lines of party affiliation and pray, and plead, and fast, and then die, for his belief in the sanctity of all life, moreover, a belief shored in his deep historical awareness of the richness of the syncretic, composite, subcontinental culture.

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9

‘Are We Women Not Citizens?’

Mridula Sarabhai’s Social Workers and the Recovery of Abducted Women

Ayesha Kidwai

This essay takes place in an extended moment in which a woman’s right to security, sexual autonomy, bodily integrity and the freedom to ‘present’ herself (rather than being represented) in both the public and the private spheres has been demonstrated for and sloganeered on in the streets of Delhi (and now Kolkata).

India’s Tahrir moment of 2012 first met with the response it deserved, in the progressive recommendations of the Justice Verma Committee. However, the euphoria was short-lived, as in the payback in patriarchal coin that this movement received in the form of the Criminal Amendment Act, 2013, even as the specific violence suffered by women has received recognition in the criminal justice system, impunity and immunity have largely been preserved. A woman who is a wife cannot be raped, and consent is irrelevant for sexual relations between young women and men if they are both under the age of 18. ‘Unnatural sex’ is outlawed, and only a woman may be raped.

Even worse, close to 18 months on, the displays of anguish and solidarity seem to have reaped a bitter harvest in the popular discourse on the Muzaffarnagar violence of 2013, where sexual harassment and sexual violence had been instrumentalised as the trigger and justification for anti-minority pogroms and the pernicious discourse of 'Love Jihad'. In October 2014, it was then a real question as to whether the hope that many of us found in the renewed assertion of women's rights, solidarity and social and political citizenship was too naive, too quick on the draw, and whether our intentions and exertions on struggling against sexual violence are doomed to be judged by the sobering facts of what has followed. Will the December 2012 movement be judged as one that injected new strength into patriarchal ownership of women's bodies and as one that gave new idioms to ideologies of communal and caste hatred? I would vociferously contest such a doomsday scenario, for the patriarchal, right-wing appropriation and distortion of women's agenda cannot, and indeed does not, delegitimise the value of the questions we continue to raise.

The Past as Present

In this essay, I wish to turn the certainty of this feminist gaze to a very uncomfortable period in Indian history—the post-Partition recovery of abducted women. As feminist inquiry in the last two decades has shown,[1] rescue was translated into forcible recovery

[1] V. Das, *Critical Events: An Anthropological Perspective on Contemporary India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995); R. Menon and K. Bhasin, 'Recovery, Rupture, Resistance: Indian State and Abduction of Women During Partition,' *Economic and Political Weekly* 28, no. 17 (24 April 1993): WS2–11; R. Menon and K. Bhasin, *Borders & Boundaries: Women in India's Partition* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1998); U. Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India* (New Delhi: Penguin, 1998); K. Daiya, 'Postcolonial Masculinity,' *Genders On-line Journal* 43(2006): 1–14; J. Didur, *Unsettling Partition: Literature, Gender, Memory* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006); S. Ray, 'New Women, New Nations: Writing the Partition in Desai's Clear Light of Day and Sidhwa's Cracking India,' in *En-Gendering India: Woman and Nation in Colonial and Postcolonial Narratives* (Durham: Duke

and repatriation, and served a patriarchal ideology that bound national and community honour to women's bodies and control of their sexuality. Women were, in the words of Menon and Bhasin:[2]

> Abducted as Hindus, converted and married as Muslims, recovered as Hindus but required to relinquish their children because they were born of Muslim fathers, and disowned as 'unpure' and ineligible for marriage within their erstwhile family and community, their identities were in a continuous state of construction and reconstruction, making of them … 'permanent refugees'.

Following the harrowing accounts this body of feminist work has collated, it is often commonplace to assume an identity of intentions on the part of the state and the social workers. In Das's words:[3]

> We witness here an alliance between the state and social work as a profession, which silences the voice of victims by an application of the 'best interest' doctrine. This voice is silenced by an abstract concern with justice, the punishment of the guilty, and the protection of the honour of the nation. This concern, lucidly articulated within the Constituent Assembly as well as outside the Assembly by national leaders, comprises a discourse of heroic and flatulent nationalism which takes no cognisance of the feelings of the women themselves.

The question I wish to answer is whether Mridula Sarabhai and other women activists—or 'social workers' as they were then called—were indeed willing minions of the patriarchal state. Asking and answering this question is important if we are to find new ways in which popular histories of social movements may be written. If we do not evaluate movements in terms of the

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University Press, 2000), 126–47; S. Kamra, *Bearing Witness: Partition, Independence, End of the Raj* (Alberta: University of Calgary Press, 2002) (to name just a few).

[2] Menon and Bhasin, *Borders & Boundaries: Women in India's Partition*.

[3] Das, *Critical Events: An Anthropological Perspective on Contemporary India*.

outcomes they win from the state and the family, but in terms of the persistence of the questions they raise initially and refine subsequently through different periods, perhaps we shall be able to sketch longer and deeper histories (and futures) of movements we encounter.

To this end, I shall first demonstrate that there was no such alliance, and that, in fact, 'social workers' were always on a collision course with social mores, the political class, police and administration, and then move on to where I think the reasons for the failure of recovery lay. My chief protagonist here is Mridula Sarabhai, as found in her writings in the *Hindustan Times* (HT) newspaper of 1948–49. Another voice that I shall turn to is that of Anis Kidwai, a close associate of Sarabhai's, whose memoir of Delhi in 1947–49 I have had the privilege of translating.

Rescue Rather than Recovery

As is well known, the Partition of India was marked by kidnapping, rape and confinement. Official figures placed the number of abducted women at 50,000 Muslim women in India and 33,000 non-Muslim women in Pakistan. Mainly due to the efforts of Mridula Sarabhai, at the Inter-Dominion Conference in Lahore on 6 December 1947, India and Pakistan jointly decided to mount a recovery operation, through a contingent of female social workers assisted by the local police. An ordinance called the Abducted Persons Recovery and Restoration Ordinance was promulgated on 31 January 1949 and was subsequently replaced by the Abducted Persons (Recovery and Restoration) Act of December 1949. This Act was renewed until 1957, although as Menon and Bhasin[4] point out, recovery operations really took place only between 1947 and 1952, and had effectively been abandoned by 1954–55.

[4] Menon and Bhasin, 'Recovery, Rupture, Resistance: Indian State and Abduction of Women During Partition'; *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition*.

It is important to recognise that in a fundamental sense, the institution of such a rescue operation signalled an achievement for the social workers, as it brought crimes against women to the centre stage. This was highly unusual—even contemporaneously, both India and Pakistan had already decided to view the Partition as a time in which there was violence, but no criminal, justiciable acts (something that has conditioned the popular view of every incident of communal violence ever since). This 'victory' notwithstanding, by December 1949 however, the number of women recovered was barely one-fourth of those abducted—9,362 in India and 5,510 in Pakistan. Moreover, despite the fact that the Act was renewed until 1957, at the end of it, approximately only 30,000 women were 'recovered'.

To understand what the experience of abduction was, I turn to Anis Kidwai in his work *In Freedom's Shade*:[5]

> When Muslim girls were recovered from Punjabi Hindu men, they had the names of their rapists dug into their flesh. Even accepting that Hindu men did this in part out of revenge, in part in anger, in part to pass them off as Hindu women, how is one to explain why the Hindu girls recovered from Pakistan arrived in Delhi with names of the mujahideens and the dates of the crimes scratched into their hands? In fact, the spirited Punjabis tried to outdo each other—girls recovered from Delhi had 'Om' and designs of flowers and vines dug into their hands; those from Punjab and the princely states had the sinners' names engraved into their private parts and 'Pakistan Zindabad' branded on their chests. (p. 306)
>
> Which nation in the world has escaped war and strife? Only Allah knows how many skirmishes this Earth has seen in which the blood of humans has been let. But nothing of what our valiants undertook had ever been attempted. Such rules of war, such manoeuvres would have never struck the minds of any commander of any army anywhere in this world. Who thought them up? These bastard children on whom the burden of shame has been foisted

[5] Anis Kidwai, *In Freedom's Shade*. Translated from the original *Azaadi ki Chhaon Mein*, published by Qaumi Ekta Trust, New Delhi (1974) by Ayesha Kidwai (New Delhi: Penguin India, 2011).

for all time; these adolescent girls whose essence is now only carnal hunger; these deranged young women whose whole being is a fervent appeal—as long as they live, they will remember those malignant times. (p. 282)

In 1949 I witnessed the return of a girl who had been abducted eighteen months earlier. This girl was brought to the city from a respected government officer's house. This was itself remarkable, as in Delhi girls were usually rescued from less affluent homes. Who dared glance at highly ranked officials, ministers, rich men? Who had the gumption to raid mansions? For employees who so dared, these magnificent buildings could well become prisons. The girl told us her story. She and her family had taken their belongings and joined a caravan of a few thousand from Kapurthala, footing it to Ferozepur. A few miles later, the thanedar deputed to safeguard the caravan declared that the police's responsibility was only to convey the men to Pakistan and the women were not to proceed further. Naturally, this announcement elicited great consternation; people protested that they would rather die than abandon the women. A sum of ₹6,000 was agreed upon as the bribe, but hardly had the caravan moved a few miles ahead that the thanedar again reiterated the injunction. This time, he accepted a further inducement of ₹4,000.

When the caravan finally reached Ferozepur, the thanedar again refused to take the women to the train station (to board the train to Pakistan). Fresh negotiations began and people again delved deep into their purses for the last of their savings, now offering another ₹6,000. Thanedar sahab graciously accepted, the caravan moved. The station was now just a few miles away and people had already begun to thank the heavens that the ordeal would be over soon—their savings were exhausted but their honour was untarnished—when disaster struck. The thanedar had secretly informed the mobs that he would escort a Muslim caravan into Ferozepur. Even before the caravan reached the station, it was surrounded and attacked. Many were killed, many thrown into the stream and about 1,200 girls snatched. Only a few middle-aged women, some men and a few children boarded the train, in service of thanedar sahab's aspirations for a decoration for bravery. Some girls died trying to escape.

Others were luckier, like this girl. She ran into the stream, flailed around in the water for some time, found firm ground and walked

> across to the other side. She ran for three days, until she reached Ferozepur, where a kind officer took her in. She took care of his children and did housework and was paid a respectable amount for her labour. A year and a half later, the police brought her to Delhi. She was educated, so I asked, 'If you can write, why didn't you write to your relatives?' She said she did. 'They should have replied. Perhaps they did and my employer hid the letters…. He didn't want me to leave the job.' Now, she hoped to reunite with her husband, who was alive in Pakistan. But her child wasn't. The water had claimed him. (pp. 283–85)

Reading the writings of the social workers of these times—Sarabhai, Patel, Kidwai—what strikes one is that what impelled the social workers of the period was rescue rather than forced repatriation. Writing in HT on 8 April 1948, Mridula Sarabhai urges:

> The time factor is of great importance…. The great majority of captive women are going through hell. Every moment, every extra day, means more suffering for the captive women.... It is only during the last two months that a special organisation has been started and a campaign launched. But the progress is at a snail's pace. ... if we want an early recovery, it is necessary to have a vigorous campaign to educate the abductors and society that by abducting women in your own area, you do not harm your opponent.
>
> Abducted women have been taken away far into the interior of both Dominions. It is not possible to trace them only through government machinery. The nationals of India and Pakistan have to be alert … and report to the highest authority in their districts the presence of abducted women in their area.

However, without the social workers, rescue would simply be recovery, and at a tremendous cost, for only the social workers know that the fate of one woman is tied to another:[6]

> There are interested parties—war-mongers who do not wish the masses to settle down—who want to exploit this human tragedy

[6] *Hindustan Times*, 14 April 1948.

> for their own ends. … if women are restored to their families then one of the causes of inter-Dominion tension will disappear. It will minimise the possibilities of war. So they make an all-out effort to obstruct work. This spirit of retaliation and destruction does not take into account physical barriers dividing countries or communities. Therefore, to tackle this question, the problem has to be considered as a while and not as a question of inter-Dominion interests.
>
> In both Dominions, the eagerness to recover their women borders on impatience. The question is asked: Why this delay? Blame is attributed to the other side. The average impression is that the recovery of the women is a simple procedure…. Those who think this way are ignorant of human nature…. By use of force alone one may be able to recover a few but large numbers would have to perish.

The involvement of social workers was also imperative because women would only confide in women, as Sarabhai writes:

> 'I am a Sikh. I am happy. Pray do not send me to Pakistan. I will do just as you want me to do. Please have mercy on me'—such would be the plea of a stunned young Muslim newcomer [to the camp]. There was no meaning with arguing with her at that stage. She had to be made to feel at home and given time to gather herself.… Then the second stage—she would want to know why she was recovered. The third would be a query about conditions in Pakistan. What are they like? Were her relatives alive? Would they take her back? Had anyone made enquiries about her? And finally, by the evening, she would be so eager to go back that her impatience would not brook even a few minutes delay. But then fear of what would happen to her would make her nervous. She would go to Pakistan provided I went with her![7]

And only women social workers were motivated enough to challenge the 'honour'–'shame' nexus that ruled South Asian women's lives:

> As the days went by and the possessors of women to know of the method of recovery, they changed their tactics. They knew that

[7] *Hindustan Times*, 18 July 1948.

> women could not be kept back by force. The best way was to get their active cooperation in staying behind. They knew all about feminine psychology … [and] exploited the women's fear complex and their conservatism. For the first few months they had waited to be recovered and had put up a brave fight against the allurements of the abductors. No help came, even those who might have been expected to come to their help had failed them. Now at least a rescue party had arrived. Who knows whether this was 'it'…. Why take a risk? So the number of resisting cases began to increase. Exaggerated accounts of these happenings gained currency and aroused sympathy for these 'resisters'.[8]

Far from the nationalist flatulence demonstrated in the Parliament, both Kidwai and Sarabhai are deeply empathetic to the women's refusals to return, and are aware of the public and private politics that encourages the refusals. In the words of Kidwai:[9]

> As recovery work went on, the greatest difficulty was not to facilitate acceptance—instead, we found that most abducted girls didn't want to return. Muslims seethed at these refusals, young men flushing at this ignominious disgrace of their community's honour. Fathers would rant, 'Shame on such daughters! This is why a father prays so hard for a son. At least a son will be a support to his father in his lifetime, and after his father's death, guard the family's honour!' As for the sons, the one sentiment that moved them was a desire for revenge and anger at their sisters. How could the immoral wantons want to live with those who had murdered their relatives!
>
> Readers cannot comprehend what I, as a woman, suffered when such things were said. I would try to explain, 'Try to understand their psychological state. Try to see why they refuse to return.'

