

Responsible Writing of Violence: A Study of Select Partition Stories

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes select Partition stories such as Bhisham Sahni's "Pali," K. S. Duggal's "Pakistan Zindabad," Ishmat Chughtai's "Roots," S.H. Vatsyayan's "The Avenger," and Atin Bandhopadhyay's "Infidel" which realistically portray the cataclysmic times of the Subcontinent in 1947. The paper shows that though the stories depict some chilling scenes, they concentrate more on the psychological impact of violence on the characters and the positive aspects of humanitarian gestures seen during the dismal days in South Asian history. With much tact, the authors approach the subject and document the dreadful events of the Subcontinent's painful past. Also, while dexterously registering the public resistance to the unspeakable horrors of Partition violence, the authors also honestly present their own ethical stance on the events. The article argues that the authors have documented the tragic history in a mature and convincing manner by presenting its balanced and holistic picture by employing an impartial and unbiased perspective. The texts stand as testimonies to the writers' sense of responsibility at recording tragic incidents not only because of their objective and holistic approach but also because of their cautious use of language so that they do not trigger any further violence through their writing.

Key Words: partition violence, ethical response, affirmation of humanity, maturity, objectivity.

The Indo-Pak conflict in the aftermath of the Partition of South Asia in 1947 has drawn the attention of various writers, scholars, and filmmakers to observe, explore, research, and express their views and perspectives on the complicated topic of violence and its representation in art forms. Resorting to different techniques and styles to address the problem for long, if some writers have focused on graphic depiction of bloodshed and death, others have tried to contemplate on the underlying reasons for the horrible deeds and offered their views on the nature of violence and its psychological impacts. In the process of translating the tragedy in fictional forms, writers have either exacerbated the skirmish or depicted the dark moments in South Asian history without any added discord. The wiser group of authors approach the troublesome subject carefully and provide its objective account by tactfully representing the frightful actions. With dexterity, the writers document public resistance as well as their own stance on violent events, awakening the readers' conscience and inspiring them to raise their voice of reason and justice. For instance, while Bhisham Sahni's "Pali," K. S. Duggal's "Pakistan Zindabad," Ishmat Chughtai's "Roots," S.H. Vatsyayan's "The Avenger," and Atin Bandhopadhyay's "Infidel" realistically reveal the chaos of the Subcontinent, they also offer, in

Amitav Ghosh's words, the authors' "civilized willed response"¹ to the mayhem. The texts stand as testimonies to the writers' sense of responsibility at recording tragic incidents because they not only describe events objectively and holistically but also use cautious language so that their writings do not trigger further conflict.

In "The Ghosts of Mrs. Gandhi," Ghosh recounts his experience in New Delhi on October 31, 1984, when Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was assassinated by her Sikh bodyguards. While illustrating the persecution of the minority Sikhs by the majority Hindus, Ghosh also highlights the resistance put up by the mass against the riots seen on the fateful day. Alluding to Dzevad Karahasan's "Literature and War," Ghosh communicates an important idea to the writers that literature can contribute much to the propagation and escalation of chaotic situation. Karahasan explains that aesthetic and heroic literature beautify and glorify warfare or heroes on the battlefield and push forward the cycle of violence ultimately leading to the destruction of society. Hence, instead of creating "a panorama of violence," or reducing it to "a mere spectacle,"² authors must be careful to tame the disturbing event with the inclusion of other details that form a part of it. Ghosh argues that writers should look for "a form—or a style or a voice or a plot – that could accommodate both violence and the civilized willed response to it."³

It is Ghosh's belief that, rather than confine to more exciting physical aspect of violence, writers should pay attention to less attractive subject of peaceful resistance. According to him, human beings instinctively oppose violence and support the victims by "upholding everyday relationships of solidarity."⁴ Ghosh writes, "The truth is that the commonest response to violence is one of repugnance, and that a significant number of people try to oppose it in whatever ways they can."⁵ Ghosh avers that focusing on the dramatic aspect of ferocious act leads merely to its proliferation which must stop. Bringing to his text "the quiet authority of personal witness and firsthand knowledge,"⁶ he provides moving instances of resistance showcased by ordinary civilians such as the passengers shielding the Sikh on a bus, the Sen family sheltering the Bawas, the Hindu cook protecting his Sikh landlords (the Bawas), and a group of women activists daring a mob of wild rioters. Through these acts, he illustrates the pacifist nature of human beings who spontaneously resist blood and brutality.

Ghosh argues that during difficult times of riots and communal conflicts, ordinary people move boldly forward to help the helpless, ignoring the danger involved in the task. By presenting the examples of people (Hindus and Muslims) who risk their lives to protect and hide those who are being targeted (Sikhs),⁷ Ghosh suggests that the altruistic acts of the courageous people

¹ Amitav Ghosh, "The Ghosts of Mrs. Gandhi," 62.

The essay was first published in *The New Yorker* in 1995. The quotations here are from *The Imam and Indian* (2002) which includes the essay as one of its chapters.

² Ghosh, "The Ghosts of Mrs. Gandhi," 60.

³ Ghosh, "The Ghosts of Mrs. Gandhi," 62.

⁴ Lucio De Capitani, "Riots, Crowds and the Collective in Amitav Ghosh's Political Imagination: from *The Shadow Lines* to *Gun Island*," 114.

⁵ Ghosh, "The Ghosts of Mrs. Gandhi," 62.

⁶ David Adler, "In Praise of Amitav Ghosh," 18.

⁷ During Partition violence, people both fought bravely against the members of the "other" community and saved them from immediate danger despite protests and threats from their own

show the invincibility of the core values of mankind and illustrate the concept of “the affirmation of humanity.”⁸ These brave individuals raise themselves above communal or religious considerations and decide to selflessly help the people who are unjustly harmed. They take it upon themselves to correct the situation, as best as they can, and glorify humanity by sheltering and saving the innocent victims.

Emphasizing the presence of goodness alongside evil, Ghosh, in his essay, shows the power of peace and harmony to be stronger than that of anarchy and chaos, and advocates for responsible writing which entails holistic representation of issues and events related with the conflicting parties. He also suggests the writers to record their ethical response to violence as well as that of the public. While Ghosh asserts that the writers should cover the ugly reality or the unpleasant happenings, he also stresses that they must include the attitude of “repugnance” mankind show toward acts of inhuman savagery for he believes that, as peace lovers, men and women hate all kinds of violent acts--riots, war, blood, death, and destruction.

