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From Nizam to Nation: The Representation of Partition in Literary Narratives about Hyderabad, Deccan


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Graduate Program in Comparative Literature
A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree in Doctor of Philosophy
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**FROM NIZAM TO NATION: THE REPRESENTATION OF PARTITION IN
LITERARY NARRATIVES ABOUT HYDERABAD, DECCAN**

(Spine Title: From Nizam to Nation)

(Thesis Format: Monograph)

by

Nazia Akhtar

Graduate Program in Comparative Literature

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
The University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario, Canada

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THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES

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**From Nizam to Nation: The Representation of Partition in Literary
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Date _____

Chair of the Thesis Examination Board

ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines literary representations of the Partition of India in 1947 as it affected the southern princely state of Hyderabad, Deccan. Through my focus on Hyderabad, I interrogate and reject the assumption generally made in scholarly analyses of Partition that this momentous, life-changing event did not significantly affect South India. In doing so, I also question the origins of the self-professed secular, egalitarian, and democratic Indian nation by shedding light on the invasion of Hyderabad and the subsequent erasure of this event from Indian historiography and mainstream culture.

Different literary texts respond differently to this fraught, suppressed history. Engaging with questions about gendered and classed violence, trauma, and silence, I study three literary texts written several decades after Partition: Anita Desai's novel *Clear Light of Day* (1980, English), Samina Ali's novel *Madras on Rainy Days* (2004, English), and Kishorilal Vyas "Neelkanth's" short story "Durga" (2005, Hindi). In my analysis, I utilize the theorizations of Partition scholars such as Jill Didur and Nandi Bhatia about how literature destabilizes the hegemony of mainstream and official narratives of cataclysmic historical events such as Partition. I also draw on Didur's argument that literature not only has the power to upturn such historical narratives, which silence alternative narratives, but that literature itself must also be scrutinized as a narrative, ideologically motivated and politically interested. Retrospectively engaging in different measures with Partition, Hyderabad, and communalism, each literary text in my corpus points to the ongoing impact of Partition on Hyderabadis and throws crucial light on the issues of citizenship, class, gender, and narrative in the context of Partition and Hyderabad. In the process, they demonstrate/expose the implicit as well as explicit assumption in Partition Studies that the South was immune to the cartographic cracking of India.

Keywords: Hyderabad, Partition literature, Anita Desai, Samina Ali, Kishorilal Vyas

“Neelkanth,” Telangana, Razakars, Nizam, Feminism, Subaltern, Trauma.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to my supervisors, Nandi Bhatia and Teresa Hubel, for their limitless kindness, patience, and support throughout my doctoral studies. I remain indebted to them for going beyond the call of duty to advise, encourage, and guide me over the past four-and-a-half years. Over the years, they have ensured that I have work in the summers so that I can stay in London and focus on my writing or go to India and conduct research towards my dissertation. I thank them for contributing to my growth as a scholar through our many conversations and heated debates about Hindi-Urdu, Partition, migration, gender, class, and communalism – all things India and Hyderabad.

During my years as a graduate student, teaching assistant, and instructor in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures at Western, I have benefited from the ever gracious help and patience of our dynamic administrative trio – Dawn Gingerich, Teresa Aconito, and Sylvia Kontra. With their swift efficiency and prompt wit and humour, they have made my time here productive and enjoyable. I thank as well Laurence de Looze, David Darby, and Aara Suksi for their sustained mentorship, guidance, and affection.

This dissertation would not have been possible without the stubborn faith of my parents and my brother. It was their love, support, and complete and total faith in me that made me finish this project. I thank also my aunt, uncle, and cousins in Windsor for their love, affection, and understanding, which have nourished me over the past six years in Canada. I specifically want to thank my Khala, my second mother, for everything that I cannot attempt to put into words. I thank Akbar Ehsan for his much-needed philosophy and Shahab Siddique for his much-needed cousinly banter.

I thank Agnes Herra, who has been my rock these past four years, for her time, affection, understanding, tolerance, and pep-talk. I thank family members and friends – Nahid Mami, Shagufta Sumbul, Chanchal Bhabhi, Sumbul Fatihi, Pooja Sanyal, Deepa Iyer, Rina Koradia, Marina Arkhipova, Devinder Singh Dhama, Sonia Dhama, Charusmita Gadekar, Sarah Afraz, and Samurailatpam Sujata – whom I have not seen for a long time but who never ceased to motivate me as I sometimes faltered, traumatized by the violence of Partition and communalism.