Far from silencing the voices of the women survivors and brushing aside their feelings, Kidwai foregrounds their anxieties:

> Take the young woman who had spent all her life behind the purdah, never seeing the face of any other man besides her brother

[8] Ibid.
[9] Kidwai, *In Freedom's Shade*, 149.

or father. Today, this girl loathed herself as a wanton who had expended her dignity by being with strange men for months. This girl was being offered a return home and she wondered whether her parents, husband, society, would own her again. A deep sense of misgiving and a fear of rejection would drive her to refuse the offer. (p. 149)

… And there were also some married women, who believed their honourable husbands to be their companions until death rendered them asunder. They wondered how they could, tainted by infidelity and scandal as they were, ever face men as proud as them? Would their husbands tolerate such treachery? Would their gazes ever invest in them the same respect as before? These feelings would shackle their feet and they would say, 'What was written as our fate has come to pass. Leave us where we are to live out the rest of our days'.

There were also some girls whose eyes had opened in homes of great poverty, who had never eaten a full meal or clothed their bodies in anything but rags. But now, they were in the keep of such generous men, who brought them silken shalwars and dupattas, introduced them to the delectable taste of hot coffee and cold ice-cream, took them to see two shows at the movies in a single day. Why would such a girl want to leave such fine men to return to her amma and abba, to a life of rags and scraps to conceal her burgeoning youth, to days of toil in the fields under a sun hot enough to melt her brain? And even if she were to do it, even if she were to leave this splendid man, so handsome in his uniform, all the romance that her old life had in store for her was a mud-spattered uncouth rustic, clutching the staff hoisted on his shoulder, for a husband. She wanted to escape this terrible past and that frightening future; she wanted to be happy in the present that was hers.

And for all women, there was another reason for refusal. How was she to know whether her self-professed rescuer was friend or foe? What if the rescuers were also traffickers? Until now, whichever strange man had taken her, had sold her. The fact that the rescuer wore a police uniform was no guarantee either. And even if it were not a uniform but an ornamental pagdi with a shining tassel, how could she trust that he was what he said, a man sent by her relatives? (pp. 149–50)

> I also met some young girls who angrily scorned the offer of return to husbands who had proven so cowardly that they just turned tail and ran, leaving the honour of their family, the mother of their children at the mob's mercy. These women would go mad with anger, 'You ask us to go back to those impotents? We kept on crying out to them to help us—In Allah's name, save us! Why are you running away? Why don't you strike these scoundrels? Wait! Take me along! But for each one, his life was most dear. There was no love for us. Why didn't they kill us with their own hands? We certainly don't want to ever see their faces again!' (pp. 151–52)
>
> Both educated and illiterate girls had another problem. When the police or activists came to rescue them, they would be paralysed by the question: Will my parents/husband accept this child in my womb? What if they make me kill it, in the name of honour? (p. 152)

In a reality in which societal structures like religion always exclude women, women could not own the society that they were being asked to return to:

> The question of religion and of conversion rarely crossed the minds of such girls. After all, what was their religion to them? It was only Muslim men who went to the mosque regularly to read the Friday namaz and the Alvida namaz, only men who listened to the mullaji's sermons. Mullaji wouldn't let women even stand in the mosque. Every time he saw young girls, his eyes would redden, 'Get out! What do you have to do here?' Their presence in the mosque would defile the namaz; if they went to the dargah, there was the danger of a commotion; if they attended a qawwali mehfil, then the Sufi was in peril of straying from his contemplation of the One to thoughts of more earthly pleasures. Women simply polluted sanctity.
>
> In any case, what did these women know of Islam? They had never been taught anything but a few kalmas and a little bit of the namaz. What relevance did that have? They had learnt it by heart and recited it by rote, but what connection did this prayer have with the soul? Her name was Rahimat, her abba Ramzani and her husband Nawab Idris. Besides a few Islamic names, what wealth of faith was hers that she should give up her life to safeguard it? And if truth were to be told, it was not as if the Almighty had kept

> her in such comfort. In fact, the god that this new man had was much more bountiful, for at least she was fed. No, it was better to let them rant on; she was certainly not going to leave this new man, who had brought such colour to her life.[10]

From both Sarabhai and Kidwai, we learn of a patriarchal 'conspiracy' to legitimise abduction. As early as April 1948, in an HT article 'Recovery of Captive Women', Sarabhai writes of what she considers to be an alliance of intentions of the abductors and members of the public who had begun to argue that 'settled women should not be uprooted'.

> Some continue to give asylum to abducted women as hostages, while others argue that 'now that women have settled down in their new environments, why again upset them and create new problems in their lives?' Anyone who knows the psychology of a captive will not be taken in by this line of thought. Captive women have resisted, waiting to be rescued…. With disappointment after disappointment on one side and on the other, the continuous all-out effort of the abductor has made them succumb to the instinct of self-preservation, and they have given in, but this does not mean that they welcome their new environment…. No doubt that these women are uncertain and apprehensive about their future, the call of their motherland has not yet reached their seclusion. If they have lost their near and dear ones, they feel their future is dark and full of struggle.[11]

On 8 August 1948, in her HT article 'The Recovery of Abducted Women', Sarabhai presents a full typology of those arraigned against the recovery operation. Besides the village\town bully, the white-slave dealer, the procurers for brothels, the communal political organisations, there is a type who claims to be a victim: 'we have treated the women shabbily, brutally if you like. But take the practical side. The Pakistan people have taken away our women. If now we give back these other ones we have, how shall we fare?'

[10] Ibid., 1510.
[11] *Hindustan Times*, 14 April 1948.

There are also the 'professional go-betweens': 'A friend of mine from the Frontier writes that he can get your women out provided you are to pay him handsomely.' But later, 'What can I do? We were not successful. Those rascals let us down. Took the money and said that the woman was dead.'

And there is also 'the fanatic'—'She is so well versed in our religious books. Here is an entirely voluntary conversion'—and the 'humanitarian', who 'waited and waited but nobody turned up to claim her' and in the end had her married off into a good family, completely unmindful of the fact that the whole episode was in direct violation of the Inter-Dominion agreement of September 1947.

At the top of Sarabhai's (and Kidwai's) list however, are the 'influential protectors', who work against 'the recovery of the women who are with highly placed individuals or someone under their protection'. While some of 'these zamindars, Civil, Police, and military officials and personnel, MLAs, and leaders of political parties' 'keep the women in their own households, others have distributed them amongst their dependents and servants so that in case of an enquiry they would not be personally involved'. It is because of these people that the recovery operation was found to be 'extremely difficult to tackle', because while some 'hide their crimes under big political and nationalist theories', others like the ministers from both sides of the Punjab have less artifice: 'Why don't you give us the women we want. What is the use of sending us 'low' class women, when we give you a better type?'

Sarabhai also reveals how the judiciary collaborated wholeheartedly with the abductors:

> A recovered girl reported that she had eloped with her father's servant and got married to him before the disturbances began. The camp officer and the tribunal made extensive enquiries for about four weeks and were about to hand the girl over to her husband when accidentally the Hindu husband turned up. Seeing him, the girl completely changed her story…. She had been abducted during an attack on a convoy. She had fainted when the attack took place. When she recovered she found that she was surrounded

> by Muslims. They told her that all her family members had been killed…. After a few days she was converted and married. The nikah certificate was dated before March 1 1947.[12]

'Are we women not citizens?' Sarabhai asks. 'Have we no right to expect State protection and aid in adversity? Are not Ministers our representatives also?' In an angry piece in the HT on 10 July 1948, 'The Problem of Abducted Women', Sarabhai sharply chastises the political class as well:

> Members of legislative assemblies are generally believed to represent the people. It is surprising, however, to read the Assembly proceedings. Not one MLA either in Pakistan on the Indian Parliaments or the East and West Punjab legislatures had asked questions regarding the difficulties faced by their respective Governments in recovery work in their own territories.… Joining hands in efforts to bring out women from the other side helps one in gaining popularity. It is a political asset. But to get out women from one's own Dominion is a struggle against one's own people. It is going against the popular trend—and therefore means a temporary setback in popularity.

Kidwai too implicates government officials in the fact that less than half of the approximately 70,000 women abducted on both sides were ever rescued:

> Inspector sahab was posted in an area where hundreds of abducted women were being held. It was even rumoured that two were being kept for him by a ziledar friend. As the government had issued strict orders, this policeman had to now cover up his past misdeeds and get a high-ranked government official to certify to his industry on this front. He therefore 'recovered' two more girls. They were produced before Mr Button, the Anglo-Indian police superintendent, and they said they didn't want to return to their parents. A signed statement to the effect, certified by a magistrate, was also produced. It so happened that Subhadra was with Mr Button when these girls were brought in and she recommended that the girls be sent to me. Inspector sahab was alarmed and blurted out, 'No, not to that lady! Once she gets the girls, she doesn't let them

[12] *Hindustan Times*, 18 August 1948.

> out.' Mr Button scolded him, 'No! Her decision will be the correct one. She will be able to counsel the girls.'
>
> The distressed girls were brought to me and exactly what Inspector sahab had feared, transpired. I took leave for a night and took them to Purani Tehsil, near Red Fort. We found their relatives there; in fact, one saw her brother in Urdu Bazaar itself and started shouting to catch his attention.[13]

The extent of the involvement of the officials and the police was not limited to collusion with the abductors alone; indeed, in many cases, they were the abductors themselves.

> In March 1948, a young woman named Husn bi was brought from a policeman's house. As usual, she began reeling off the same old story of kindness and gratitude, but when I took her husband's name, her eyes filled with tears. She said, 'I'm sure he has been murdered. But if he is alive, or if my chacha, who is also my devrani's father, can be found, I can go back to them; otherwise, I will not leave.' Our list indicated that Husn bi had a two-year-old daughter with her when she was taken. I found out that the policeman had kept the child. No mention had been made of her to the magistrate either.
>
> All day long, Husn bi pined for her daughter; by evening, she was beside herself with worry. My problem was that I didn't know where the child was being held and I had to leave for Allahabad the next morning. Husn bi was to be presented the next day before the police commissioner; before I left, I called Maulana Mohammed Miyan, a well-known writer and activist in the Jamiat office to say that Husn bi's statement should be recorded only after her child was in her arms. But that didn't happen. Tormented by a mother's love for her missing child, Husn bi said that she wanted to go back to the policeman—and this was the statement recorded. She is still with that man, despite all my efforts to get her out.[14]

Indeed, Kidwai's record is a searing critique of the negligence of the police, the courts and government officials, as well as the general public:

[13] Kidwai, *In Freedom's Shade*, 154–55.
[14] Kidwai, *In Freedom's Shade*, 156–57.

> In general, the police and the administration were callous. Not one government official was suspended for a single day. What I could not comprehend was how the government expected to run an administration relying on the abilities of such sinners? How could those that worked against the interests of justice be trusted to impose laws on others?
>
> As for the general public, many people were led astray or were simply uneducated—straws whipped any which way the wind blew. However, they were individuals and ultimately responsible for their own deeds. But those courts, magistrates, policemen, officers were not—when the guardians of the nation and arbiters of its nationhood placed their hand in blessing on the heads of sinners, when they became their accomplices and accessories, then where would the doers of justice come from, and who could be called a criminal?[15]

As the social workers threw themselves into the rescue operation and raised questions about the role of the police, Kidwai reports greater obstruction by the officials, whom she says were to 'somehow implicate the activists in some case and arrest them, or at least defame them as criminals'.[16] Dealings between the East Punjab Liaison Agency in charge of recovery operations and the Steering Committee of the Recovery Operation, of which Mridula Sarabhai was a member, suggest constant friction. The minutes of a meeting of the Steering Committee for the recovery operation stand witness to this inherent conflict between Sarabhai's social workers and the agency. Women social workers were not allowed to go out alone in search of abducted women:

> The Steering Committee requested the C.L.O. to cancel his instructions to the DLOs that the women workers are not to go out alone in the districts. If a woman worker desired to go out alone, there should be no restriction on her movement. If, however, she wants the D.L.O. to accompany her, then it is a matter of mutual adjustment. (as quoted in Singh 1998)[17]

[15] Ibid., 158–59.

[16] Ibid., 152–53.

[17] Kirpal Singh, 'Partition and Women' Abstracts of Sikh Studies (June 1999).

Rescue Rather than Recovery

Although I hope to have shown that there is no reason to assume an alliance of intentions between the social workers and the patriarchal state—indeed, there is ample evidence for the opposing contention—there can also be no gainsaying the fact that as time went by, certainly beyond 1949, Mridula Sarabhai and the social workers' will to rescue became hostage to recovery encoded in the letter of law. As the excesses of forcible repatriation increased in number, both Kamlabehn Patel and Anis Kidwai increasingly offered up the explanation that this was not a law of their own making and that they were only implementing what the two governments had agreed upon. Unable to implement rescue, outdone by the alliances between the abductors and the administrators of the recovery operation, less and less convinced by the modes and universal applicability of recovery, both Kidwai and Patel take the blame for the activist's failure to bring relief:[18]

> The activists had to reassure the women, support them, build trust, and gently try to turn their hearts towards accepting the idea of return. But I'm sorry to report that we were all unequipped, incompetent. We lacked the right spirit, which had to be of the order of Christian missionaries. None of us had any understanding of psychology, nor did we try to gain it. We would just parrot the few catchphrases that were habitually used in such circumstances, and when they proved ineffectual (as they often did), we would berate the girls. (p. 142)

> The girls would bring with them grief-laden hearts and disturbed minds. There was no one here to vent one's feelings on, no one to unburden one's heart to, nothing to do. Besides aimlessly skipping around all day, bickering and weeping over their misfortune, these girls had nothing else to occupy them. As I had no formal connection with the camp, I went infrequently. Whenever I went though, I was advised at the reception itself to not speak too much to them. Rude girls, they always mouthed obscenities, I was told. I would take a silent round of the camp and return.

[18] Kidwai, *In Freedom's Shade*.

> This treatment, I believe, had an adverse effect on the girls. They could not vent the fever in their hearts and their disaffection only mounted. No one comforted them, or gave them hope, their just due as humans. Even a straw is a source of support to one who is drowning but this straw too was not in their grasp. None of them was told what lay ahead. Those whose relatives came could go away happily (as many did), but there were also scores of others who were bundled off screaming and cursing to Pakistan, without any promise of light at the end of the tunnel. (p. 161)

However, the problem was in fact, not of the activists' alone. There are many indications in the writings of both Kidwai and Mridula Sarabhai that the networks of women's solidarity that criss-crossed the camps took them by surprise. Because of the moral position that both Sarabhai and Kidwai take on matters of family (but not of honour or community), the empathy with which they relate to the fears of women cannot extend to solidarity. In the 27 July 1948 article, Sarabhai is unable to respond to the incarcerated women's refusal to leave the camp with a critique of the institution of marriage, which implicitly is not unlike that of abduction.[19]

[19] In fact, this analogy is made explicitly in the annual Parliamentary debates on the renewal of the Abducted Persons Recovery and Restoration Act. In 1952, the representative from Mysore, Shri C.G.K. Reddy observes:

> It is not as if it is only due to partition that this strange and most unfortunate relationship has come into play in this country or in the world. There are other occasions—in our country specially—when even though solemnised and respectable, marriages start off with a relationship almost akin to that between an abducted woman and another man. Are we not aware, Sir, that many of our girls are forced against their consent to marry men whom they thoroughly dislike? Are we not aware that even a few years of this remarkable companionship which more or less is thrust upon them—after five years, after some children are born, it is not possible for us to separate them?