Ghosh wisely suggests the writers to remain neutral toward the warring communities and document the tragic details with caution because “words cost lives”⁹ in incendiary circumstances of large-scale communal conflagration such as the new Delhi riot of 1984 or the Partition holocaust of 1947. Alluding to the Holy books, Ghosh insists that the writers must carefully use their language because “all that happens in [the world], happens in language first.”¹⁰ As he has internalized this fact, he depicts a world of “engagement and attention”¹¹ rather than one that is indifferent to violence and its resultant suffering, and recommends other writers to honestly portray the troubled times in history incorporating both the dreadful and the delightful events, avoiding “aesthetic of indifference.”¹² Through his own writing, Ghosh advocates and illustrates the incorporation of philanthropic activities together with the author’s moral response to the on-going horror. He believes that the inclusion of the anecdotes of resistance in fictional writings will help break the chain of violence.

Unlike some fictional works about the subcontinent’s Partition that apparently prioritize discord and disorder over harmony and peace and re-ignite the flame of violence by their biased writing,¹³ the stories selected here take a more responsible approach to portray the tragedy of 1947. Without showing any favor to one community or nation over the other, the authors

community. Defying the community’s dictates of solidarity and loyalty, Hindus, Muslims, or Sikhs protected a threatened individual belonging to their “enemy” community. Taking great risk, these courageous people also opened the doors of their hearts and homes to those who were uprooted and displaced from their homes and homelands.

⁸ Ghosh, “The Ghosts of Mrs. Gandhi,” 61.

⁹ Ghosh, “The Ghosts of Mrs. Gandhi,” 61.

¹⁰ Ghosh, “The Ghosts of Mrs. Gandhi,” 62.

¹¹ Samir Chopra, “Amitav Ghosh and Dževad Karahasan on ‘An Aesthetic of Indifference,’” (samirchopra.com/2015/09/11/amitav-ghosh-and-dzevad-karahasan).

¹² Ghosh, “The Ghosts of Mrs. Gandhi,” 61.

¹³ Examples are Manohar Malgonkar’s *A Bend in the Ganges* (1964), and Bapsi Sidhwa’s *Cracking India* (1991). While Malgonkar bluntly accuses Gandhi and admires his murderer Godse in his novel, Sidhwa, in hers, elevates Mohammad Ali Jinnah to the heroic heights and reduces Gandhi to the lowly status of a villain.

employ an impartial point of view to depict the painful historical events that affected the lives of millions of citizens--Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs. In a balanced manner, the texts paint a convincing picture of the painful division of united India by including scenes of evil deeds as well as accommodating voices of resistance against them. In addition to enlightened response to violent deeds, the authors make cautious use of words as suggested by Ghosh. Moreover, they create good characters from both sides of the conflicting groups and engage them in serious contemplation or in peaceful conversations to end provocations as well as further viciousness.

"Pali" by Bhisham Sahni¹⁴ offers one of the best examples of responsible writing on Partition violence. "Pali" tells the story of a little Hindu boy of four who is separated from his parents Manohar Lal and Kaushalya when they are moving to India from Pakistan. Muslim Shakur finds the boy, adopts, and keeps him in his house in Pakistan for seven years. When Pali becomes eleven years old, Shakur and his wife Zeba hand over the boy to his Hindu parents with whom he returns to India. Pali endures twice the pain of ritualistic conversion--to Islam and back to Hinduism.

As a responsible writer of violence, Sahni gives an honest account of the Partition without taking sides with any of the conflicting communities—Hindus or Muslims. He favors no one nation over the other and populates his fictional world by good and evil individuals from both sides of the border—India and Pakistan. Despite the antagonism between the two communities, the characters interact with each other cordially at the individual level, showing mutual love and respect. Admittedly, Sahni has created villainous¹⁵ characters in Hindu Chaudhri and Muslim Maulvi, who try to silence both the little protagonist and his parents who, as Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak's subaltern characters, cannot speak for themselves.¹⁶ Their family matter takes on a "religious slant" (Sahni 238) and becomes a community affair—"a Hindu-Muslim question" (244) controlled by powerful people such as the Maulvi and the Chaudhri. However, they cannot disrupt the peaceful environment in the text by their rude words or evil actions. Sahni has tactfully placed them as heads of the opponent groups showing that evil does not lie exclusively in one community. Also, the author's enlightened outlook and strategic style of writing subdue the effectiveness of the communal statements made by the authoritative figures as well as their potential to perform singularly evil actions.

Another important reason readers can see Sahni as an accountable writer relates to his effort at providing a comprehensive picture of the time by accommodating both the scenes of torture and trauma and acts of love and kindness. He shows the painful life of Hindu Manohar and his wife Kaushalya who are uprooted and displaced from their native Pakistan. Having lost their home, property, and son, they become refugees in India where they lose their daughter, too.

¹⁴ A distinguished novelist and short story writer, Bhisham Sahni (1915-2003) was born in Rawalpindi, Pakistan. A doctorate in English, he lived for seven years in the Soviet Union and translated Russian and Soviet classics into Hindi. His own works have been translated into Russian and English. *Tamas* (translated in English by the author himself), his novel about the South Asian Partition of 1947, won the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1971.

¹⁵ M.M. Preetha, in "Divided Homeland, Fragmented Psyche: Rajinder Singh Bedi's *Lajwanti* and Bhisham Sahni's *Pali* as Narratives of Loss," remarks that they are "narrow minded in their attitudes and insensitive to the feelings of not only the boy but also the parents and others" (55).

¹⁶ Gayatri C. Spivak, in "Can the Subaltern Speak?" states, "the subaltern cannot speak" (104).