I thank Drs. U.M. Nanavati, Deeptha Achar, Maqsood Ahmad, Susan Bhatt, Charanjit Singh, and Ritoo Jerath for inspiring me to be a teacher. My gratitude extends to my students Katie Starr, Darmant Bhullar, Varun Hargan, Sheetal Dua, Anuj Taxali, Asha Vyas, Anisha Chotalia, and Rajkamal Lalli for teaching me so much over the years. I also thank Amber Riaz, Alia Somani, Farzad Shahinfard, Bahareh Kasmai, Anushree Majumdar, Ani Hoque, Élika Ortega, Jen Kozak, Donna Atkinson-Wilson, Karthick Ramachandran, and Zohreh Nouri, all of whom have been my partners-in-crime over the past six years that I have spent in Canada. I am eternally grateful to Jason Staniforth, my honorary big brother, and Iulia David, Auntie Cornelia, and Grandma Elena, for including me in their families and making me one of their own. In Toronto, I thank Mr. Bashir Beg for helping me find resources about Hyderabad communities in diaspora. In Hyderabad, I thank my friends and colleagues at / associated with Yugantar for their generosity with their time and resources: Jaideep Undurti, Jasraman Grewal, Dr. K. Lalita, Mr. M. Sashi Kumar, Shankar, and Vandana. I also thank Mr. B. Narsing Rao, the late Mr. Mughni Tabassum, the late Mr. Raj Bahadur Gour, Mrs. Oudesh Bawa, Aruna Aunty and Jayaraman Uncle, and Aarti and Rishi Dhand for their hospitality and interest in my work.

And finally, I thank Arfi, sky of my thoughts, for waiting for me so patiently and cheerfully.

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Introduction: Partition Studies and Its Engagements with Hyderabad in the 1940s

In 1947, the transfer of power from the British Raj to Indians was accompanied by the Partition of India into India and Pakistan (West Pakistan, now known as Pakistan; and East Pakistan, now known as Bangladesh). The two provinces that were at the heart of the Partition debates between Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims were Punjab and Bengal. The demographic upheaval and the ensuing communal (sectarian)¹ violence that Partition constituted resulted in the largest migration in human history as well as the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of people. Numerical estimates of the migrations vary wildly between eight million to ten million people; there were also anywhere between two hundred thousand and two million people who were killed (Butalia, *Other 3*; Menon and Bhasin 35). The gendered nature of the violence of Partition is seen in the fact that approximately seventy-five thousand women are reported to have been abducted and raped (Butalia, *Other 3*).

The sheer magnitude of the abductions of women was such that the Indian and Pakistani governments arrived at an agreement called the Inter-Dominion Treaty of December 6, 1947 and decided to “recover” as many women as they could through the Central Recovery Operation; social workers such as Kamla Patel (in Lahore and Amritsar) and Anis Kidwai (in Delhi) participated in this “recovery” operation under the supervision of Mridula Sarabhai, a Congress activist (Butalia, *Other 114*; Menon and Bhasin 71-3). The treaty was followed in December 1949 by a Bill called the Abducted

¹ The term “communalism” is generally used to describe sectarian violence between Hindus and Muslims in India. For an extremely detailed etymology and history of the term, see Gyanendra Pandey’s *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India* (1990). For a shorter but succinct and insightful definition and history of communalism in South Asia as well as its prevalence in west-based South Asian diaspora, see Crispin Bates’s introduction to *Community, Empire and Migration: South Asians in Diaspora* (2001) (1-3). See also Ayesha Jalal’s critique of the questionable way the term has been used by scholars to refer to Muslim politics in her “Exploding Communalism: The Politics of Muslim Identity in South Asia” (1998).

Persons Recovery and Restoration Act. This Bill was introduced in the Indian Constituent Assembly and remained in force till 1957 (Butalia, *Other* 140; Menon and Bhasin 99).

The Central Recovery Operation recovered about thirty thousand abducted women during its existence (Butalia, *Other* 130).