If recovery operations were to continue, if 'social workers' were allowed to separate women from their families against their will, he argues, the very notion of family would be at stake. We would be led to 'the logical conclusion of trying to separate men and women of the same religion living here,

In one such camp, Sarabhai recounts a confrontation with a group of dissenting young girls:

> A young girl took the floor and argued out their case. 'You say abduction is immoral and so you are trying to save us. Well, now it is too late. One marries only once. Willingly or by force, we are now married. What are you going to do to us? Ask us to get married again? Is that not immoral? What happened to our relatives when we were abducted? Where were they? They tell you that they are eagerly waiting for us. No, you do not know our society. Life will be hell for us! Some of our nearest relatives are here living as converts. We can't leave them and go away.[20]

Although Sarabhai manages to persuade this lot, others were less amenable. More generally, even for those who left willingly, farewells would be a spectacle:

> Leave-taking was also a problem. It is said to be usual with women to cry when bidding farewell to someone but never have we known such hysterical outbursts as at these camps. the outgoing women and those remaining behind, saying goodbye to each other, raise such a tumult of grief that it draws the attention of the whole area, and the outsiders, not knowing what was going on, might easily suppose that violence and force was being applied to the women in the camp. In this way a big crowd is apt to collect outside and its sympathy with the women would be obvious. Only elaborate police bundobast saves the situation.[21]

The pathos of this situation in which the women who have nowhere to go tug at those who do, and the welter of grief that spills over do not leave Sarabhai unmoved as the rest of the article shows; however, she has nothing concrete to offer these women beyond the acceptance that they are driven by fear of the future, of losing their children, the reception they get, and of public

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living in this country for years together, whose beginnings were as unfortunate as these beginnings have been'.

[20] Mridula Sarabhai, 'The Recovery of Abducted Women'. *Hindustan Times*, 27 July (1948).

[21] Ibid.

opinion, and shame at the loss of honour, a fear embedded in them by the police recovery squads, novice social workers and camp managers. Having been deceived so often and having had to face so many 'bogus rescue friends', these women have lost all faith in human goodwill.

Kidwai too, at least so close to the Partition, is both defensive and moral:[22]

> Both men and women want children. To perpetuate family and race, both need a new human that springs from them. For this, a woman bears all the trouble. To agree to this union on the promise made by a pair of love-filled eyes is in her nature. If there is no companion, she will make do with the memory of one but if reflecting on the past is horrifying, how will she bear this great burden alone?
>
> While there is no doubt that birthing, rearing, loving a child is a woman's natural proclivity, it is still a huge burden—one that she has never had to bear alone. Indeed, if such an intolerable situation is foisted upon her, she hands it to someone else and skips town. Many abducted girls were no different; often, almost as soon as they arrived, they said, 'Send these children off to their fathers. We don't want them.' No doubt that behind these words lay fear of society and shame at their unwed status, but the way they spoke did not indicate that an abiding love underlay it. They would wrap their arms around the child, weep, and push him at us, 'Give him away, I can't keep him. Or you take him. He will survive, and when he grows up, he will meet me.'
>
> I remember those two young girls, one seventeen and the other barely fourteen. The older one had been bought by two men in partnership and been the object of their joint amusement. The younger one had been taken two years earlier, when she was twelve. She sat beside me a silent question mark, her petrified eyes asking of me and every other human—who am I? She had no words left, no ambition in her heart, no vigour in her limbs, no obstinacy of adolescence, no loveliness of youth. Can my readers

[22] Shortly after the Partition, in around 1953, Kidwai herself established a home for women rendered destitute by the 'Partition disturbances'.

> tell me what transgression we committed in bringing these two back? Would leaving them there not have been a sin?
>
> But such girls were merely a handful of the many I met. How could we have executed the desires of these teenagers, when their parents were still alive? No law would permit us. Besides, in light of past events and our milieu, what other option did we have? Should we have instead tried to erase these crimes? If we did so, this bad habit would only grow and, instead of preying on the other community, dishonour its own.
>
> In fact, hasn't this ill already taken root in our society? Scores of abducted girls, all Hindus, continue to be brought to us from the railway station, where they were sold into prostitution. The camps also frequently witnessed incidents where one man shamelessly made away with another's daughter. It was our duty—as much as it was that of the government and political leaders—to end this situation quickly.

Having managed to get the two Dominions to act against abduction by making reference to the claims of family, Sarabhai was unable to move beyond, or at the very least, question the bounds of the law:

> … Once I had to interrogate a Hindu woman who had made a statement in court … that she was a willing party and wanted to stay where she was. We were alone. I was facing a girl hardly in her teens. Her expression was full of sorrow; there was a haunted look in her eyes. … she asked a few questions: Why did we want her? Were we interested only in her or others too? What about her izzat? How would her family react? Would they take her back.… I drove home the point by asking her that how, if no one had registered her name with us, we could have found our way to her.… Still she hesitated. Her mother and two nephews had been taken away but had not been separated and were kept together by the same family in a distant district. It was in order to save them that she had agreed to this life of 'shame'.
>
> ... She warned me that if she was asked to state what she wished to do in front of the Pakistan authorities or the Muslim relatives, she would say exactly what she had said in the court. If they were to find out that she was eager to go and went willingly, and we on

> our part failed to rescue her mothers and nephews, then the latter would have to face a life of hell. Even though I had informed her otherwise, she was sure that her relatives were dead, except these three, and she did not want to lose them also. Moreover, she was by no means sure that we were going to be able to get her back finally. If we failed then her life too would be hell.… But if by force of law we took her back, she would have no objection!
>
> I was in a dilemma. She was in law not a minor but a full grown adult. What was to be done? The Pakistan authorities did their best to persuade her to go with me. But she did not budge. Should coercion not be used in a case like this?[23]
>
> A series of such experiences has convinced us, field workers of India as well as Pakistan that a recovered abducted woman is not in a normal state of mind. In treating such cases the usual code of human rights cannot be applied nor can time factor be considered. The wish of the women concerned should not be given undue weight. Their statements are almost false, or at least valueless.[24]

Statements like these by Sarabhai have usually been indexed as the reason why the outcomes of the recovery operation were as cruel to women as they were, and the fact that many such remarks were usually couched within a general argument that decisions about repatriation should not be made blindly following a general rule, and must instead be made case by case, has had little effect on conclusions about Sarabhai's authoritarian pig-headedness. Some feminist writers have argued for the need for a distinction between Sarabhai and other more empathetic social workers such as Kamlabai Patel and Anis Kidwai: For example, Menon and Bhasin[25] suggest that while other social workers were caught in an 'ambivalent' and 'increasingly troubled' relationship with the government, Sarabhai's proximity to Gandhi and Nehru invested her with authority, 'minus political accountability, that

[23] Mridula Sarabhai, 'Abducted Women: Typical Problem Cases'. *Hindustan Times*, 27 July (1948).

[24] Mridula Sarabhai, 'The Recovery of Abducted Women'. *Hindustan Times*, 27 July (1948).

[25] Menon and Bhasin, 'Recovery, Rupture, Resistance: Indian State and Abduction of Women During Partition'.

she brought into full play on the issue of recovery, which operation bore her stamp as much as it did that of the government's'.

This focus on Sarabhai's persona and ideological rigidity—however factual this may be—might allow us to fix the blame, but is in no way explanatory as to why the social workers' efforts floundered in the way they did. After all, even given Sarabhai's notorious truculence and brusqueness, she remained an inspirational figure for the social workers of her time. In the closing section, I would like to contend that the failure of the social workers to build a movement was not at a personal level for either the benign or authoritarian social workers but derived fundamentally from the political moment that these women were located in and their appreciation of women's rights as citizens.

The Long Road to Citizenship

With the benefit of hindsight and our experiences of the many decades of the Indian women's movements, one could always of course expect that they would have learnt to work *with* the abducted women to frame an alternative agenda for a radically different set of demands, all of which would essentially boil down to a guarantee of civil rights *outside* the framework of the family. Such an alternative agenda would have demanded not only a reconfiguration of the social workers' class alliances and ideals of (in) discipline, it would also have required the creation of resources for an interrogation of the nature of the family. While the Partition's pornographic violence created the resource for a critique of religion and community, there were perhaps no comparable ones available for the family.

Rather than asking of the personalities of social workers of the abducted women period why they did not transform empathy into solidarity as easily as we do today—most spectacularly with the Manipuri women's protests against AFSPA, and on a routine basis every day—I think that the proper question is what it was at that political moment that rendered this impossible. My contention is that this impediment lay in the relationship that women

such as Kidwai and Sarabhai, at the moment of the birth of the nation, had to the notion of citizen.

The sociologist Sylvia Walby[26] has noted that in most societies, 'women have a different relationship to citizenship than men', where citizenship is defined as having three elements—the civil, political and the social:

> The civil element is composed of the rights necessary for individual freedom—liberty of the person, freedom of speech and thought and faith, the right to own property and to conclude valid contracts, and the right to justice…. By the political element … [is meant] … the right to participate in the exercise of political power, as a member of a body invested with political authority or as an elector of the members of such a body.… By the social element … [is meant] … the whole range from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilised being according to the standards prevailing in the society.[27]

Although Marshall has argued that in liberal democracies, these three elements have been placed in a historical trajectory of development, by which civil rights are the first to appear, followed by political rights and lastly the social, Walby points out that across the world, the history of women's acquisition of these rights is substantially different. Women in Britain before 1928 did not acquire civil rights—such as the right to person or justice, embodied in the right to be free of sexual coercion by husbands—in fact, 'for first world women political citizenship is typically achieved before civil citizenship, the reverse of the order for men.' In other countries, Walby argues, 'citizenship did not arrive at one moment for all people', and in the order instantiated—particularly for many third world women, as political citizenship came well in advance of civil and social citizenship.

[26] S. Walby, *Theorizing Patriarchy* (Cambridge: Oxford, 1990); *Gender Transformations* (London: Routledge, 1997).

[27] T.H. Marshall, *Citizenship and Social Class* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1950).

Walby[28] goes on to argue that in many areas of the globe, the acquisition of political citizenship has created the conditions for a transformation of the basic nature of patriarchy itself—from a private patriarchy to a public one. In her theorising, these two forms of patriarchy differ at many levels: While private patriarchy is based upon household production, with the patriarch controlling women individually and directly in the home, public patriarchy is based on structures other than the household (which may still remain an important site). While in private patriarchy, the exploitation of women in the household is maintained by their non-admission into the public sphere, in public patriarchy, the exploitation of women takes place at all levels, but women are not excluded from any. This access itself creates the space for struggles against subordination both in the home and outside, and for the rights of civil and social citizenship. In other words, public patriarchy forms the edifice upon which the access of civil and social citizenship rights can be erected, as it is only public patriarchy that is ever powerful enough an opponent against private patriarchy.

Returning to Sarabhai and the social workers and using Walby's arguments, at the cusp of the Partition, movement beyond the letter of the law was well-nigh impossible, as to reject the state and the public would have resulted in a denial of the one weapon handed to them to challenge private patriarchy. While the social workers' optimistic assertions of how 'every citizen is needed by India and Pakistan to help each build up a model state'[29] (and of how 'the women in captivity have a brilliant future ahead of them')[30] must have rung false even contemporaneously, these lies also paved way for the utterance of other truths directed at the outer rims of private patriarchy—religion and community.

> Not one person in both Dominions will refrain from vehemently denouncing what has happened but before the might of anti-social

[28] Walby, *Theorizing Patriarchy*; *Gender Transformations*.
[29] Sarabhai 'Recovery of Captive Women'.
[30] Ibid.

> elements, how many are there who have had the strength openly to resist them and to curb their activities? How many have dared to assist in freeing a woman from captivity or to stand by the converted minorities to stay in their homes as followers of their original faith?[31]

More than sixty years on, while it is absolutely necessary for us to critique the failures of the social workers in producing a women's movement, this critique has to be one from within. Even today, the Indian women's movement chooses public patriarchy as the one with whom to wrestle and wrest rights from. More assured than Kidwai and Sarabhai, we know who we are fighting with—it's still patriarchy, so what if its public—and with the gains of civil rights that political citizenship has brought us, solidarity is the form that our struggles take. Today, if we are overtaken by dread over the present scenario, it is because the familiar target of our battles is itself in a state of flux, as the Khap panchayats and campaigns of Love Jihad are determined to violently undo the limited gains that have been won and to once again reinstate the power of private patriarchy. Our invocation of the Constitution and existing laws does not therefore legitimise public patriarchy but the achievements of civil and political liberties that we have won from it. It is in this context that we must see Sarabhai, Kidwai and other social workers as one of our own—women who cast the first stones at a spectre that still looms before us all.

[31] Ibid.

10

The Rhetoric of Violence

Cultures of Affect in Resistant Nationalism and the 1947 Partition

Sukeshi Kamra

To speak of the Partition as a rhetorical 'moment' of our history might appear to be, at first, a gesture that is disrespecting of the devastating violence with which it is indelibly marked. Rhetoric—usually defined as language that aims to persuade but which is much more profoundly language in its social and political dimension[1]—is an inextricable part of the scene of violence here, as elsewhere. In fact, one could say that the Partition, practically synonymous with violence at the time, since violence was the most insurmountable of 'facts', was framed by competing rhetorics—all of them claiming the 'right' reading of the event. On the one hand, and most visibly, political leaders and the press employed vocabularies that were ultimately derivative, of colonial discourses, to put distance between themselves and the signs of barbarism. In this view, Partition violence was inexplicable,

[1] To approach language as rhetoric and (all) communication as rhetorical is to acknowledge that no language and utterance is value free and to locate it within the realm of semiotics, and as such, to acknowledge that it is part of social life.

requiring metaphors of madness, disease and contagion to signal its incommensurability while automatically retaining the space of sanity and reason for the observing public and political leaders.[2] On the other hand, hyper-visible at the time was the rhetoric of a different sort of othering, to which the first was a reaction, at least in part; it emanated from areas most afflicted by and producing violence—full of invective, emotional distress, hatred, tropes of pollution and purity, and so on. Interestingly, we know as much, if not more, of this rhetoric of extreme othering from the response and violent refusals it provoked in the press and literature written soon after, as we have recorded examples of this rhetoric.[3]

[2] See Sukeshi Kamra, *Bearing Witness: Partition, Independence, End of the Raj* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2002), Chapter 1 for a discussion of the representation of the Partition violence in the press and leadership. An interesting way to think of this determination of the state, to stamp the Partition with its own reading, outlawing all others, is to see it as our witnessing of an archive in the making. In *Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault suggests archives are not spaces or collections of material so much as they are a system which mandates what can and cannot be said ('the law of what can be said') [quoted in, Ann Stoler, 'Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance: On the Content in the Form,' in *Archives, Documentation and Institutions of Social Memory*, eds. Francis X. Blouin and William G. Rosenberg (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2006), 269] and specify the rules which determine what can and cannot be said.