The parents undergo the agony of separation, desperately look for the missing boy for years, and fight for his custody even after they find him. The kid himself suffers repeatedly from the pain of dislocation: separation from family, forced religious conversion, and identity crisis.¹⁷

Though “Pali” allots significant space for struggle, distress, and discord, the text makes much room for humanitarian ideals, too. The story contains various scenes that show people helping others in distress. One of the best examples of humanity relates to the Muslim couple Zenab and Shakur who adopt the four-year Hindu boy and take care of him as their own child. Their action shows that not every person during the Partition despised the members of other religious communities. At a time, rife with ill will and hostility, when people abducted and mercilessly killed small children belonging to the other side, or at best, used them as slaves, Shakur and Zenab shower much love on Pali. They do not keep the Hindu boy with them for labor,¹⁸ neither do they view him as a *kafir* (infidel) or someone lesser than themselves. The couple takes a serious risk in adopting Pali because the Muslim community could at once disown them as well as the Hindu boy. Even after the adoption of Pali, Zenab and Shakur lose their peace of mind and panic all the time with anxiety that the boy might be snatched away from them. Whenever they hear a knock, they look towards the door “in alarm their hearts pounding hard” (Sahni 231). Despite the fear and consternation, Shakur and Zenab decide to raise Pali as their own son by naming him Altaf. From the moment she sees Pali for the first time, Zenab’s heart fills with motherly affection: “Overwhelmed by a sense of joy. . . her heart swell[s] up with maternal feeling” (Sahni 228). Sahni further writes: When Pali falls asleep resting his head on Zenab’s bosom, “his sobs slowly dissolved in a sea of affection” (228). Right from the beginning, Zenab empathizes with the boy and identifying completely with him feels as lonely, dislocated, and “rootless” as he is (231).

Perhaps the best example of human goodness comes at a moment when Shakur and Zenab must take a strong decision on Pali after the Hindu parents locate the boy. They fall in a situation of predicament to decide whether to hand over the child to Manohar and Kaushalya or not. In the climactic scene, Pali too faces a momentary dilemma of choice between the two sets of parents—biological and adoptive. At this time, Pali’s genetic father, Manohar addresses Zenab as “*Bahen*” (sister) and begs not for the child but for his “wife’s life” as she has lost both of her children and is “missing Pali very much” (Sahni 244). When she learns how Pali’s “absence is driving [Kaushalya] insane,” Zenab becomes instrumental in relieving Pali and others from the predicament by behaving (speaking, to be more precise) in a most rational and humane manner. She responds in empathy, asking the Hindu parents to: “Take away the child,” and adds that she does not want “an unfortunate woman’s curse” to affect her life (244). Raising herself above selfish desire and making a heroic sacrifice, Zenab proves herself an angelic being—a cream of humanity.

¹⁷ Saros Cowasjee & K.S. Duggal in “Introduction” to *Orphans of the Storm: Stories on the Partition of India*, rightly remark that behind the “grim comedy” of forced circumcision and re-baptism, “lies the traumatic experience of the boy” whose very identity is in crisis (xvi).

¹⁸ Urvashi Butalia, in *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India*, observes that the displaced children, especially the boys were “not adopted for love or family but mainly for labor” (221).

The anecdote above, when both sets of parents come together with the authoritarian figures from both countries and religious groups, affords not only a peaceful atmosphere to conduct inter-community conversation on a serious subject but also serves as an apt example of Sahni's careful use of language. The endearing Hindi word *Bahen* sets a tone of affection and love suggesting the world to be a large family. Skillful handling of this situation by the author does not allow even the rude words of the intimidating Chaudhri and Maulvi to cause any harmful difference, let alone cost anybody's life. The restrained interaction of both sets of parents, who behave in a most decent, mature, and gentlemanly manner and readily agree to share some time together in Pakistan every Id establishes a strong bond of humanity. Shedding tears, Zenab even plans to go to India to "meet our son" (Sahni 250). This scene toward the end of "Pali" shows the triumph of humanity because at this point all the important characters—Manohar and Kaushalya, and their "mirror images" ¹⁹ Shakur and Zenab not only engage in fruitful conversation but also pave the path for harmonious relationship between the two warring communities. Pali himself serves as a link/bridge between them, remaining imprinted in the "collective perception, [as] a Hindu boy wearing a Muslim cap"²⁰ and reading *namaz* in a Hindu household, and surmounting the malevolence of time.

Thus, while writing about tragic displacement and identity crisis experienced by the little Pali and his parents because of cataclysmic Partition, Sahni makes careful and artistic use of language to create gentle and humble characters from both sides, engages them peacefully in meaningful conversation, converts the tragic division of a country and the resultant suffering of people as an opportunity to come together and develop understanding by bridging the gulf between two religions, communities and countries.²¹ Also, as Sahni chooses not only to focus on the "apocalyptic spectacle"²² of violence but also to shed light on the "affirmations of humanity" present simultaneously on the occasion, he can be considered a responsible writer of violence as conceived by Ghosh.

Like Sahni's "Pali," readers can consider S. H. Vatsyayan's²³ "The Avenger" to be a sample of balanced and rounded writing that restrains the terrible situation from further deterioration. "The Avenger" relays the story of two refugee families: one Muslim and another Sikh who meet in a train to Aligarh. If the Sikh family comprises of an elderly Sikh and his son from Shekhupura, the Muslim family consists of Suraiya, her elder daughter and a little son. The entire action in the story takes place inside the moving train that functions as a "fitting symbol of liminal spaces and the death of old structural certainties."²⁴ A victim of communal conflict, the Sikh has lost everything: home, land, property, and relatives except the son. Gangs of rioters mercilessly

¹⁹ Anuradha Marwah Roy, "'Pali' and Communalism Today," 114.

²⁰ Shashi Joshi, "The World of Saadat Hasan Manto," 148.

²¹ Roy, in "'Pali' and Communalism Today," makes a convincing statement that the story "makes an emotionally charged case for humanism devoid of religious falsities" (116).

²² Ghosh, "The Ghosts of Mrs. Gandhi," 61.

²³ S. H. Vatsyayan 'Ajneya' (1911-1987), an eminent Hindi poet and fiction writer, has published about fifteen volumes of poetry and a large body of fiction. A winner of the Bharatiya Jnanpith Award and the National Academy of Letters Award, his works have been translated into several languages such as German, Swedish, and English. He has also written numerous essays and travelogues.

²⁴ Alok Bhalla, "Introduction" to *Stories about the Partition of India*, xxxvi.

shamed his wife and daughter before their death. As a rootless, dislocated, disowned and homeless person, the Sikh has made his refuge the train that travels daily between Delhi and Aligarh. He says, "Home is where I am now. In this corner of the railway compartment" (Vatsyayan 48). Hoping that no family would undergo the tragedy that befell his wife and daughter, he avenges their death in a unique way: by travelling day and night and escorting people safely to their destination, which he has made a mission of his life.

During one of such trips, the Sikh father and son come across Suraiya's family. She has boarded the train with her children, fleeing to safety from the rioting environment of Delhi. As Suraiya's psyche has registered the prevalent rumor about Sikhs as the most terrifying enemies of the Muslims, her sense of relief shatters at once by the sight of the two formidable Sikhs in the compartment.²⁵ Scared Suraiya reads vicious intentions in every word the Sikhs utter; her fear intensifies further when two Hindu men enter the train. One of the Hindu passengers tries to ignite communal feelings and extract retributive response from the Sikh by describing how the Muslims atrociously dishonored their women in Delhi. After sensing threats from the Sikhs and Hindus, as Suraiya prepares to move to another section of the train, the elderly Sikh offers to escort her toward safety and security.