While the partitioning of the Punjab saw a large exchange of minority community populations between Indian and Pakistani Punjab in the late 1940s, the persecution of non-Muslim minorities persists in Pakistan as the most recent exodus of Pakistani Hindus from Punjab (and also Sindh and Balochistan) in 2012 has revealed (Lakshmi, “Hindus”; Bareth, “Pakistani”; *Tribune*, “Fleeing”; *Times of India*, “118”; *BBC News*, “Pakistani”). The more porous borders of West Bengal and Bangladesh have also witnessed a continuous trickle of refugees and migrants coming to India from Bangladesh since 1947. The strident advance of Hindutva, a right-wing Hindu fundamentalist ideology, which derives its force from reinforcing narratives of Muslim violence during Partition, has also spelled death and destruction for India’s Muslim minority.

Partition violence has been represented in literature written in several languages such as Urdu, Punjabi, Hindi, and English. The Urdu short stories and sketches of writers such as Saadat Hasan Manto (*Siyah Hashiye* (1948), “Toba Tek Singh” (1955)) and Ismat Chughtai (“Roots”), as well as the Urdu poetry of Faiz Ahmad Faiz (“Subh-e-Azadi” (1947)) are a few examples of vernacular literary works that represent the brutality and savagery with which people were raped and killed during Partition. Amrita Pritam’s Punjabi poem “Ajj akhaan Waris Shah nu” (1948) and novel *Pinjar* (1950), Attia Hosain’s English short stories “Phoenix Fled” and “After the Storm” (1953), and her novel *Sunlight on a Broken Column* (1961), Bhisham Sahni’s Hindi novel *Tamas* (1974),

Anita Desai's English novel *Clear Light of Day* (1980), Bapsi Sidhwa's English novel *Cracking India* (1988), Shauna Singh Baldwin's English novel *What the Body Remembers* (2000), and Samina Ali's English novel *Madras on Rainy Days* (2004) are only a handful of examples from what is a very rich and diverse collection of writing that addresses difficult questions associated with Partition and how it continues to haunt South Asians down to the present day. Similarly, cinema has also engaged with Partition right from the start, as is evident from Nemai Ghosh's Bengali film *Chinnamul* (1950), Ritwik Ghatak's Bengali trilogy *Meghe Dhaka Tara* (1960), *Komal Gandhar* (1961), and *Subarnarekha* (1962), and M.S. Sathu's Urdu film *Garm Hawa* (1973).

There are also literary anthologies such as *Writings on India's Partition* (1976), which is edited by Ramesh Mathur and Mahendra Kulasrestha and contains English translations of Hindi, Urdu, and Punjabi short stories, poems, an excerpt from a play, and two critical essays on literary texts; the three-volume anthology of Partition short stories titled *Stories About the Partition of India* (1994), which is edited by Alok Bhalla and includes short stories in English as well as English translations of Urdu, Hindi, Bengali, Punjabi, Sindhi, and Malayalam short stories; *Orphans of the Storm* (1995), which is edited by Saros Cowasjee and K.S. Duggal and consists of short stories on Partition by writers who wrote in English, Hindi, Urdu, and/or Bengali; and *Vibhajan ki Kahaniyan* ("Stories of Partition," 2006), which is a compilation of Urdu short stories edited by Musharraf Alam Zauqi. Zauqi's collection is published in Hindi's Devanagari script for easier access by many Indian readers. *Crossing Over: Partition Literature from India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh* (2007), edited by Frank Stewart and Sukrita Paul Kumar, also makes a significant contribution because not only does it consist of stories, essays, and

excerpts from novels written in English, Hindi, Urdu, and Bengali, but the text is also interspersed with photographs of Teresa Vas, a Goan Christian from Karachi who now lives in Hawai'i, and whose family's experiences of Partition as disruption and separation dot the pages between individual stories, excerpts, and essays. This photographic archive is particularly significant because it highlights the fact that Partition not only affected Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs, or Punjabis, Bengalis, and North Indians generally, but also shook the lives of those who could not or did not relate on a basic level with any of these indices of political identity. The two-volume anthology *India Partitioned: The Other Face of Freedom* (1995), which is edited by Mushirul Hasan and consists of stories, poems, diaries, eye-witness accounts, and excerpts from novels and autobiographies that were originally written in English, Hindi, and Urdu, makes a similar contribution by reproducing the 1947 drawings of artist and Partition eye-witness Krishna Khanna as frontispieces.