[3] Interestingly, testimonials in which survivors state they cannot explain why entire villages went on killing sprees do not make the link between rhetoric and violence part of their statement (see Kamra, *Bearing Witness*, 127 for examples). But we know that there was a frenzied response to rumours or accounts of brutal violence enacted by the 'other' side. Thus, rhetoric is deeply implicated in the cycle of violence which drew in entire communities. This connection, not in its most subtle forms, mind you, was, however, very clear to the press and leaders who commented daily on the inflammatory rhetoric of what was called the communal press. The *Bombay Sentinel* editorial of 23 September 1947 commented:

> One of the potent mischief makers has been certain irresponsible communal newspapers, which, in display and presentation of news allowed their prejudices to run riot. Not content with this, they gave vent to their communal feelings in writing editorials, which were of a highly inflammatory character.

In this essay, I am primarily concerned with the hyper-visible language of violence,[4] which is still most widely engaged in the Partition literature written by survivors, a number of whom were displaced by the process of the partitioning of Punjab and Bengal. The fact that rhetorical excess and physical violence informed one another in the months of extensive violence, in profound ways, is something much Partition literature has noted. In one of many powerful fictional statements on the tear in the social fabric, of much of India, Bhisham Sahni shows the rhetorical violence by which the othering worked in 1947. In *Tamas*, perpetrators embolden themselves by engaging in sloganeering, labelling the other 'kafir'[5] or 'Muslas',[6] turning religious phrases of invocation, such as 'Allah-o-Akbar' and 'Jo Bole So Nihal Sat Sri Akal'[7] into a war cry, and rationalising violence against the other as retaliation while hypnotically chanting 'blood for blood'.[8] The scene offers a classic example of mob behaviour. In 'Munasib Karawai', Sadat Hasan Manto offers readers a view of a different kind of rhetoric, not rage and frenzy but its opposite—a shockingly clinical indifference. Reduced by hunger and unable to bear the uncertainty—of knowing whether they will be killed by their captors or not—fugitives, this being the only marker of their identity, ask to be killed. The reduction of the empowered community of captors (identified as Jains) to the inhuman at the very moment at which they are most powerful is captured in the verbal exchange, on which the short prose piece focuses. Confronted by the surrender of the desperate fugitives, the Jains dispassionately respond to the plea with: 'Killing is a sin in our

[4] Of course, there was less public but as influential contributions to the rhetorical face of the Partition, including administrative reportage, which showed significant stresses and strains between a factual register, of accounts, and the miasmic quagmire of civilian rhetorical spaces. See Kamra, *Bearing Witness*, 155–63 for a discussion of government reports of 1947.

[5] Bhisham Sahni, *Tamas,* trans. Jai Ratan (Delhi: Penguin India, 1974), 168.

[6] Ibid., 170.

[7] Ibid., 171.

[8] Ibid., 172.

religion'.[9] We are lured into believing the fugitives will be spared, if only for a split second. Of course, this split second magnifies the atrocity of the act that follows. The terse narratorial comment is indicated only in the emphasis placed on the language chosen by the perpetrators to name the act of violence: 'They were Jains. And they handed over the fugitive couple to the people of another mohalla for "appropriate action"'.[10] If the characters in *Tamas* find logic in cheap religious sentiment, the characters in Manto's vignette espouse a logic that delights in squaring religious injunction with (living out) the fantasy of possessing absolute power, which the moment has made available to them.

What both texts struggle to complicate, in very different ways, is the relationship between language and action. They betray a keen awareness that language, of othering, produces the other. What both show is the production of collective affective states in conditions of civil war and their emergence as devastating social facts. This is to say, what both texts capture is the fact that over the liminal period of the Partition, emotions acquired new collective definitions. In fact, you could say that it is in the affective culture of the Partition, captured in so much Partition literature, that we witness the devastating toll of competing definitions that identity took. On the one hand, there were sedimented practices within which identity was a negotiated practice, grounded in, and by, the concept of neighbourliness (from which conflict was not exempt). On the other, there was a sudden reduction of identity to the political (Pakistani and Indian), grounded in and by the concept of a political entity, the nation state. The resulting panic and fear produced its own effects, of which violence was surely the most devastating. Along with a sudden and devastating incertitude and ambivalence about identity, what was thrown into question was the very 'knowability of the world', as Elaine Scarry has put it, since, as she has argued, knowability

[9] Mushirul Hasan, *India Partitioned: The Other Face of Freedom,* vol. 1 (New Delhi: Roli Books, 1995), 94–95.

[10] Ibid.

depends on 'its [the world's] susceptibility to representation'.[11] The Partition experience was nothing if not a failure of meaning, making representation a challenge. This is perhaps best captured in Manto's 'Toba Tek Singh' and nowhere better than in the following narratorial representation (construction really) of the confusion in the minds of the inmates of lunatic asylums (as they were then called) upon being informed that they too were subject to the new definitions of national identity:

> [T]hey did not know a thing about its actual location [Pakistan] 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?[12]

This brilliant comment on the inherent fiction of boundaries, and its very devastating effects, is also an observation on the gap between reality and meaning, history and discourse.

It is this, our own encounter with the modern, social uncanny (where the familiar is discovered to be at once familiar and terrifyingly strange, as the political violently invades, shatters and in general turns the personal inside out) that remains unresolved. My aim here is to offer a context for understanding the Partition's rhetorical abyss. If we can say that the language of disease, naturalised by centuries of colonial rule for establishing civilisational distance between the native and the European, was an all too familiar vocabulary and all too available to the Indian political class in 1947, thus ensuring that there would be a reproduction of the logic of empire as and when they employed this imperial rhetoric to frame the Partition violence, can we not extend

[11] Elaine Scarry, *Resisting Representation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 3.

[12] Sa'adat Hasan Manto, 'Toba Tek Singh,' in *Translating Partition*, ed. Ravikant and Tarun K. Saint, trans. M. Asaduddin (New Delhi: Katha, 2001), 63–72.

the same consideration to the rhetoric of violence and public emotional upheaval that defined the Partition? The question to ask would be one of the presence, role and function of emotions in colonial India and of the connection, if any, between such a past, which was a recent past in 1947, and the Partition.

The story of colonial subjugation, at the moment in which it began to be theorised as such in Indian public culture, is quite profoundly written in the print-based public culture of affect, which had a significant public presence by the 1870s. The periodical press, which was at the core of print culture in post-1870s British India, functioned as a public forum and language for thinking about and sharing the emotional impact of subjugation. In its earliest forms, the literature of popular nationalism which developed in its pages was replete with negative themes, emotions and rhetorics. The presence of negatively themed 'emotional discourse' provoked the government of Bengal (or provided it with an excuse) to initiate the first law suit against the Indian press under Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code.[13] In the story of rhetorical nationalism, the central tension, I think, is of the displacement of this culture, developed over the decades of amorphous nationalism, by a much more positive and disciplined form of nationalism that acquired a Gandhian shape starting in the 1920s. Negative themes and rhetoric, directed at colonialism, did continue to animate revolutionary nationalism, but the latter (and hence its modes of propaganda) did not have the force of Gandhian nationalism and its themes. There is a connection to be drawn, I think, between the negatively themed affective discourse that builds in early nationalism, and loses ground to Gandhian nationalism of non-violence, and the emergence of negative rhetoric and affective structures in 1947. The connection is not

[13] Lila Abu-Lugodh and Catherine Lutz have used the term 'emotional discourse[s]' to describe discourse that 'seems to have some affective content or effect' (Lila Abu-Lugodh and Catherine A. Lutz, ed., 'Introduction: Emotion, Discourse, and the Politics of Everyday Life,' in *Language and the Politics of Emotion* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 10.

a matter of shared themes or vocabularies but shared structures of feeling.

What does it mean to say that there was a public affective life, which gave popular nationalism its first taste of contestation and formed the ground of political counter-memory? First, affect—the dimension of expression which signifies reactions, to the everyday and to the extraordinary—which may appear to be a biological category has been claimed, by anthropologists such as Lila Abu-Lugodh, as a social discourse. Emotions are, Abu-Lugodh and Catherine Lutz write, 'embodied discourse[s]'.[14] An approach which aims to demonstrate that the discourse of emotions has force, and brings about political change, is most closely associated with Raymond Williams. In *Marxism and Literature*,[15] Williams proposes that feeling can be said to have structure and is critical to the dialectical process of history. In an attempt to describe and legitimate the ways in which practical consciousness works as a shaping influence in history, he makes the following case: 'Structures of feeling', which he says are a category synonymous with 'structures of experience', designate the world of lived reality as distinct from the realm of 'formally held and systematic beliefs'[16] with the important caveat that the latter cannot be regarded as something entirely separate from the former. As he sees it, structures of feeling, characterised by what he describes as 'specifically affective elements of consciousness and relationships',[17] are evidence of the centrality of affect to thought and thus, to collective action. Given the fact that structures of feeling are discerned in, are part of, practical consciousness, this was Williams' attempt to make visible the ways in which the arenas of informal and unsystematised social interactions and exchanges, of ideas, politics and so on, are a place of influence and change.

[14] Ibid., 13.

[15] Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977).

[16] Ibid., 132.

[17] Ibid.

Williams' definition and location of the affective in the world of the social and historical, and for this reason subject to the same contestations, internal contradictions and paradoxes as other discourses, are key to the argument I will make: that the Indian public's historicising of emotions in early unorganised nationalism and giving of public emotions, inseparable from thought, a historical location belongs to the category Williams identifies as 'structures of feeling'. This is to say, the very public 'presencing' of colonial rule as negative states of feeling that are produced, it is repeatedly claimed, by the form of rule in place produced a distinct 'structure of feeling.' The complex web of relations between politics, language and emotion that 'structures of feeling' describe and the centrality of this set of relations to the history of nationalist India are important to understand if we wish to further understand how (negative) emotions came to be so much a part of the everyday life of nationalising India and to have so much power as well as legitimacy.

There were two, simultaneous, processes in place in the era of early nationalism that were entangled and that produced a public culture of dissent. Rapid developments in the print and press industries were one. Colonial rule, especially with the rapid inroads made into print technology starting in the 1860s by Indians,[18] was met with a continuous public expression and exchange of negative states of emotional experience that were claimed to be historically produced and provoked (not symptomatic of an irrational people, as the Anglo Indian press and culture—including the government—continued to represent it). The second was the deliberate slippage by which affect, a defining

[18] See the following for the development of the Indian press industry: Swaminathan Natarajan, *A History of the Press in India* (London: Asia Publishing House, 1962), 49. Chandrika Kaul, *Reporting the Raj: The British Press and India, c. 1880–1922* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 101. Gerald Barrier, *Banned: Controversial Literature and Political Control in British India 1907–1947* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1974), 9. Jitendra Nath Basu, *Romance of Indian Journalism* (Calcutta: Calcutta University Press, 1979), 218.

characteristic of the feudal discourse of loyalty, was incorporated into the (Indian) colonial law on sedition. Thus, mastery of 'affective knowledge',[19] which was already a key mechanism of rule of early colonialism,[20] was enshrined in law when Section 124A was introduced, in 1870, into the Indian Penal Code. The statute declared (native) affect to be the proper concern of the law. Specifically, the language by which seditious libel was enshrined in law made disloyalty a matter of 'disaffection' (not seditious libel) while the normative category of (native) loyalty was thus automatically turned into a cognate of the term 'affection'. The relevant clause, before the 1898 amendment, read: 'Whoever by words, either spoken or intended to be read, or by signs, or by visible representation, or otherwise, excites, or attempts to excite, feelings of disaffection to the Government established by law in British India….'[21] In the simplified scheme mapped by the statute, expression which manifested an absence of affection on the part

[19] Christopher Bayly cited in Stoler, 'Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance,' 273.

[20] Ann Stoler too has remarked on affect as a technology of rule in British India. In 'Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance', she refers to and expresses agreement with Christopher Bayly's claim that, in her words, 'the mastery of "affective knowledge" was an early concern of the British colonial state' ('Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance, 273) but suggests this use of the affective to maintain rule was not transient. It was, she writes, 'at the core of political rationality in its late colonial form' (ibid.).

[21] John D. Mayne, *The Criminal Law of India* (Madras: Higginbotham, 1896). As I have mentioned in *The Indian Periodical Press*, when the section was amended, the word 'feelings' was removed to the explanation. The relevant sentence read: 'Whoever by words, either spoken or written or by signs or by visible representation, or otherwise, brings or attempts to bring into hatred or contempt, or excites or attempts to excite disaffection….' (G.K. Roy, *Laws Relating to Press and Sedition* (Simla: Station, 1915), 17–18). *Explanation 1* read: 'The expression "disaffection" includes disloyalty and all feelings of enmity' (ibid., p. 18). As I see it, the explanation only reinforced the ambiguity of the key word in the statute, 'disaffection'. And the term 'disaffection' was not replaced with a term of law. See Sukeshi Kamra, *The Indian Periodical Press and the Production of Nationalist Rhetoric* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 92 for a discussion of the amended law.

of the colonised for the government was disloyalty-in-action. This view of the statute was of course the most conservative but it was the one that dominated in the legal courtroom in the precedent setting cases of 1891 and 1897.[22]

As we might expect, the Indian press tactically manoeuvred through the vague language of the clause by embedding lengthy and detailed critiques of the government in spectacular professions of loyalty. The tactical behaviour made for fundamentally paradoxical texts, especially when critique drew on the notion that the government was a 'foreign' one simultaneously expressing loyalty to the crown.[23] At the same time, one cannot discount the possibility that ascribing to the colonised a uniformly negative affective life, and seeking to convince themselves and others that colonial rule was the cause, was more than purely instrumental. Such an ascription was also a difficult act of public acknowledgement—of subjugation and the humiliation that is the condition of the subjugated. Here, I can only offer a couple of instances from this complicated history. These will, I hope, indicate that the rhetoric of negativity was profoundly an Indian experience, particularly in the decades of early amorphous

[22] See Kamra, *The Indian Periodical Press*, 87–98 for a discussion of Section 124A.

[23] A classic example (which does not invoke the notion of foreign rule but clearly assumes it) is the following which appeared in the 11 July 1891 issue of the *Bangavasi*, on the eve of its trial (which makes the act of defiance much more noteworthy). I cite from the extract which was included in the Bengal Native Newspaper Report.