In "The Avenger," Vatsyayan captures "a vital moment"²⁶ in the life of his characters such as the fright of Suraiya, the tragedy of the elderly Sikh and his decision to help. He deftly handles the moment revealing his accountability as a writer of violence. First, he employs an objective stance and writes honestly about all the groups involved in the conflict. It does not heroize one community at the expense of the other nor does it demonize the "other" group to unjustly deify one's own. Second, carefully balancing the scenes of fear and ferocity and care and sympathy, the author effectively puts together ugly details tamed by judicious scattering of humane acts. Next, Vatsyayan uses restrained language to avoid further escalation of unrests. Most of the dialogues of the elderly Sikh, especially the ones related to Suraiya, are cases in point: he rebuffs all inflammatory language spoken by the communal minded Sikh against the Muslims.

When a Hindu tries to incite him to rape Muslim women, the Sikh makes an admonishing comment: "A woman's shame is a woman's shame; it is not the shame of a Hindu or a Muslim, it is the shame of the mother of man" (Vatsyayan 51). In another instance, the Sikh says: "*Babu Sahib*, I seek forgiveness for any harsh words I might have uttered. You are our refuge" (Vatsyayan 52). When one of the Hindus tries only to blame the Muslims for the shaming of women, the Sikh repeatedly reminds him about equal culpability of other communities—directly, indirectly, or ironically. Also, on one occasion, when a Hindu tries to relate with relish the molestation of a Muslim doctor's daughter, the Sikh retorts harshly admonishing the communal minded man: "*Babu Sahib*, a woman's shame is everybody's shame" implying that one must respect all women including the Muslims (50). He silences the Hindu by snubbing his provocative speech against the Muslims and begs an apology from Suraiya for the indecent talk. Besides, when the terrified Suraiya is about to leave the compartment, he asks her to stay back by promising protection: "I look on you as my sister and these kids of yours as my own. I will

²⁵ Ravikant and Saint, in Introduction to *Translating Partition*, maintain that "The compartment, or the train's internal space, is where passengers face each other with an enhanced sense of insecurity and distrust" (xv).

²⁶ Saros Cowasjee, "Introduction" to *Orphans of the Storm*, xv.

see you safely to Aligarh and beyond Aligarh there is no danger” (Vatsyayan 48). Although Suraiya might have misread him and disbelieved his soft, affectionate, and uplifting words at the time, readers cannot miss his genuine desire to help her. The comments above show that the petty thugs cannot elicit a communally charged response from the elderly Sikh. This is because Vatsyayan, as a responsible writer, uses his words prudently to avoid continuity of violence.

“The Avenger” associates most humane situations and actions with the elderly Sikh, an ethically enlightened and highly generous character. His words and deeds reveal that he neither wants anybody to share his fate, nor desires to take revenge for what has happened to his family. He reasons that despite his knowledge of the intensity of his family’s tragedy in Shekhupura, he “cannot avenge it” because “there can be no revenge” for such heinous crime with the propensity to spread without any limit (Vatsyayan 51). With a commitment not to “let what happened to me happen to anyone else” (51), he makes a mission of his life to “make reparations: offer penance” (51). The elderly Sikh believes that his constant movement between Delhi and Aligarh will help him make amends so that no one “whether he is a Hindu or a Sikh or a Muslim” needs to see “what I have seen,” and experience the pain and trauma like him (Vatsyayan 52). The Sikh’s munificence manifests once again when he relates his own bitter experiences as a refugee.²⁷ Even though he has experienced irrecoverable loss and painful trauma, he keeps alive his faith in human values. Aggrieved that “the killing sickness” has gripped the country and opened “the road to hell,” the elderly Sikh wants people to eschew all kinds of violence (51). Though a homeless and identity less victim of Partition himself, he shuns the idea of retaliation and tries to assuage the suffering of people from all faiths by escorting them safely to their destination.

The Sikh’s ability to forget and forgive the real culprits of his family tragedy, to love the members of the “enemy” community, to sacrifice his life for their safety, and the divinely creative idea to take vengeance by doing good not just to an individual but to all the people belonging to the “other” community falls into the category of the courageous heroes Ghosh mentions in his essay. The thoughts and actions of the elderly Sikh exemplify the best in humanity, validate Ghosh’s concept of confirmation of humanity and promise a peaceful, friendly, and supportive society. Readers can assume that having gone through the text, no one would easily be triggered for further tension and trouble.

Readers can thus consider Vatsyayan a highly responsible writer of Partition violence because of his adoption of a neutral point of view without any prejudice against the other community, his incorporation of wonderful humanitarian deeds in the story of death and destruction, his creation of a character such as the elderly Sikh with a golden heart, and his careful choice of words.

²⁷ Bodh Prakash, in *Writing Partition: Aesthetics and Ideology in Hindi and Urdu Literature*, states, “even though they [the Sikhs] are refugees themselves, they do not forget their responsibility as moral beings” (145).

Kartar Singh Duggal's²⁸ "Pakistan Zindabad" supplies another specimen of responsible writing for its holistic representation of Partition, ethical response to violence, balanced treatment of characters, careful use of non-aggressive language and an impartial and objective stance. "Pakistan Zindabad" recounts the story of forced restoration of a young married woman, Ram Rakhi--now Allah Rakhi--to her parents in India. She has survived the pain of Partition holocaust that displaced her Hindu family from Pakistan, separated her from them, led to her conversion to Islam and her marriage to Sher Baz Khan, the very person who had tried to molest and murder her during the conflict.²⁹

After much hardship when Rakhi has just managed to adjust and lead a normal life with the alien people (her Muslim in-laws), her surviving brother arrives from India with a police officer to take her away from Pakistan. Her love for Pakistan and the fact that she has been carrying a child of Sher Baz in her womb, separation from him and her native land is unimaginable to her. However, she must leave Pakistan permanently much against her will³⁰ because the *lumbardar*, the village elders, the police officer and her husband too persuade her to obey the state orders to make a difficult sacrifice for her country. Because: "no sacrifice was too big for Pakistan—their beloved country," everyone around expects her to separate herself from her husband and family for the sake of the newly created nation (Duggal 102). Ironically, the government's policy of rehabilitation actively engaged in seeking one's people and grant them safety becomes the cause for Rakhi's tragic dislocation.³¹ As per the policy, Rakhi must be uprooted and sent to India as an exchange for an abducted Muslim woman to be relocated in Pakistan. Unable to dodge the demand of loyalty made by her government and escape displacement, Rakhi accompanies her brother to join her parents recently "evacuated to Hindustan [India]" (Duggal 102).