> We have not amongst us disloyal writers and speakers, or seditious newspapers like those that flourished during the French Revolution. Our detractors must therefore admit that we are only partially and secretly disloyal. And then if we are not really disloyal, it is extremely impolitic to allow us to be called disloyal. (11 July 1892, Bengal Native Newspaper Report, week ending 18 July 1891, para. no. 50)

The claim of loyalty is made through a denial of disloyalty, a clever use of the double negative surely. The text conveys the message of resistance and refusal, of constituted authority, even as it protests and proclaims loyalty.

nationalism, in which theorising of colonialism as exploitative rule was an overwhelming public urge.

Consider the history of circulation and substance of a patriotic pamphlet of 1886. Published in the Amrita Bazar Patrika on the 8th of October 1886, a few years before the first use of the law on disaffection, the pamphlet invites readers to participate in this 'patriot's cry of sorrow ending with an expression of hope, over the present lamentable condition of our country'. The pamphlet itself opens with a poem, titled 'The Star in the East; or Bengal National League', the first stanza of which declares mourning to be apposite—the only appropriate political emotion given the conditions of rule in place in India:

> Robed in mourning, crowned with ashes,
>
> Night-enshrouded, India weeps,
>
> Rolls the storm, the lightning flashes,
>
> Still the nation heedless sleeps.

The text lays claim to the illocutionary: It is a lament as much as it describes lament—powerfully visualised in and by the powerful anthropomorphic image of India/woman in mourning for the dead. Equally intriguing is the fact that while mourning is the stated subject of the stanza, rage, as even more apposite, is communicated in veiled metaphor. I am referring here to the third line of the stanza and its interpretative ambiguity—on the one hand, it can be read as an echo of the romantic sublime and as such is a statement of justified rage; on the other hand, it can be read as a more culturally specific image of the (very welcome and not threatening) force associated with the Indian monsoons. (Indeed, the claim that cultural mistranslation was at work in the government's reading of Indian literary texts was routinely part of the defence's case in the legal courtroom of sedition trials). This text circulated widely in 1886, and was cited or republished in at least 20 Indian newspapers and maybe more.[24] They were

[24] See Kamra, *The Indian Periodical Press*, 181 for the history of its circulation.

such affectively rich texts that were first brought into the legal courtroom, where they gained even more notoriety and legitimacy precisely because they were subject to the law.

A different, and equally typical, text of early nationalist India shares, nonetheless, the project of establishing affect, as much as critique, as the proper response of the colonised. A stanza of a lengthy poem, published over several issues of the *Native Opinion* in late 1875, is a tongue-in-cheek instruction, to readers, about law in the colony:

> The 'Reign of Law' thus seems a 'Rain of Laws!'
>
> Since laws like tides and waves incessant rise!
>
> The good old time of former rule now draws
>
> Our minds to Mintos, Bentinck, Lawrence wise![25]

As much as the stanza thematises colonial law, which is deprived of legitimacy through its equation with the unpredictable world of natural phenomena, it is in itself a suggested reaction to the fact, about colonial law, that it purports to uncover. The reaction promotes amusement and irony as also proper affective states of experience under colonial rule. I would imagine that both of these distancing techniques acted to shield readers from a stark realisation of their own abjection, at a time when there was no movement in place and no formulated position on dissent. (In passing, I would like to note that in the press we see this push and pull of differing desires and approaches to the emergent narrative of colonial rule as a hindrance and a problematic. While some texts describe self-loathing and abjection as apt affective states of the colonised, others choose irony and situate the problem squarely within the contradictions of imperialism).

My final example is taken from pamphlets intended to turn the 10th of May (my example is of 1910) into a memorial of 1857, which the colonial government had intended, in 1907, to turn into an imperial memorial of the same year. Judging by the

[25] 'A Native's Appeal', *Native Opinion*, 14 November 1875, stanza 46.

Native Newspaper Reports of 1907, it provoked much outrage in the Indian press and was not forgotten in the years that followed. The pamphlet was entitled 'May 10, 1910: In Memoriam' and was proscribed by the government.[26] The pamphlet opened with a verse which proclaimed that a revolutionary present, of social and political freedom, was within reach.

> The world is moving Freedom's way
>
> And ripening with its sorrow
>
> Take heart, who bear the cross to-day
>
> Will wear the crown tomorrow[27]

Different as these examples are in style and subject, and drawn from different times, all are exercises in persuasion. The message appears remarkably consistent, suggesting that a culture of citation, imitation and ventriloquism was in place, not of individuality. These three representative texts share the purpose of interrogating imperial narratives of colonialism, which appears to be the invisible 'text' against which the counter-narrative, that each develops of colonialism, arranges itself. They also share the purpose of encouraging and producing vocabularies of emotional discourse. This simple fact tells me that such insistence on emotional discourse, as the proper response to a system of abuse (which the innumerable analyses that populated the pages of newspapers and periodicals aimed to prove was the unpleasant truth), was as critical to the production of a popular nationalist culture as was critique. Thus, in such texts, the effort to educate the public about the workings of colonial rule is at the very least balanced by the struggle to carve a space for the expression and sharing of emotionally discomfiting states of experience.

The circulation of such texts must have persuaded the readership that a collective affective economy was part and parcel of the colonial fabric, and the only appropriate response to

[26] Proscribed Literature Series, British Library Shelfmark: EPP 1/34.
[27] Ibid.

an exploitative rule and, thus, properly a part of the colonial public sphere. The evidence lies in the widespread production of vocabularies of despair, loss, fear and self-hatred in the Indian periodical press and pamphleteering cultures, much of which was reported in the Native Newspaper Reports and some of which was proscribed. This process, by which the language of political sentiment came to be overly visible in public culture, was harnessed to a political cause. This is to say, affect was part of the fragile counter-historicising in which popular nationalism had its beginnings and as such was of unquestionable value. If jail experience was themed in nationalist propaganda literature, starting in 1907 or so, as the crucible of nationalism,[28] in the early days, affect and its expression held a similar meaning: Imitating and inventing negative rhetoric, as much as circulating it, was equivalent to a public profession of patriotism.

What happened to all of the powerfully negative emotions that quite literally inundated the public culture of British India after 1870 and produced the first public vocabularies of nationalism? As I have mentioned earlier, and at the risk of being overly general, I think it is fair to say that there was a shift in the nationalist structure of feeling when Gandhian nationalism dictated the themes and rhetoric of public nationalist culture.[29] Sisir Kumar Das' study of Indian literatures of the colonial period, which traces the emergence of the Gandhian hero and themes in

[28] See Kamra, *The Indian Periodical Press*, Chapter 4 for a discussion of the jail as symbolic space, one which transforms prisoners from the stigmatized to patriots.

[29] The banned literature collection provides much proof of the positive emotional engagement that was part and parcel of the self-described moderate pamphleteering and press cultures of the 1920s–40s. See Graham Shaw and Mary Lloyd, ed., *Publications Proscribed by the Government of India: A Catalogue of the Collections in the India Office Library and Records and the Department of Oriental Manuscripts and Printed Books* (London: British Library, British Library Reference Division, 1985). There are titles which describe Gandhi as 'paramatma' and put a positive spin on political crime by describing the jail as a sacred space, associated with Gandhi as much as with god Krishna.

literature written in Indian languages such as Telegu, Assamese, Hindi, as well as English between 1917 and 1947, makes a similar case.[30] He identifies the following constructive Gandhian projects and notions of identity as typical themes in this literature: '… propagation of ideals such as rural upliftment, eradication of untouchability, Khādi and Charkhā, women's liberation, and … ahimsā'.[31] However, I would argue, the early irruption of negative rhetoric remains as trace in Gandhian literary and cultural nationalism in the very fact that emotional discourse was a critical part of Gandhian propaganda literature (which was also seized and destroyed by the government). It informs much popular resistance literature on spaces such as the jail, for instance.[32] But the deeply negative themes of early nationalist rhetoric—rage, destruction, revenge, self-hatred—appear to have receded in the face of the more positive themes of constructive mass campaigns, and the very privileged notion of individual and collective identity posited in the Gandhian concepts of ahimsa and *satyagraha*.[33] You could say that Gandhian nationalism—which in popular culture produced positive self-image and transformed suffering into sacrifice and pain willingly undertaken, and so on—effected

[30] Sisir Kumar Das, *A History of Indian Literature, 1911–56, Struggle for Freedom: Triumph and Tragedy* (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1995), 75.

[31] Ibid., 74.

[32] Of course, Gandhian rhetoric had, as precedent, the rhetoric preferred by the self-described moderate press. In an article which appeared on the 30th of March 1907, and was reported in the Bengal Native Newspaper Report for the week ending 6 April 1907 (para. no. 25), the *Bharat Mitra* asked readers to imagine the jail as a place of privilege. I cite one sentence from the extract which appeared in the Bengal Native Newspaper Report: 'When our rulers send us to jail for speaking the plain truth, we should accept it as a special grace of God and consider the handcuffs on the wrists of our innocent countrymen as golden ornaments.'

[33] *Satyagraha* in Gandhian philosophy and politics is a capacious term. It encompasses an individual principle, of non-violence, at one end and political struggle for rights, grounded in the principle of non-violence, at the other. In the context of British India, it is generally considered to be synonymous with the civil disobedience movement of Gandhian nationalism.

a foreclosure of darker forms that showed a distinct preference for using humiliation, self-hatred and so on in their own act of persuasion, of the public. Of course, such an emphasis on negative themes, which imagined the past as a humiliating one and flirted with notions of revolutionary violence, encouraged rage and was part and parcel of revolutionary rhetoric in nationalist India well into the 1940s.[34]

Arguably, the 1947 Partition is the next time we witness such a forceful overwhelming of public culture with negatively themed emotional discourse. The conditions on the ground were, of course, significantly different. While in early nationalist India, the press needed to convince the public that the structures of rule, law and order, and the sense of normality were more properly recognised as a fiction and that the reality was closer to the (Freudian)[35] uncanny,[36] in 1947 India the rupture, also described in the press in terms reminiscent of the uncanny, was plainly in view. It is etched in the memory of survivors who relive scenes such as the following, which was given in testimony:

> my sister came, and sat in front of my father, and I stood there right next to my father, clutching on to his kurta as children do, I was clinging to him … but when my father swung the kirpan … perhaps some doubt or fear came in his mind, or perhaps the kirpan got caught in her dupatta … no one can say … it was such a frightening, such a fearful scene. Then my sister, with her own hand she removed her plait and put it forward … and my father with his own hands moved her dupatta aside and then he swung

[34] Sisir Kumar Das offers insight into the competition between rhetorics in the literature of the nationalist movement, especially between Gandhian and revolutionary nationalisms once Gandhian rhetoric begins to dominate the scene. See Chapter 3 of his *A History of Indian Literature*.

[35] Sigmund Freud, 'The Uncanny,' in *Psychological Writings and Letters*, ed. Sander L. Gilman, trans. Alix Strachey (New York: Continuum, 1995), 120–53.

[36] For a mention of texts of the radical press in which the aim is to convince the public that colonial rule is an unhousing of the collective and individual personality (such that the familiar is rendered unrecognizable), see Kamra, *The Indian Periodical Press*, Chapter 4.

> the kirpan and her head and neck rolled off and fell … there … far away (ellipses in the original).[37]

There could not be a more devastating comment on the horrific and unfathomable scenes of transgression the Partition produced. Here, the home is turned into an eerie replaying of the violence outside the home where the object of violence is not the other but the self. Thus, self and other, as well as the boundaries separating them, are entirely thrown into doubt.

Is it possible that the receding of negative themes and rhetorics in the face of the powerful Gandhian rhetoric of non-violence resurfaced in 1947? The answer that such a question prompts is similar to answers encountered in much post-colonial thinking, which has documented how the logic of empire is reproduced in post-colonial nation states. If in colonial India a collective public identity grounded in negative affective states develops a self–other dichotomy in which the other is colonialism, at the symbolically overburdened moment of political self-determination this deeply valued and embedded trope turns in on itself. If othering in early nationalism was quite consciously harnessed to a cause and produced a thin definition of nationalism, in 1947 the othering turned inward and was a fracturing of this very history, of built community. The language of negation which earlier fixed the coloniser in the place of the other was a familiar vocabulary, available for retooling and refunctioning. Possibly, it is this sense of a transgression of an originary moment of community which was painstakingly built over decades that informs the silence that prevails over the fact that Partition violence was part and parcel of a civil war. And as such it requires a civilian negotiation of this past.

By shifting the emphasis slightly, to ask whether these two moments in time, with their negative affective cultures, can be described as social traumas, I hope to show what is missing from the post-history of 1947. We are used to thinking of the

[37] Seminar (New Delhi, India), 1994, vol. 420.

1947 Partition as sociocultural and even linguistic trauma. Can we describe the negatively themed emotional discourse of early nationalism also as social trauma?

The view that social, or collective, trauma is qualitatively and structurally different from individual trauma is usefully invoked here. Jeffrey Alexander, for instance, has suggested that the move from individual to collective trauma involves the will, on the part of a community, to make trauma historical. He writes, 'To transform individual suffering into collective trauma is cultural work. It depends upon speeches, rituals, marches, meetings, plays, movies and storytelling of all kinds.'[38] Of the difference between individual and collective trauma, he writes, 'Individual victims react to traumatic injury with repression and denial, gaining relief when these psychological defenses are overcome, bringing pain into consciousness so they are able to mourn,'[39] whereas collective trauma 'is a matter of symbolic construction and framing, of creating stories and characters, and moving along from there'.[40] In short, 'shared trauma depends on collective processes of cultural interpretation'.[41]

Alexander's approach to collective trauma is similar to mine in my reading of the affective culture that builds in the periodical press after 1870, but particularly that between 1870 and 1910 or so. My sense of this early nationalist culture is that it is quite self-consciously engaged in the cultural work of producing suffering as collective trauma as much as it is in experiencing colonialism as trauma. That is, the texts are profoundly performative even as they engage in storytelling about colonial rule from the Indian perspective.[42] The evidence is gathered, ironically enough, in the

[38] Jeffrey C. Alexander, *Trauma: A Social Theory* (Cambridge, UK and Malden, US: Polity Press), 3–4.

[39] Ibid., 4.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid.

[42] I have explored this at length in *The Indian Periodical Press*. See Chapters 2 and 4 in particular for a discussion of the topics in the Indian press of the 1870s and early 1900s by which colonial rule is read primarily

Native Newspaper Reports. Here, extracts drawn from articles, most in translation, describe a public culture that defiantly reclaims the public sphere and floods it with the pent-up fury we might associate with subjugation. It is here, you might say, that we find the missing Fanonian moment of our history. At the same time, social trauma is discovered, by the Indian public, to have a use—to provoke the government into criminalising dissent (as the press insisted the use of law was properly interpreted). Negatively themed rhetoric thus, over time, is transformed into a narrative of colonial rule as lack and political freedom as utopia of a transformation of lack into fulfilment.