Duggal shows admirable skill in judiciously juxtaposing the vicious and virtuous acts in "Pakistan Zindabad" when he incorporates compassionate deeds in a world enveloped by unthinkable atrocity. The text contains tragic incidents such as the attempt to rape, assault, forced migration and the subsequent struggle for adjustments undergone by the protagonist, Rakhi and her family. The "agonizing picture" of young Rakhi "ripped off from her husband and

²⁸ Born in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, Kartar Singh Duggal (1917-2012) has published short stories, plays and novels. Best known for his fictional works *Twice Born Twice Dead*, *Come Back My Master*, and *Death of a Song*, he is the recipient of prestigious awards such as Ghalib Award (1976) and Soviet Land Nehru Award (1981). He worked as Director, All India Radio and Adviser (information), Planning Commission.

²⁹ Butalia, in *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India*, remarks that, like children, women were "seen to be vulnerable" and that they "could be raped and, being 'weak,' could be forced to convert; both things which could be an insult to their religion (and their manhood)" (199).

³⁰ Debasri Basu, in "Restored, or Doubly Displaced: Women and the Recovery Commission in India's Partition Narratives," makes a keen observation that "women had been relegated to the status of chattel to be exchanged following the primitive barter system; both abductions and rescues were, thus, being carried out in violation of their will" (cafedissensus.com).

³¹ Syed Shaker Hussain, Bilal Ahmad Dar & Charu Chitra, in "Confusion and Trauma Suffered by Women during Partition: A Study of Selected Short Stories," rightly remark that Rakhi "had escaped the dislocation during the riots, but she cannot escape it during the rehabilitation" (587).

in-laws by the [Rehabilitation] Commission”³² can easily hurt the readers. Despite her strong love and attachment for beloved Pakistan, Rakhi cannot escape displacement. “Pakistan Zindabad” sensibly makes space also for noble thoughts of the characters and the selfless, heroic, loving deeds they perform. Rakhi’s undying love for her native land: her hearth and home, the plants and trees in her village, the green fields, the streets, and the people including her neighbors despite differing religion and culture, her altruistic work amidst Muslim population serve as moving examples of human ideals that can elevate the readers.

Sher Baz’s comportment at the close of the story furnishes another memorable example of humanity. His silence and almost unconscious state at the time of his separation from Rakhi can easily touch the conscience of readers. Admittedly, in his mad fury during the communal riots, Sher Baz had tried to slaughter the innocent Rakhi forgetting their childhood friendship and love. However, right after his fatal attack, he marries Rakhi and pledges “to love her in life and in death” (Duggal 99). The sense of righteousness enables him to see his “heartlessness” and criminality at the thoughtless attack on the Hindu girl who “haunted his dreams for years” (99). Sher Baz’s subsequent redemptive act of love for Rakhi proves the moral aspect of his being. Another poignant example of morality in “Pakistan Zindabad” comes from Sher Baz’s family when his mother and sister protect Rakhi from his assault during the riots. Red with anger when the young man pounces upon Rakhi to kill her with his hatchet, he finds his mother and sister “covering Rakhi, the *kafir*” (Duggal 99). Interrupted in his action, a surprised Sher Baz withdraws in helplessness. The two women raise themselves above communal feud and act with extraordinary courage to help and protect the innocent victim belonging to their “enemy” community from the wrath of a frenzied youth of their own. Their action amply supports and illustrates the concept of “affirmation of humanity,” as Ghosh puts it.

Duggal has written “Pakistan Zindabad” responsibly in the sense that he presents a very balanced picture of the situation without demonizing or deifying any specific community. Readers find kind characters from both groups—Hindu-Sikh and Muslim—who treat the people from other community with love and affection. If in Rakhi, Duggal has created an innocent and spirited being, a passionate lover, a staunch patriot, a helpful and reliable neighbor, and friend, he has invested some qualities of a good lover in Sher Baz, too. Human fallibility certainly makes him feeble, but never an evil personality. Additionally, the author has represented other individuals, especially Muslim women—Sher Baz’s mother and sister—as adorable beings who dare their own relation to protect Rakhi.

Readers notice Duggal’s liability in writing also in his cautious use of language--devoid of aggression--to develop the plot. The moments Sher Baz falls into deep silence touch the reader’s heart: “Sher Baz lay silent, his eyes brimful with tears . . . It seemed Sher Baz had developed high fever. He was lying almost unconscious. He didn’t utter a word” (Duggal 102). Likewise, the passages in which Rakhi expresses her attachment to Pakistan appeal to both the heart and head of the readers. Refusing to part with Pakistan, she says, “I’ll never leave my village. What if the name has since changed, this is our own country. This courtyard is mine. I have swept it day and night. These plants are mine. I have watered them morning and evening. These streets

³² Basu, “Restored, or Doubly Displaced: Women and the Recovery Commission in India’s Partition Narratives,” (cafedissensus.com).

are mine. I have played in them since my childhood” (102). These words uttered in tears can compel readers to think seriously and resist violence, especially that of forced migration. The last scene in the story in which Sher Baz brings a bowl on which Rakhi has etched his name “Sher Baz Khan” and the handmade fan with embroidered words “Pakistan *Zindabad*” (long live Pakistan) can influence the reader and dissuade him or her from hostile feelings and ideas (103).

Thus, while describing the tragic havoc such as the displacement and the identity crisis created by genocidal violence of 1947, Duggal writes in a responsible manner without being biased. A close observer as well as a victim of Partition riots,³³ the author writes without falling prey to the toxicity of labeling and caricaturing the other. He neither demonizes the members of other community by resorting to the prose of otherness,³⁴ nor stereotypes characters belonging to the “other” communities to represent the Muslims as rapists, or sexual predators, Hindus as treacherous cowards and Sikhs as mindless killers.³⁵ Making use of restraint language, Duggal forwards a balanced viewpoint, creates good characters from both sides, engages the “enemies” in meaningful conversations and shows the possibility of harmonious relationship between the two communities. “Pakistan *Zindabad*” serves as a testimony of Duggal’s “civilized, willed response” to violence, and his maturity and reliability as a writer.