Arguably, in 1947 India, and in the following decade, there was little appetite for engaging thoughtfully with the shocking levels of violence and the forms of othering that erupted with ferocity. If anything, and as many historians (most famously Gyanendra Pandey)[43] have pointed out, the attempt to other Partition violence itself has been in place ever since.[44] This has meant a denial of national trauma even though the signs are all around us, announced, for instance, in Mushirul Hasan's assertion, in 1998, that 'the fiction written about that cataclysmic event preserved "essential human values"'.[45] It would appear that the first casualty, of the long silence that has prevailed in South Asia (which is in the process of being challenged, no doubt because of the critical position taken by historians such as Hasan), has been 'essential human values'; literature and art have been the place in which the devastating details of Partition violence have been engaged, not merely represented (although this last,

to make one point only—that colonial rule is injurious at every level, from economic policy (leading to famines) to the bureaucracy to institutions (such as law and even municipal government) and so on.

[43] Gyanendra Pandey, *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism and History in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

[44] See Gyanendra Pandey, *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism and History in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

[45] Hasan is citing Krishna Sobti. Mushirul Hasan, 'Memories of a Fragmented Nation: Rewriting the Histories of India's Partition,' *Edinburgh Papers in South Asian Studies* 8 (1998): 19. www.cas.ed.ac.uk

a witness to the horrific forms which violence took, is in itself very important). Indeed, they are the (only?) place in which the silence of complicit majorities, and of subsequently complicit generations, has also been faced.

Some years ago, I made an attempt to think of the Partition in the context of its post-history, by tracing the lineage of an idea whose first text was Manto's 'Toba Tek Singh'. I chose Gulzar's poem of the same name and Joginder Paul's *Sleepwalkers*,[46] both of which seem to me to invoke the Manto short story as intertext and by this very act of intertextuality speak of the Partition's post-history, of indifference.[47] More specifically, I felt then, and do now, that the two later texts require us to ask the following interrelated questions: Why is the Partition not historicised the way, say, colonialism (implicit in our extensive interest in nationalist India) is and what would a history/narrative in which the Partition was confronted look like? All three draw on the uncanny to articulate the absence of the Partition as a problematic in the national, collective consciousness. The equally profound question that Gulzar and Paul's texts pose is of the present, in which they confront the very force of erasure—of the past of the Partition—and the difficulty of reversing it. There is little solace offered in these texts: Both situate the historical present of which they write in an extended liminal present that reaches back to 1947. In Gulzar's poem, the present is an arrested moment in time, in which the only possible resolution is of the disappearance of the marginalised poetic figure (marginalised by his interest in the Partition) into the originary moment and landscape of the asylum of the 1947 Partition. The poem opens with a narrator who invokes Bishan Singh (aka Toba Tek Singh), as the oracle of the Partition, and hopes to get some answers from him. It concludes

[46] Joginder Paul, *Sleepwalkers*, trans. Sunil Trivedi and Sukrita Paul Kumar, ed. Keerti Ramachandra (Delhi: Katha, 1998).

[47] See Sukeshi Kamra, 'Partition and Post-Partition Acts of Fiction: Narrating Painful Histories,' in *Partitioned Lives: Narratives of Home, Displacement, and Resettlement*, ed. Anjali Gera Roy and Nandi Bhatia (Delhi: Dorling Kindersley), 99–115.

with the narrator disappearing into the oracular past, where he and Bishan Singh converse in the private language of the Partition, which Manto had made famous in his short story. The last lines of the poem are: 'Toba Tek Singh's Bishan beckons me often to say: "Opad di gud di moong dal di laltain di Hindustan te Pakistan di dur fitey munh"'.[48] In *Sleepwalkers*, insanity and the spectral economy of Karachi, which houses a little Lucknow in its midst and is bomb-ridden, are balanced against one another and it is the latter that destroys the former. In all three, insanity is a sanctuary from the horrors of history, whose violence litters the very streets.

In its 14 August 2012 issue, the *Express Tribune* published an article by Yaqoob Khan Bangash. Titled 'The Ghosts of Partition', the article, somewhat resignedly, reminds readers that the Partition has yet to emerge as a problematic in (Pakistani) public culture. Bangash writes:

> Every country's Independence Day is a defining moment in its history. The events of the day are the culmination of years of struggle and the day hearkens to a new beginning. The same is true for Pakistan, except that we have yet to move on from our '1947' moment. This is not because historians keep writing about it but that in our collective memory, we still have to reconcile with the events of 1947 and move forward.

The same can be said of India. Clearly, we are still far from having worked through this past. Surely one reason the Partition remains an uneasy past is the fear that assimilating it would mean, or could mean, a rupture of cherished notions that anchor national identity, the lynchpin of which is 'independence', that symbolically charged triumphal moment to which the Partition is uneasily tethered. The conundrum is best articulated by Theodor Adorno in 'The Meaning of Working Through the Past'. He writes, in the context of the German past of National Socialism:

[48] Gulzar, 'Toba Tek Singh,' in *Translating Partition,* ed. Ravikant and Tarun K. Saint, trans. Anisur Rahman (New Delhi: Katha, 2001).

> One wants to break free of the past: rightly, because nothing at all can live in its shadow and because there will be no end to terror as long as guilt and violence are repaid with guilt and violence; wrongly, because the past that one would like to evade is still very much alive.[49]

[49] Theodor W. Adorno, 'The Meaning of Working Through the Past,' in *Critical Models. Interventions and Catchwords*, translated by Henry W. Pickford. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005, 89).

11

Looking Within, Looking Without

Pratima Murthy

The isolation of psychiatry from other fields of medicine was an issue that seemed to pervade professional and scientific thought in psychiatry in the period around the Independence of India. Burlingame,[1] writing in one of the earliest issues of the *Indian Journal of Neurology and Psychiatry*, stressed, 'I repeat, I believe that the field of psychiatry is that of a medical specialty dedicated to the understanding of psychiatric disturbances, the causes of psychiatric disturbances, the physical accompaniments of psychic disturbance and the psychological and physical treatments of these disturbances.' Lt Col. Bardhan[2] summarised the preoccupation of modern science with 'electrical technology, embryology, metabolic disorder, virus diseases, clinical services and industrial medicine'. Nagendra Nath De,[3] the president of

[1] C.C. Burlingame, 'Good Psychiatry is Good Medicine,' *Indian Journal of Neurology and Psychiatry* 1, no. 3 (1949): 147–49. (Excerpt from the *Journal of the Indian Medical Association*.)

[2] P.N. Bardhan, 'Progress of Medicine During World War II,' *Indian Journal of Neurology and Psychiatry* 1, no. 3 (1949): 149–52.

[3] N.N. De, 'Mental Health Service in India,' *Indian Journal of Neurology and Psychiatry* 1, no. 3 (1949): 104–12.

the Indian Psychiatric Society, in a five-part serialised article, quoting Horst (1948), said, 'In the West, the accent was on the individual. Personal freedom and self-determinism were emphasized to such an extent that the individual was left isolated and lonely'. De concluded that research so far had been limited to the psychological aspects of diseases without any heed to their biological aspects. These ideas probably spelt the direction of writing in subsequent decades which shifted the accent of enquiry from the experiential to the experimental, from the subjective 'feeling' to empirical validation and from the qualitative experience to statistical measure. This urge to be seen to embrace the new 'biomedicine', and thus sit at the high table of science and progress, came at the cost of neglect of psycho-social realities that confronted the newly formed states. The person with mental illness somewhere along the line became construed as a person bereft of 'personhood', no longer approached as a thinking, feeling person affected by the milieu and life conditions. The preoccupation with decrying 'individualism' overshadowed the need to examine the personal impact of trauma and indeed the collective experience of trauma, which are known to not merely influence thought, feeling and action of the individuals experiencing them but have an intergenerational impact as well. It is on this background that we would attempt to discuss the various ideas that have been portrayed in writings around the Partition in this book by Indian authors from diverse backgrounds. The book is divided across a few broad themes. The initial chapters describe some actual events such as the partitioning of mental hospitals and its impact on clinical services in northern India as well as health care planning for the subcontinent. The ensuing chapters focus on the psychological processes that were identified in the creation of the 'other', as a prelude to the actual vivisection, and wider implications of social psychology and politics. The third broad theme looks at the Partition through a literary lens. The next theme provides a gender perspective on the experience of the Partition. Later, the gaze shifts to an analysis of the role of affect and violence on civic society and the political process.

The Partitioning of Madness

In their article titled 'Partitioning of the Mental Hospitals and Transfer of the Mentally Ill Persons', Kala and Sarin, both practising psychiatrists and second-generation 'experiencers' of the Partition, begin with the chilling analysis of the Urdu writer Ismat Chughtai on how it was not only the country that was split, but bodies and minds divided, families separated and the bonds of relationship in tatters. This chapter invokes Manto's terrifying chronicle of the damned, which locates them in the middle of madness and crime. The protagonist of his story is Bishan Singh, who is in the Lahore Mental Hospital. His village is Toba Tek Singh which is partitioned to Pakistan. Bishan Singh finally dies in a no man's land. The authors ask: 'Should his seemingly nonsensical mutterings be construed in psychiatric phenomenology as neologisms, or as the desperate cry of a person denied his identity and personhood?'

The authors' discovery of the mental hospital reports of both the British Empire and post-Independence India suggests that the 'chilling fictional metaphor for madness' that engulfed society in 1947, so vividly discussed in Toba Tek Singh, and most often perceived as satire, was actually based on a historical fact. Around the time of Independence, mental hospitals were full, custodial care being the mainstay of treatment. This has continued to be much the same even five decades later.[4] At the time of the Partition, there were 20-odd mental hospitals, mostly inherited by India, three by West Pakistan at Lahore, Hyderabad and Peshawar, while East Pakistan had no mental hospital. After the Partition, a juvenile offenders' reformatory in Amritsar had to be converted to a mental hospital in 1948, to serve the needs of 'Indian' patients. The Lahore Mental Hospital, started in 1900, had 1,300 patients, more than half of whom were Hindus and Sikhs. The simmering unrest of the independence movement does not seem to have had any major impact within the mental

[4] National Human Rights Commission, *Quality Assurance in Mental Health* (New Delhi: NHRC, 1998).

hospital. Though sporadic incidents of violence relating to death are reported in 1945, they are attributed to accidents, and according to the annual report of the Punjab Mental Hospital of 1947,[5] no communal incidents were reported and attempts were made to protect the non-Muslims by allowing them to work only within the precincts and thus shield them from the 'disturbances' in Lahore. Shortly after, many of the non-Muslim staff left for East Punjab and were replaced by clerks with a lack of experience of the 'complicated routine' of the large mental hospital. The hospital had to deal with budget cuts and disgruntled employees, but seemed to be holding together.

In 1949, a recording in the *Civil and Military Gazette* authorised the release of all Hindu and Sikh mentally ill patients deemed fit since 15 August 1948. The order goes on to say that this is to reserve sufficient accommodation for Lahore patients, and that the total number at one time should not exceed 100 (later 150). This, the authors point out, raises several issues: How was fitness determined; why were people still in the mental hospital if they had been fit for over a year? Of course, even more questions emerge! The exchange of the mentally ill occurred, just as the exchange of assets of the subcontinent, not only the material wealth, but also 'the government officers and clerks with chairs, pens and inkpots were distributed, just like the spoils of war'. It can be said that the mentally ill were also divided and distributed, just like the other assets and liabilities, or as the authors question, why was there a delay of 3 years and 4 months'? Was this yet another reflection of the relative lower rungs that the mentally ill occupied in society?

Whatever the explanation, the grim aftermath cannot be allowed to be forgotten. Of the 650 mentally ill persons in the Lahore Mental Hospital at the time of Independence, only 450 were transferred in 1950. The number of patients sent across

[5] *Annual Report on the Working of the Punjab Mental Hospital, Lahore, for the Year 1947* (West Punjab: Government Printing, 1949). (Printed by the Superintendent.)

the border to Pakistan appears to be 233, but the actual number that reached their destination is not clear. Why were so many patients 'lost' in transit? Were they also victims of the brutality of violence? Was it wilful neglect? Or was it that they were simply outside the periphery of vision that their safe passage and their care was of no great consequence? What were the findings of the Punjab government in the report requested by Mangat Rai, Sec (H), Punjab dated 22 August 1951?[6] Many of these questions beg answers.

The chapter also explores the turbulent, fractured history of the Delhi hospital and its rather incredible stories. Apathy and administrative delays appear to have been an integral part of the setting up of the Delhi hospital, and the same theme reverberates during the subsequent merger, and separation, with the Lahore hospital.

Considering the total lack of information on the impact of the Partition on persons with mental illness caught in the tsunamic wave of the Partition, this chapter at least begins to scratch at the surface of the issue of the partitioning of persons with mental illness. The only legitimate status that these persons got during the Partition was on the basis of religious divide. Their personhood, their experiences, their sorrows and, for the survivors, their resilience and subsequent survival are all stories that must be told, heard and learnt from.

Different Worlds, Recurrent Themes

The metaphor of madness was used time and again in the lead-up to the Partition and its aftermath, as Jain discusses, and politicians often referred to the behaviour of the populace, and even some leaders, as temporary madness. However, the psychological trauma of the Partition, unlike that of the Holocaust, never

[6] *Annual Report on the Working of Punjab Mental Hospital, Amritsar, for the year 1951.*

got similar academic attention in the West, and the intelligentsia in India were too small to really comprehend and comment on the events. Routine medical services also bore the brunt of the Partition. Mental hospitals, jails and orphanages were also partitioned over several years, along with the medical services. The sense of chaos and brutality did not spare the medical services, and hospitals and medical staff were often the target of anger and mob frenzy. Insensitivity to the needs of persons with mental illness continues in the present day. In a sardonic twist, a welfare organisation in Guwahati housed homeless mentally ill in an erstwhile refugee camp, which in clumsy bureaucratese was known as a permanent liability area. Such an insensitive reference to mad persons as a 'permanent liability' is commonplace.

It was keenly felt that the psychological scars would take a long time to heal, and this came with a warning of other darker forces that would try and prevent any healing. These themes are also explored by Moushumi Basu who takes the discussion of partition beyond the borders of the Indian subcontinent to compare processes across the world that demonstrate the ways states legitimise their position towards individual and cultural ideas that are perceived as threats to the state. Basu begins by fast-forwarding from the communal violence of the Partition to modern times, to the Muzaffarnagar communal riots in 2013 between Muslims and Jat Hindus. For many of the elders who had witnessed the 1947 Partition, Muzaffarnagar in 2013 marked the resurgence of the very ideas that had resulted in the division of British India into two sovereign states, India and Pakistan, in 1947. At the centre, Basu says, lay a latent fear of the other, built around the perception of irreconcilable 'differences' and the fear of annihilation, made real by actual acts of violence of one community against other.

The fact of religion being the basis of two separate states during the Partition is in itself inadequate for nation building, says Basu, citing the example of the call for self-determination by the people of East Pakistan, culminating in the formation of Bangladesh in 1971. Issues of majority–minority, insider–outsider, and us or

them, Basu expands, are not peculiar to only India and Pakistan. The twentieth century has been privy to many such partitions. Basu makes the larger argument regarding partitions by focusing on four cases across the world—ethno-nationalism and genocides in Yugoslavia in the 1990s and Darfur in 2003; immigration tensions in Europe; and the state's handling of the Maoist insurgency in India.

The phenomenon of partition, according to her, can take a variety of forms, some subtler than others. The underlying fundamental premise is the idea of difference between people that permeates both private and public spaces, leading to the construction of divides. This defies the accepted norms and attributes of democratic citizenship based on principles of equality and non-discrimination. The construction of a concrete wall in Bhagana, Haryana, in 2012 on the basis of caste, the ghettoisation that occurs in the aftermath of communal riots and Love Jihad campaigns, she says, are all examples of the everyday phenomena of partition. Even in urban metropolis in the recent day, minorities face much greater distress in day-to-day living.[7] Basu makes an important point about shared stories being integral to human interaction, belongingness and the construction of identities. It is important to recognise that such stories need not necessarily be divisive or contentious. However, in the modern day, it seems that the state, through the powers delegated to it, seems to ultimately decide what ideas can be considered virtuous, permissible and hence legitimate in the context of a given society.

The anti-immigration debates in Europe are also seen in a similar light. Taking the contemporary scenario of the 'war against terror', she illustrates that not just acts of terrorism but even the propagation of ideas and thoughts thought to be aiding or abetting such acts of violence are now considered 'unlawful' and warrant criminal prosecution in many countries, including

[7] J. Agarwal et al., 'Socio-demographic Correlates of Subjective Well-being in Urban India,' *Social Indicators Research* (2011). doi 10.1007/s11205-010-9669-5

India. In the last decade, terrorist violence in different parts of the world has transformed countries into a permanent state of alert. This has extended to state censorship of political views in many countries. Basu emphasises that scholars have drawn a distinction between state security, that is, military, political, economic and environmental threats to sovereignty, and societal security which relates to threats to a cultural identity.

This essay also focuses on the role of psychiatry and psychology and advances in these fields in the expression of state ideology. The abuse of psychiatry in the execution of the Nazi program is the best known example of this. Basu emphasises that the two main ideologues of Serbian nationalism, Radovan Karadzic and Jovan Raskovic, were both psychiatrists who used their professional skills to serve their political beliefs by 'building up a hysteria that helped create and deepen the wedge between communities'. Basu also quotes the example of the CIA in the United States that uses psychiatrists in extracting confessions through the use of sodium pentothal and hypnosis. A similar example is cited from India, where it was attempted to use 'brain mapping' to address extremism.

Health professionals including psychiatrists are vulnerable like other citizens to political ideologies. Basu raises a scenario where when personal beliefs dominate, the use of professional knowledge that could otherwise be employed for treatment and research of the mentally ill can be extended for the purposes of torture. This is best exemplified in the work of Strous who indicates that of the estimated 600–700 psychiatrists practising in Germany at that time, a large proportion was personally responsible for putting to death approximately 280,000 individuals. However, there were a few who publicly refused to participate in the pogroms.

The partitioning of minds draws some sustenance from the persistent themes used, over history, to imagine the 'other', and then convert that fantasy into reality. These themes were questioned only recently, with the growth of empirical science that led to revolutions in physical medicine and also a gradual

secularisation of the ideas regarding mental illness. However, the cause of mental illness was often seen to be not merely as dysfunction of the brain, but also a result of the interaction between the self, other humans and society, with the illness itself manifesting in one's relationship with others and society. Jain begins by showing the contradictions between the colonial view of the 'native mind' and the general premise of 'modern' human psychology. While modern psychology emphasises self-growth and is derived from liberal, humanistic and secular trends in twentieth century thought, the native mind is construed as being incapable of deep psychological or political thought. The tensions between models of a shared, universal humanism and intensely local, group identity continue to persist. While the overall symptoms and outcomes of mental illness are often seen as being robustly similar in the UK and India, over time, the idea that the 'native' mind is somehow different, and inferior, or at least un-understandable becomes evident. Jain argues that such contradictions occurred in Europe too. Despite the sense of egalitarianism of culture and race, for example, the theories of Darwin and Galton also gave rise to eugenics and social Darwinism. Imperialism transformed itself from the control of the physical world to the control of the world of ideas.

The approach of secular and universal humanism, while ideal for European consciousness, was thought insufficient to provide explanatory models for mental illnesses in non-Western society. This led to the societies themselves being viewed as flawed or primitive, and the fact that they were not psychologically minded for psychotherapies. This, to Jain, represents a reversal to the mid-nineteenth century positions. Language and religion had been used before for the basis of partition elsewhere, for example in Ireland and Palestine, and much of Europe. The trend in pre-independent India was similar. Jain quotes an anonymous author whose work carried a foreword by M.A. Jinnah, who emphasised that the various social behaviours and attitudes of Hindus and Muslims were sufficient to qualify them as separate species of humans. This conflation between the cultural and the biological has often been a cynical ploy to urge a rational 'final solution'.

These ideas were derived from those propagated in Europe, as evidenced by preoccupation of psychological traits as defining Jewishness or Aryan-ness, and later were evident in the Croatian and Serbian view of the other to justify ethnic nationalism.

The horror that social scientists and psychologists felt at the events going around them had been hinted at in the prescient writings of Beni Prasad and others, and was also reflected in the report of Gardner Murphy and Pars Ram on the psychological aftermath of the Partition, on behalf of the UNESCO. Pars Ram observed that it was only in the past two decades that Hindus and Muslims have grown apart socially, and 'many now grew up without meeting the other on a friendly or personal basis and are unlikely to have a common response to a shared hardship'. Murphy emphasises that the indigenous roots of strength, faith and continuity that exist in Indian society would need to be protected and nurtured. He argues for the need for appropriate social engineering so that real life issues are not transformed into prejudices and apprehensions and that there is a need for positive encouragement (shared schools, community spaces, and a shared sense of purpose). Vakeel, writing several years earlier, had warned that the pervasive provincialism needed to be 'replaced by a sense of common destiny' to cure India of its 'political insanity'. This reflects the opinion of Karl Jaspers, the founder of psychopathology, and much of contemporary psychiatry, that all notion of historical consciousness could only develop if we accepted the unity of mankind. The destruction of this in India in the middle of the twentieth century and in the Balkans at the end of the twentieth century were both examples of misapplication of psychological ideas as a logical continuum to the 'hyper-locality', as exemplified by the psychological construction of Croatian-Serbian positions by psychiatrists-turned-leaders in these areas of ethnic conflict.

The tensions between group identity and individual identity appear to be the drivers of policy and politics rather than universalism and humaneness. This has major implications for medicine, in general, and psychiatry, in particular. Defining the 'other'

as a madman, or the madman as the 'other', has a literal and a rhetorical resonance, and the subsequent sections focus on these.

Partition as Madness

In his essay on the Partition as a metaphor of madness, Tarun Saint points out that historical trauma is experienced in different ways by perpetrators, victims, bystanders and witnesses, across the borders of class and community. Similar themes are identified by Hina Nandrajog in her account. Violence and rape are also represented as metaphors of madness. Several other metaphors of madness are used: 'madness swept over the lands in increasing crescendo'; 'Gandhi's admonition not to 'counter madness with madness' and many variations on the theme; the infectious nature of hatred by alluding to 'outbreaks' of rioting; a need for 'the psychic contagion to be contained by the application of security measures such as the cordon sanitaire around "inflamed" areas and communities'; collective fines as 'vaccines' against the 'communal virus'. Also, reference is made to the sixth river in the Punjab, 'The River of Hatred', an Urdu short story.

The literary references from both the past and present scattered throughout these essays constantly refer to the 'tired metaphor' of madness. Toba Tek Singh achieves a 'Foucaltian intensity in its interrogation of the madness–sanity binary'. The Urdu short story 'Dera Baba Nanak' describes the experience of the Partition as a sense of feeling 'of being dismembered and scattered in all directions'. The outcome of the lunatic's misdirected choice of path, whether as a result of death at the hands of a mob or re-institutionalisation and likely negligence at the hands of medical authorities who might treat him as someone belonging to the 'other' community, is chilling. Whether such attitudes were also reflected in the 'callous indifference' meted out to patients in mental hospitals in the twenty-first century remains to be explored.

In the story of Ibrahim Masud, even though the transcendental idealism underpinning the denouement of partitions is somewhat predictable, the foregrounding of the possibility of

medical negligence based on religious identification is significant, reminding us again of the situation of mental (as well as other) patients left behind on the wrong side of the border at the time, who may have indeed faced institutional neglect based on such identification on religious grounds. The nameless mentally ill fellow, who was with them, would start screaming 'Don't kill me. I am a Hindu, look!' while loosening his pajama strings.

Although Saint draws primarily from literary references, the narration nevertheless reverberates with notions of the madness of human beings. There have been other oral history narratives[8] making attempts to capture real voices to address the ghosts of the past which continue to haunt current civilisation in numerous ways. Hina Nandrajog traces the overlapping sensitivities in Punjabi and Urdu literary genres, and the many descriptions of psychological trauma, which psychiatrists could identify as illnesses. More importantly, the gap between the literary sensitivity and the medical gaze, thus, becomes even more problematic.

In addition to the private world of the individual, captured vividly in the literary output, the public consciousness was also moulded by the experiences and expressions of public figures like Mahatma Gandhi and the related media coverage. Public debate focused on issues of 'community' and honour, conflated with those of national prestige, which were evoked to handle the emotively charged issue of 'abducted' women and their rehabilitation. These essays highlight the turbulent emotions that individuals and communities experienced.

Revisiting Gandhi

Revisiting Gandhi at the time of the Partition may in some ways help to understand the broad divide that was created between the exultation of Independence and the anguish of the Partition. Sharma and Sabharwal in their essay 'Anger Is a Short Madness' attempt to piece together the one month of September 1947,

[8] D. Chawla, ed., *Home, Uprooted: Oral Histories of India's Partition* (New York: Fordham University, 2014).

using Gandhi's expressed thoughts during his time in Calcutta and New Delhi through research of his speeches and the editorial responses in a number of newspapers. September found Gandhi in Calcutta. Calcutta's troubles were a reflection of the fragmented nature of post-Partition India: convulsed, deeply conflicted, enraged and confused. Since the time that partition was announced, Gandhi had been self-exiled from the centre of power in Delhi, far away from the pomp and pageantry that had marked India's tryst with destiny.

According to the authors, Gandhi's tryst is not publicly broadcast; it is a quieter, more individualistic response to what for him is not a moment of historic triumph, but of deep sadness. His message read out on a day of his silence by Rajkumari Amrit Kaur possibly exemplified it best: 'For me the transfer of millions of Hindus and Sikhs and Muslims is unthinkable. It is wrong … I hope I shall have the courage to stand by it, even though mine might be the solitary voice in this clamour.' The essay describes the reports of police violence to dispel mobs, peace marches to stop hooliganism and Gandhi's attempts to quell the violence in Calcutta. This action replays when he travels to Delhi in September. He visits Shahdara (the future site of the mental hospital, and then a site for particularly intense violence), Daryaganj, Kucha Tarachand, Qutub Road, Paharganj, Sadar Bazar and Pul Methai on the background of incidents of arson and stabbing, imposition of curfew, and riots and listens to nightmarish accounts of dispossessed and scared minorities. The authors state that with the intervening distance of decades, it is almost possible to forget what Gandhi and others encountered at refugee camps, met and heard the accounts, and were sucked into the vortex of violence and its resultant psychosis.

The authors continue to use the metaphor of madness as expressed in the newspaper reports of Gandhi's anguish on the expression of communal intolerance and hatred…. 'Let not future generations say that you lost the sweet bread of freedom because you could not digest it. Remember, that unless you stop this madness, the name of India will be mud in the eyes of the world.' Gandhi referred to the mindless separation of persons purely on

the basis of religion as a suicidal policy. 'To drive every Muslim from India and every Hindu and Sikh from Pakistan would mean war and eternal ruin for the country. If such a suicidal policy was followed in both States it would spell ruin of Islam and Hinduism in Pakistan and Union.'

It is sheer madness, according to Gandhi, to think that 4 crore Muslims could be banished to Pakistan or wiped out, and that some newspapers had actually published articles urging people to either kill or banish all Muslims in India. For him, this is a form of national suicide and a way to actually destroy Hinduism. 'If India fails, Asia dies. India has been aptly called the nursery of many blended cultures and civilizations. Let India remain the hope of all the exploited races of earth whether in Asia, Africa or in any part of world.'

The futility of anger as an emotional response to hurt is yet another idea that Gandhi speaks about. He says to the residents of Delhi, 'I am prepared to understand, anger of refugees whom fate has driven from West Punjab but anger is a son of madness. It can only make matters worse in every way. Retaliation is no remedy.' Taking the analogy of health and disease, the authors liken Gandhi to a physician 'who is increasingly overwhelmed by a new pathology of a form that escapes diagnosis'. At the same time, pathological sadness is evident in Gandhi's psychological angst in the report of September 18, after the Lahore Conference, when there are reports of fresh killings in Pakistan. The attacks on Hindus and Sikhs had been carried out by both Pakistan troops and Muslim mobs. In his prayer speech he says, 'I have no desire to live to see the win of India through fratricide.' 'Depression' is also a word that Gandhi himself uses to describe his malaise in public.

His prayer meetings become a space for personal therapy where he shares his anger, his anguish and his loss of faith in human goodness. Although several physicians have helped him with medical advice, he says that now his only physician is Lord Rama. After the *bhajan* was sung during prayers, Gandhi said: He (the Lord Rama) was the curer of all ills, physical, mental and moral.

The Gender Perspective

The abduction of women, gendered violence, rape and murder were particularly traumatic and symbolic brutalisations of the 'other'. As the bodies of women became a battleground, not enough attention was paid to their state of mind as individuals, rather they were treated as contested objects. Ayesha Kidwai, who has translated Anis Kidwai's moving Urdu memoir of the aftermath of the Partition, begins her article by providing a contemporary context to women's rights, where, despite the recommendations of the Justice Verma Committee, the patriarchal outlook both in society and law is pervasive. Sexual harassment and violence 'have been instrumentalised as the trigger and justification for anti-minority pogroms and the pernicious discourse of "love jihad"'. To further discuss newer contemporary idioms that gender lends to ideologies of communal and caste hatred, Kidwai draws attention to feminist enquiry post-Partition and the 'patriarchal ideology that bound national and community honour to women's bodies and control of their sexuality'. She tries to answer the question of whether women activists or social workers became minions of the patriarchal state, adopting stances that took no cognisance of the feelings of the women victims themselves. In order to do this, she analyses the position of Mridula Sarabhai, as reflected in the latter's writing in *Hindustan Times* during 1948–49 as well as refers to the writing of Anis Kidwai, a close associate of Sarabhai. Kidwai starts from the position that social workers were always on a collision course with social mores, the political class, police and administration and does not seem to prescribe to Das' opinion of 'an alliance between the state and social work as a profession'. While feminist enquiry suggested that the rescue of abducted women was translated into forcible recovery and repatriation, Kidwai discusses, through the writings of Sarabhai and Anis Kidwai, the issues of rescue as well as recovery.