Similarly, in “Roots,” Ismat Chughtai³⁶ reveals herself as a cautious writer for her impartial treatment of characters, shrewd use of language, objective point of view and balanced representation of bloody ferocity and loving kindness. Related from the perspective of a little Muslim girl, “Roots” tells the tale of two families—one Hindu and another Muslim—in Mewar, Rajasthan and their relationship before and after the Partition. Despite their religious difference, the families of Roop Chand, a Hindu doctor and the Muslim narrator lived in harmony before 1947. They respected the other and participated in one another’s religious festivals. However, Partition creates a chasm between them and the bond of “love and friendship” uniting the families for three generations starts crumbling. Divided physically and emotionally, they behave like strangers, start looking at each other with fear, suspicion, and hostility, causing ultimately the Muslims to leave for Pakistan. However, re-surge of lovely feelings in the Hindu family becomes instrumental in the return of the Muslim neighbors.

³³ Saikat Banerjee, in “Tales of Partition in Selected Short Stories of Kartar Singh Duggal,” says that the author “witnessed the partition holocaust and suffered the brunt of partition resulting in his displacement from Lahore to Delhi” when he was about thirty (197).

³⁴ Gyanendra Pandey, in “The Prose of Otherness,” remarks that while writers use the prose of otherness to blame the other community and their attitude, they try to present their own community and attitudes as innocent and free from blemishes (213).

³⁵ Ian Talbot, in his essay “Legacies of the Partition for India and Pakistan,” notes that “Stereotypes of the Muslim ‘other’ as a sexually rapacious and violent aggressor have been drawn from the partition ‘history’ and replayed at times of communal conflict” (17).

³⁶ Born in Badayam, Uttar Pradesh, Ismat Chughtai (1925-1992) studied at Lucknow University. A highly regarded Urdu writer, she published seven novels including *Ziddi* (considered to be the best) and numerous collections of short stories. *Garam Hawa*, a famous Hindi film about the Partition, is based on some of her stories.

"Roots" portrays an honest picture of the Hindu-Muslim relations at the troubled times of Partition. Herself a member of Muslim community, Chughtai remains unbiased in her representation of the situation, the characters, and their actions. She divulges the good and evil side of Roop Chand's family in a convincing manner as evidenced by the description of the physical and emotional impact on the Hindus before and after the departure of their Muslim neighbors. Having detailed the bitterness and indifference that develops a poisonous chasm between the neighbors, Chughtai discloses the discomfort felt by Roop Chand and his family.

Restless and irritated Roop Chand behaves in a strange manner: he paces up and down his verandah and curses and shouts at everyone and everything in the house and outside (Chughtai 585). Since he thinks that he has uprooted the Muslim neighbors, he feels their empty house across the road taunting him as if he has "demolished it brick by brick" with his own hands (586). Pricked by his conscience, Roop Chand feels the corruption and contamination of his personality which unnerves and unsettles his existence. He wants to get rid of the painful experience: "He wanted to brush something out of his mind. Wanted to peck it out with all his strength. . . He couldn't uproot it from his soul because it had gripped him like the roots of an ancient tree" (586). Although inability to wrench out the disturbing element from his being exasperates Roop Chand, he undergoes a kind of positive change after some days: he internalizes the pain and anguish of the neighbors and empathizes with them. As his innate goodness replaces the temporary malignance, Roop Chand hurries to help re-unite his Muslim neighbors.

Similar kind of benevolence changes the manners of his mother (Amma/Ammi) and daughter-in-law who look at the women of the Muslim family "with sympathy and understanding," though without speaking (Chughtai 586). They now silently encourage each other for reconciliation and rapport with their neighbors. Reverting to past friendship, the daughter-in-law brings "two plates full of food in her hands" for the narrator's mother (586). This act of serving food to the forlorn lady demonstrates not only the loving nature of Roop Chand's daughter-in-law, but also exemplifies the cordial relation between the two communities "who were not ready for this partition and division."³⁷

"Roots" proffers one more case of human kindness when Roop Chand brings back the narrator's family to their home from Loni railway station before they cross the Indian border to Pakistan. He becomes instrumental in conferring immense joy to Amma through the re-union of her family. Chughtai writes: "A smile began to play on her lips. She was overwhelmed with happiness. All her sorrows...swirled into the surrounding darkness and vanished" (587). The mother sheds happy tears because of the return or coming together of her family members as well as her gratitude to the Hindu doctor who has coped with all emotional stress and strain and bestowed happiness to everyone around him. By bringing about the family re-union skillfully in the text, Chughtai ensures the restoration of "communal harmony."³⁸

³⁷ Ashraf Lone, "The Women in Ismat Chughtai's Short Stories," (dailytimes.com).

³⁸ Rupal N. Vora, "Representation of Communal Harmony in Ismat Chughtai's *Selected Short Stories*," 4.

The narrator's mother is the only individual who rejects the borderlines drawn between the two nations and resists the idea of parting with her homeland.³⁹ As she cannot dissociate herself with her beloved land and the house that treasures her family's memory and history, she stays back choosing "fidelity to place rather than to religious community."⁴⁰ Severance from her home in native Mewar is unthinkable for Amma because she loves her origins more than anything else. To her, leaving the roots equals death—death of self, past, history, tradition, culture, heritage, and relationship.⁴¹ Therefore, despite being lonely and sad, Amma "sat rooted in her place like a banyan tree which survives even as the storms rage around it" (Chughtai 583). She does not believe in the idea of modern nation states nor has she any faith in the hastily drawn Radcliffe line⁴² which she thinks has converted her native place into a foreign land.