The various experiences of abduction are discussed on the backdrop of the ordinance called Abducted Persons Recovery and Restoration Ordinance, promulgated on 31 January 1949, and subsequently replaced by the Abducted Persons (Recovery

and Restoration) Act of December 1949. The 'recovery operation' of 50,000 Muslim women in India and 33,000 non-Muslim women in Pakistan through the efforts of a contingent of female social workers assisted by the local police resulted in the recovery of only 30,000 women until 1957. The Act, however, brought crimes against women to the centre stage. Kidwai sees the viewing of violence during the Partition as non-criminal and non-justiciable as playing out in contemporary society today during episodes of communal violence.

The stories narrated in this essay are startling and poignant—abducted women as the spoils of war, with the spirited Punjabis outdoing each other in engraving personalised symbols of their victory on their victims, adolescent girls 'whose essence is now only carnal hunger', bastard children on whom the burden of shame has been foisted for all time. From greedy *thanedars* who extorted money to save the women, only to finally 'sell them' out, to highly ranked officials, ministers and rich men who 'kept the women in their own households, or distributed them amongst their dependents and servants, so that in case of an enquiry, they would not be personally involved', victimisation manifested itself in numerous ways during the Partition.

The different postures of some of the 'rescued women' are also eye-openers to the varied responses to the circumstances of victimisation, including fear of rejection, stigma, anger, need for self-preservation and allure of a better life, all of which are not only responses to their prevailing circumstances but also coloured by who they were and the backgrounds from which they came. If some women refused to return to their homes, the response on the need to comprehend such things is illuminating. 'Try to understand their psychological state. Try to see why they refuse to return'. One important and fundamental response is the reality in which societal structures like religion always exclude women, 'after all, what was their religion to them?' The abductors are also typologised by Sarabhai as the 'village town bully', the 'white slave dealer', the 'brothel procurer', the influential protector and the men who are even themselves the victims: 'They have taken away our women. If we now give back these other ones we have,

how shall we fare?' From these writings, Kidwai concludes that there was a patriarchal 'conspiracy' to legitimise abduction. The collusion of the judiciary, government officials and the police is highlighted in the examples of Husn Bi and others. These themes, often with tragic overtones, would echo down the years, in personal accounts[9] and in cinema, right down to the present. While Kidwai cites many examples to contest the assertion that the social workers were in an alliance of intention with the patriarchal state, she also concedes that there are instances when the social workers' will to rescue became hostage to the objective of recovery encoded in the letter of law.

One major failing that is cited is the social workers owning blame for their inability to bring relief: 'We lacked the right spirit, which had to be of the order of Christian missionaries (read perhaps as care and commitment, comment by the commentator). None of us had any understanding of psychology, nor did we try to gain it….' That grief was present, there can be no doubt. That the women needed installation of hope and support and empathy is not in doubt either. The lack of both the skills needed for therapy and the unconditional acceptance that would make it possible, perhaps explained the discomfort that the social workers experienced.

Kidwai returns to modern times and points out that, despite some achievements in terms of civil and political liberties for women, public patriarchy has again manifested itself, and gender-based violence continues its ugly march. In this context, Sarabhai, Kidwai and others were the women who 'cast the first stones' at a spectre that still looms before us all.

Rhetoric in the Times of Partition

Sukeshi Kamra analyses in detail that this heightened and affect-laden rhetoric had, and continues to have, on our times. She

[9] P. Tandon, *Punjabi Century, 1857–1947* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 253.

uses rhetoric as an inextricable part of the scene of violence that defined the Partition. The fact that rhetorical excess and physical violence informed one another in the months of extensive violence, in profound ways, is something that much of the Partition literature has noted. She alludes to various kinds of rhetoric that was evident right from the nineteenth century to that which surrounded independence: the imperial rhetoric which seeks to adopt the language of disease, with an approach of establishing civilisational distance between the *native* and the European; and its mirror, the rhetoric of popularist nationalism. She quotes different examples of nationalistic rhetoric in popular press in the nineteenth and early twentieth century—the pamphlet in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* that invites readers to participate in this 'patriot's cry of sorrow ending with an expression of hope, over the present lamentable condition of our country, powerful anthropomorphic image of India/woman in mourning for the dead, the theme of mourning, juxtaposed with rage'. Different as these examples are in style and subject, and drawn from different times, all are exercises in persuasion. The message appears remarkably consistent, suggesting that a culture of citation, imitation and ventriloquism was in place, not of individuality. She goes on to say that the circulation of such emotive texts must have persuaded the readership that a collective affective economy was part and parcel of the colonial fabric and the only appropriate response to an exploitative rule. Kamra argues that rhetoric of negativity was profoundly an Indian experience, particularly in the decades of early amorphous nationalism, in which theorising of colonialism as exploitative rule was an overwhelming public urge.

She discusses that though early public vocabularies of nationalism gave way to Gandhian nationalism, propagating ideals such as rural upliftment, eradication of untouchability, swadeshi, women's liberation and ahimsa, and emotional discourse was also a critical part of Gandhian propaganda. However, the negative themes of early nationalistic rhetoric—rage, destruction, revenge and self-hatred—appear to have receded in the face of more positive themes and the privileged notion of individual and collective

identity posited in the Gandhian concepts of ahimsa and *satyagraha*. Kamra questions whether the receding of negative themes and rhetoric in the face of Gandhian rhetoric resurfaced in 1947. Whether the othering in early nationalism was turned inward, resulting in a fracturing of this very history of built community. She questions whether the negatively themed emotional discourse of early nationalism be described as social trauma, social or collective trauma being qualitatively and structurally different from individual trauma. She quotes Jeffrey Alexander,[10] who says, '*Individual* victims react to traumatic injury with repression and denial, gaining relief when these psychological defenses are overcome, bringing pain into consciousness so they are able to mourn', whereas *collective* trauma 'is a matter of symbolic construction and framing, of creating stories and characters, and moving along from there.'[11] In short, 'shared trauma depends on collective processes of cultural interpretation'.

Kamra asks why the Partition has not been historicised in the way colonialism has, and alludes to the literary works of Gulzar, Paul and Manto to articulate the absence of the Partition as a problematic in the national, collective consciousness. She asserts that literature and art have been the place in which the devastating details of the Partition violence have been engaged, not merely represented—the only place in which the silence of complicit majorities and of subsequently complicit generations has also been faced. She concludes that one reason the Partition remains an uneasy past is the fear that assimilating it would mean, or could mean, a rupture of cherished notions that anchor national identity, the lynchpin of which is 'Independence', that symbolically charged triumphal moment to which the Partition is uneasily tethered. In essence, this reluctance to confront the Partition reflects a sense of unease, and moral ambiguity, that still smoulders on in our collective sub-consciousness.

[10] Jeffrey C. Alexander, *Trauma: A Social Theory* (Cambridge, UK & Malden, US: Polity Press, 2012).

[11] Ibid.

Looking Within

Historically, the 'madman' was seen as someone outside the pale of human society in many schools of traditional medicine. The insane were almost universally marginalised as people whom the high-born should avoid meeting and avoid giving their daughters in marriage to (there was a relative silence on what happened to mentally ill women!),[12] and even doctors were advised to avoid helping as some of these were not likely to recover and thus bring disrepute to the practitioners.[13] Though madness could occasionally arise from grief, and mythologies were replete with accounts of grief and madness, these were not seen as mirrors to the human experience as such, and even less the society at large.

The secularisation of the mind, and the madman as a symbol of social disorder, was formulated over the last few centuries. As has often been noted, psychiatry has a long past but a short history. This historical process, by implication, places the theories and formulations of psychiatric illness within the shared process of reform and renaissance, and common-sense philosophies. These models have now been shared by almost all societies. Within India, the mental hospital and the madman quickly became a familiar cultural metaphor, from going *Doolaly* (in English/Anglo-Indian slang) to sending someone to the Deolali *paagal-khana* (madhouse) (Deolali, near Bombay was the final staging post for mentally ill people on the way to the United Kingdom) or on board the Number 4 bus (which served the mental hospital in Bangalore) when referring to someone whose opinions and behaviours were beyond the pale! Politicians still resort to score debating points in the legislative bodies by calling their opponents mad or worthy of admission to one of these asylums. The public reports and comments in the press (vernacular and English) had

[12] Weiss, 'History of Psychiatry in India: Towards a Culturally and Historiographically Informed Study of Indigenous Traditions,' *Samiksha* 40, no. 2 (1986): 31–45.

[13] D. Wujastyk, ed., *The Roots of Ayurveda: Selections from Sanskrit Medical Writings* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2003).

accounts of recovered mentally ill. The large number of admissions and discharges from the various asylums implied that the experience of madness had become commonplace, and that some understanding about contemporary ideas about the causes and treatments had percolated through society. 'Madness' could now be used easily as a metaphor, both in its tragic and pejorative connotations. By calling the violence and brutality as 'madness', one could then ignore its treatment (and resolution), much as madmen had been ignored for centuries.

Psychiatry in Europe had, by the twentieth century, also developed ideas of *boufee delirante* or psychogenic psychoses, described as a sudden occurrence of aggression and confusion, often with paranoid ideas and hallucinations. It was initially described to explain brief spells of abnormal behaviour in seemingly normal people faced with unusual stress, who tended to recover almost totally. It was often use as a diagnostic term to many colonised societies, especially in the French colonies. Within India, psychogenic causes of insanity were often looked for, and talked about, as the records of the asylums reveal. A large number of Indians had served in the two world wars in Europe, and when these ideas translated into representations about the Partition, it was a convenient symbolism. However, the deeper interrogation by psychiatry of the personal and social structures that contribute to madness, that relied more on introspective psychology and phenomenology, had just started making an appearance in India. Analysts such as Bose, Satya Nand and Berkeley-Hill, and social psychologists like Beni Prasad, could discuss about nationalism as well as the religious and caste boundaries within India. These viewpoints hardly figured in the 'official' psychiatry of the period. The events of the Partition throw up a myriad of emotions and several complex issues. The mental trauma of individuals who not only underwent immense distress on account of the dislocation and separation but also faced violence of the worst kind is the most obvious. Grief and madness are often used to describe these events. Both are charged words, with many layers of experience and representation. Ironically, in the political and

communal environment, many of these stories of mental anguish were never shared, and sufferers did not receive any professional help to heal.

This reluctance to look inward, for the fear of resurrecting suppressed 'demons', as part of the contemporary discourse in psychology and psychiatry, has had many consequences, far beyond the event is its aftermath. As suggested by Kavita Punjabi,[14] did the 14 million dislocated people of the Partition all lead schizophrenic lives, and submit mutely to the will of politicians, to the regimes of their nation states? Many events all around the world mirror the same mental anguish and illustrate the 'madness' of humankind. The 'us' and 'them' occurs most often on the basis of ethnicity, religion and language. Ideology, dialogue, policy and health care are all influenced by these distinctions. The constant tension between a universal understanding of the psyche and human behaviour and the fragmentation into distinct group identities negates all attempts to have a unified polity, or health care.

So far, psychiatry, in its fervour to be recognised as an empirical science along with other disciplines in medicine, has not applied itself adequately in India to the study of the mind in the context of social turmoil. The situation has not changed much since the time of the Partition. By 1943, although there were already about 100 full-time psychiatrists in India,[15] the preoccupation was on establishing psychiatry as a valid medical discipline and on building up a satisfactory mental health service in India and Pakistan. What resounds in the writing is the silence around the personal experience of the Partition and the emotional aftermath. Should psychiatrists and other mental health professionals not engage in the larger determinants of mental disease and health in both its understanding and its treatment? Does the diagnosis of schizophrenia, for example, make that person 'a schizophrenic' or a 'person' with schizophrenia? Should psychiatric approaches be

[14] K. Punjabi, *Old Maps and New: Legacies of the Partition—A Pakistani Diary* (Kolkata: Seagull, 2005).

[15] E.A. Benett, 'Psychiatry in India and Pakistan,' *Indian Journal of Neurology and Psychiatry* 1, no. 1 (January–March, 1949): 35–42.

atheoretical, focusing only on signs and symptoms, devoid of any personal meaning, or should psychiatry attempt to think of the person with mental illness in terms of their personhood? Would the farmers' suicide be handled by prescribing anti-depressant and sessions of cognitive-behaviour therapy, or by addressing the systemic problems of inequality and poverty? Why are there so few studies of post-traumatic stress disorder following the interminable cycles of violence, and where are the links developed between grief of the victims and the guilt of the perpetrators? Since we do not address the grief, the guilt is conveniently and automatically banished.

The mental anguish in Gandhi's mind around the divisions during the Partition is only amplified in today's polarised world. The anarchy unleashed when 'freedom' and autonomy had been attained is what undoes Gandhi, and one is confronted with an image of a much diminished Gandhi. It is an account of an exile, ironically, at the very moment when 'home' has been legally established. The newspapers reveal that there is a progressive and steady marginalisation of Gandhi from the discourse of the nation, and a state that he himself recognises as depression. Yet, today, when we write or speak or visualise the narrative of the Partition, we rarely speak of Gandhi as also being its victim—a struggling survivor attempting to hold onto the thread of a reality that is fast vanishing. He, too, is like Manto's fictional Toba Tek Singh: a citizen of no country, stateless and permanently in exile.

Psychiatry and Its Partitions

Through the essays in this book, we hope to kindle an insightful examination of the ghosts from the past, which cannot be brushed away or forgotten. The angst, the psychological trauma of displacement, geographically, socially and ideologically, need to be openly discussed for the wounds to heal. Many of those who actually faced the turmoil have passed on, but the questions and transgenerational effects pervade.

The discourse on the psychological effects of the Partition are as relevant in our contemporary world as well.

The practice of psychiatry in India, in its fervour to emerge as a scientific, empirical and universal science, has, in the process, become sterile and devoid of the richness of human experience. Human experience is both universal and, at the same time, highly personalised. The importance of understanding individuals in their personal, social and larger-world contexts in this helping profession has given way to looking for sterile biological explanations for underlying condition, and an enthusiasm to fix the human condition with a 'pill for every ill'. This, in some ways, is a sequestration or partitioning of professional minds.

More questions than answers stare us in the face. Is this turning away of our professional gaze reactionary to the anxiety of not knowing how to deal with people's predicaments, emerging from their personal and collective identities? Is this a callous indifference to people's plights, which must actually be recognised and addressed in psychotherapeutic approaches? Can the discipline of psychiatry understand mental distress and illness through the lens of societal tension and upheaval? Should personal identity and affiliation still regulate and compromise the very nature of our state and country? Can a universal and humanistic approach to the human mind help transcend the borders of discrimination and intolerance that society itself has created?

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