Amma raises some of the most pertinent questions about forced migration in the text. Confused like millions at the time of Partition, she asks a poignant question: "What is this strange bird called, our country? Tell me, where is that country?" (Chughtai 583). She cannot conceive of any other place as her country except India and says: "This is the land where you were born, which gave birth to you; this is the earth on which you grew up; if this is not your country, how can some distant land where you merely go and settle for a few days become your country?" (583). Expressing her love and attachment to Mewar and unwillingness to migrate to Pakistan, Amma says: "we had all fought for this land for fifty years, had shed our blood for it, and today we are being asked to leave it and establish a new nation somewhere" (Chughtai 586). As she cannot be convinced that the unknown and unfamiliar land holds promise for her family, she asks a series of questions: "Will the new land suffuse the new crop being sown in it with sap? Will the transplanted saplings wilt?" (586), "Will the predatory birds have left anything for them in the new land? Or will they be forced to return shamefaced?" (587). Doubting whether they would be accepted back in India with dignity, she further asks, "If they return, will they be granted another chance to establish their roots in this soil?" (587). Questions such as these do not allow the mother to leave her native place as she remains skeptical of the answers she receives.⁴³

Far from fanning communal fire, the questions above, the depiction of uncomfortable situation in hard times and the complicated analysis of character such as Roop Chand and the relationship between his mother, daughter-in-law and Amma compel the readers to think seriously about the irrationality of communal feuds and inspire them to develop empathetic attitude toward their fellow beings. Rather than triggering violence, Amma's long silence and

³⁹ Jason Francisco, in "M.U. Memon's 'An Epic Unwritten'--A Review Essay," rightly claims that the mother (Amma) "is a pariah in her own family, whose stubborn adherence to her native place narrowly averts exile" (<https://jasonfrancisco.net/an-epic-unwritten>).

⁴⁰ Ritu Menon and Kamala Bhasin, *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition*, 230.

⁴¹ Lone, in "The Women in Ismat Chughtai's Short Stories," observes that amma/ammi "loves her roots and doesn't want to get cut-off from her roots. She is not ready to leave her land, country and her neighbours and likens this to death" (daily times.com).

⁴² Butalia, in *The Other Side of Silence*, avers that the line drawn without proper homework by Sir Cyril Radcliffe between India and Pakistan changed "millions of lives" (59).

⁴³ Sukrita Paul Kumar, in "It's Fiction, not History, that Reveals the Real Impact of the Partition on Women," rightly states that "when the entire family decided to migrate, no amount of force or persuasion could make the Amma of Ismat Chughtai's story *Jadein (Roots)* leave her haveli" (scroll.in/article/847133/its-fiction-not-history).

“two teardrops” of love and gratitude that roll down her face and fall on Roopchand’s hands, will not only appeal to the head of the readers but also move their hearts and advocate strongly against any kind of misunderstanding and discord (Chughtai 588).

Thus, written in a most responsible manner, Chughtai’s “Roots” shows that goodness ultimately triumphs because the deep-rooted ties of friendship do not snap even in the gloomiest atmosphere of fear and distrust. The generous act Roop Chand and others perform to give life to the Muslim neighbors testify to the enduring power of humanity. Through the measured use of choice words and non-aggressive language, civilized response to violence, careful handling of the subtle nuances in manners and the magnanimous transformation in characters, Chughtai shows the hands of a responsible writer at work in “Roots.”

“Infidel” by Atin Bandhopadhyay⁴⁴ adds one more example of responsible writing as theorized by Ghosh in “The Ghosts of Mrs. Gandhi.” Desisting from personal prejudices, Bandhopadhyay implements the technique of objective representation of violence in the text. The author attempts truthful depiction of the Subcontinent’s mass decimation in 1947 by refusing to discriminate between Hindus and Muslims or Indians and East Pakistanis. As if in imitation of his great predecessors, Bandhopadhyay narrativizes his story from an elevated ethical stance and tries to appeal both to the head and heart of the readers. Despite its strong emotional moments and the content of pain and death, “Infidel” shuns bloodshed and avoids exclusive focus on a graphic description of horrific incidents. The story gives space to human values of love, friendship, and sacrifice by toning down the atmosphere of fear, hatred, and terror through its employment of carefully chosen words and influential passages.

Describing how Partition riots disrupt the harmonious existence of differing communities, “Infidel” narrates a moving tale of friendship between Hindu Paran Mandal and Muslim Hashim in Nayapara, a Muslim dominant village in East Bengal⁴⁵. In a wave of terminal violence, when Paran’s house sets ablaze and his wife, Kirni goes missing, he seeks shelter and protection from his Muslim neighbors. None except two friends--Hashim and his wife Zabida--dare come forward to help the unfortunate Hindu. The Muslim couple undertakes the risk of helping Paran who had earlier saved the life of Zabida by safely carrying her home from far-off grass fields. Bandhopadhyay writes: “Paran had once found Zabida, then ten-months pregnant, unconscious among this long, lush grass. She had gone out looking for the goats. Paran had lifted her up in his strong arms and had carried her back all the way across this huge field” (168). The grateful friends defy the noxious communal attitude of the people around and by using a novel idea devised by Zabida, help Paran cross a nearby river trickily hiding his head under a big pot floating over his head. The moment Paran starts for an unknown destination leaving behind

⁴⁴ Born in 1934, in Dhaka, Bangladesh, Atin Bandyopadhyay migrated to India after the Partition of Bengal in 1947. He has published several fictional works both for children and adults. His magnum opus, a four-part novel *Nilakantha Pakhira Khoje* (2006) draws from his own experiences as a victim of Partition and portrays in a most poignant manner the lives of the Hindus and Muslims during the violent times that followed the Partition. Recipient of prestigious awards such as Bibhuti Bhushan Award (1901), Bankim Puraskar (1998), Tarashankar Award (1999), and Sahitya Akademi Award (2001), Bandyopadhyay died in Calcutta in 2019.

⁴⁵ Unlike most stories about Punjab discussed in this paper, “Infidel” concerns the Partition of Bengal.

permanently his native place, his home, and his friends, Hashim and Zabida feel too bad for him. Despite his desperate attempt to help, Hashim cannot save Paran whom two Muslim youths kill by piercing his head in a spear before he reaches the destination.

In the unfolding drama of death and destruction, “Infidel” comprises of episodes that show extraordinary courage and “strains of empathy,”⁴⁶ in the major characters which affirm faith in humanity. Both husband and wife do their best to help by escorting Paran out of the village to the safety of another geographical space—the town of Narayangunj. Hashim keeps cheering and inspiring him: he whispers, “words of assurance, encouraging him to live, preparing him to cross the river, to float under its surface and swim untiringly for long distance and long hours” (Bandhopadhyay 168). Besides, to enable the Hindu escape safely, Hashim drills “into Paran a new identity—Paran was now Mohammed Idris, son of Mohammed Imanulla” (169). He plans various other strategies to save Paran—asking him to act as a dumb or a sick or a disabled man, keeping vigil on him all the time. Shedding tears of love and compassion for the poor victim, Zabida offers him milk and ties to a bamboo pole a little “bundle of parched rice” so that Hashim could offer refreshment to Paran while swimming his way out to town (167).

Hashim’s blissful experience after he helps Paran successfully embark on his journey away from the riot torn Nayapara offers another beautiful moment of shining humanity in the story. Hashim returns home feeling that he is on a pilgrimage to “Mecca and Medina... a place where there was love for humanity, where there were no differences amongst mankind, where everything was accepted as God’s gift, where all creatures could demand sympathy” (Bandhopadhyay 170). Hashim is happy that he has been able to help a fellow human being, a “God’s gift” who “could demand sympathy,” and who deserves human compassion and a chance to live like any other creation of Allah (170). A soul free from narrow feelings that create barriers between individuals and communities, Hashim tries his best to protect Paran from another religious community, knowing fully well that by doing so, he will be inviting the wrath of his own Muslim brethren.⁴⁷ He faces the fury of his co-religionist: they label him as an *infidel* and chase to attack him; also, he breaks his leg while trying to protect Paran. To divert the attention of the two young boys who intend to harm Paran, Hashim resorts to different techniques but without any success. Ultimately, they kill the Hindu. Although he is unable to protect Paran, Hashim carries on his altruistic work undeterred, thereby setting an exemplary model of comradery. Even after Paran dies, Hashim fondly remembers him and his wife because no tint of communal resentment can tarnish the memory of their friendship.

Raising himself above communal considerations, Bandhopadhyay demonstrates how “the Hindu helps the Muslim and the Muslim helps the Hindu heroically,”⁴⁸ at the crucial hour of need. The risky responsibility the Muslim couple undertakes to help the Hindu friend shows

⁴⁶ Shamik Bag, “Review of *Mapmaking: Partition Stories from Two Bengals*, edited by Debjani Sengupta,” (<https://www.livemint.com>).

⁴⁷ The venom of communal passion in the wild days of Partition had infested both Hindus and Muslims, and they looked at each other with fear, hatred, and suspicion. Demands of communal solidarity not only denied communication with the opponent but also punished those by death who tried to offer food and shelter to the members belonging to the other side.

⁴⁸ Martin Kämpchen, “Review of *Mapmaking: Partition Stories of Two Bengals* by Debjani Sengupta,” 220.

their extraordinary courage and faith in humanity. Individuals like Hashim and Zabida keep the light of love and friendship aflame even during the terrible times of apocalyptic genocide. Shadow of communal bitterness can never eclipse “the sparks of humaneness”⁴⁹ in them which can withstand any tempestuous rage of the times. The volunteers who rescue the missing Kirni also add to the humanitarian aspect of the story. The Muslim as well as Hindu characters-- Hashim, Zabida, the rescue workers, and Paran pass the “test of humanity”⁵⁰ in the dark and dismal days of the devastating South Asian Partition.

The text contains several passages that compel readers to think seriously over certain important terms and concepts such as compassion, oneness of creation, and *kafir* (an infidel). When the two Muslim boys trail Hashim to kill him for helping Paran, they call him a “kafir,” and shout: “There goes a *kafir*” (Bandhopadhyay 175). Unjustly called “kafir” (an unbeliever), Hashim understands and follows the true spirit of Islam which accepts all beings as the creation of the almighty God. Rather than differentiate one person from the other, his compassion embraces all individuals whether they are Hindus or Muslims. Hashim believes that his community has misinterpreted their religion and missed its message against discrimination of the Hindus such as Paran. In his opinion, people like himself (who does not share the hatred of their community and persecute the Hindus) and Paran and Kirni (who do not follow Islam) are not infidels. The real infidels are those, who like the Muslim youths, torture their fellow beings by defying the Lord’s message of love and mercy. Therefore, at the end of the story when people ask about the young boys whom he has killed in the process of saving his Hindu friend, Hashim points toward the watery burial and utters the word *kafir*, re-defining the word in its true sense.

Also, Bandhopadhyay describes the last moments of Paran using soft and tender words: “He no longer had any sorrow. He was lying in his own village, in his own land, and dreaming—there were pretty flowers in the *kalmi* creepers again, there were birds in the sky, and in the lush green fields of maize and wheat he was playing hide-and-seek with his beloved Kirni” (176). This description is too poignant to arouse any aggressive thoughts. Passages like these suppress any antagonistic feelings, and therefore, rather than incite the readers to continue the cycle of violence, become instrumental in calming down the situation and establish loving bonds between conflicting communities. Bandhopadhyay’s successful production of “Infidel” as balanced writing using cautious language and neutral point of view elevates his authorial height as well as contributes to his development as a responsible writer of violence.

The discussion in the paper above illustrates the readers that Sahni, Duggal, Chughtai, Vatsyayan and Bandhopadhyay have carefully written their respective stories--“Pali,” “Pakistan Zindabad,” “Roots,” “The Avenger,” and “Infidel.” They document the most tragic happening in the Subcontinent’s history without resorting to the mean trick of demonizing the members of the other community. By accommodating both the ugly details of enmity, forced migration, loss, guilt, suspicion, pain, trauma, revenge, and death as well as the ennobling ideas such as that of fraternity, compassion, love, and oneness of mankind, the writers paint a balanced and holistic picture of the conflictual times. Judicious scattering of humane acts in the stories uphold Ghosh’s view that humanity exists even at heart of devastation and death. Also, through the

⁴⁹ Mushirul Hasan, “Foreword” to *Bengal Partition Stories: An Unclosed Chapter*, xvi.

⁵⁰ Bashabi Fraser, “About the Stories,” 64.

presentation of the author's deliberate moral response to violence, every piece selected for discussion in the paper, makes sufficient room for resistance.

Because of the manifestation of humanitarian acts at the heart of blood and terror, events in the stories counter the narrator's argument in Suraiya Qasim's story "Where Did She Belong?" that at the end "the Hindus had won, the Muslims had won, but humanity had lost."⁵¹ Contrary to Qasim's claim, these authors show the ultimate triumph of humanity. Adopting an objective stance, the writers document historical events in careful language and thereby compel the readers to think seriously about the dangers of war, the futility of communal conflicts, and the necessity of peace and harmony in the society. The authors' writing strategy--reluctance to include horrific scenes exclusively, refusal to make a "spectacle of violence," and absence of the employment of the language of aggression--discourages further incitement of chaos and conflict. Instead of any further dissemination of violence, these stories advocate for harmonious living and make people contemplate on the general welfare of society.

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⁵¹ In the story, the narrator remarks, "then began those memorable months of disgrace by the end of which the Hindus had won, the Muslims had won, but Humanity had lost" (208).

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