However, the post-Partition years of the Indian state are marked by an official and historiographical silencing of any discussion of Partition violence. Gyanendra Pandey has argued in "In Defence of the Fragment: Writing about Hindu-Muslim Riots in India Today" (1991), *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism, and History in India* (2001) and, most prominently, in "The Prose of Otherness" (1994), that historians' history of Partition declares violence to be non-narratable in order to distance us from it. It "tends to produce a prose of Otherness" in its account of "the masses" driven by unreason to commit acts of communal violence. Pandey, and other scholars such as Krishna Kumar, have made similar arguments that the absence of representations of Partition in nationalist historiography in India can be attributed to the potential of

memories of such extremes of violence and devastation to mar the construction of a new nation and its quest for modernity and progress. Thus, everything that does not contribute to the building of the nation state is Othered. The historians' history of Partition, therefore, represents Partition as "a history of crisis for the Indian nation and the nationalist leadership" (Pandey, "Prose" 194). What actually happened during Partition, i.e. communal violence, is underrepresented as the focus remains on India's freedom struggle.

The élitism of this nationalist historiography is seen in the fact that there is never any mention of the experiences of common people, or even any mention of the militant struggles led by people in the quest for freedom. In other words, there is no popular construction of Partition and the violence that constituted it, no representation of its human dimension. Historians' history writes Partition history as a history of causes or origins, represents it not as a part of this, but of another, alien history which we do not really claim as our own, and localizes it by problematically asserting that it was a freak occurrence, an aberration which just happens in the difficult birth and lives of nations.² Historians have also remained silent on Partition violence with the conviction that this silence and consequent forgetting is in the interests of that essential unity between Indians. But Pandey warns that if we do not examine how Partition was constituted by violence and how that violence unfolded, we will never know our past politics and will,

² For examples of such perceptions amongst historians, see the essays in the first volume of *Pangs of Partition* (2002) by the following historians: B.R. Nanda, Chittabrata Palit, S.K. Chaube, V.N. Datta, Salil Mishra, Sucheta Mahajan, Dwijendra Tripathi, and Lal Bahadur Varma. Literary scholars too are not entirely exempt from this trend. For example, the fact that Partition literature does not try to "fathom the cause or source" of Partition makes it "inadequate and wanting" in Mathur's assessment (18). See also Bhalla's introduction to *Stories About the Partition of India*, where he suggests that Partition violence stems from the "irrational passions that erupted so violently amongst us" (xiv); this approach is in line with the way nationalist historians face Partition violence as well as communal violence in general and "serves to normalize the violence and reduce history to a more or less generalized account of the triumphant march of modernity and progress" (Pandey, "Prose" 192-3).

therefore, be unable to control our future politics and prevent history from repeating itself.³

It was only in the 1980s, a decade of terrible communal violence in India, with anti-Sikh riots taking place in Delhi and its surrounding areas in 1984, anti-Muslim riots in Bhagalpur in 1989, and Hindu-Muslim riots in Hyderabad in 1989, that historians began to seriously consider Partition in their work. This violence drew to a head with the demolition of the Babri Masjid (“Babri Mosque”) in Ayodhya on December 6, 1992 and the Hindu-Muslim riots that followed in Bombay, Surat, Ahmedabad, and Bhopal in 1992-1993. And then there was 1997, the year when India and Pakistan celebrated with great pomp and fervour fifty years of independence. The body of scholarship we know as Partition Studies began to take definitive shape in the atmosphere created by these events; amidst the nationalist jubilation that followed such bloodthirsty aggression, scholars were compelled to rethink that which remained forgotten: Partition, the darker side of independence.

As a result of this initiative, the corpus of Partition scholarship has expanded in recent years and has helped us to better appreciate, acknowledge, and share the tremendous and continuing impact of Partition on South Asians. Scholars have worked extremely hard and been very innovative in uncovering and analyzing the human experiences of Partition that are embedded in various locations and genres. Research has been conducted on literature, oral testimonies, letters, political pamphlets, parliamentary records, journalistic sources, memoirs, autobiographies, school history textbooks,

³ Furthermore, the fact that there were acts of kindness during Partition between members of different communities must not be allowed to underplay the history of changing relations between those communities, “of emerging right-wing formations and attitudes of a state that has become increasingly partisan and, indeed, of a growing societal tolerance of violence and brutality” (Pandey, *Remembering* 64).

sketches, painting, photographs, political cartoons, websites, cinema, theatre etc. Scholars have debated, speculated, and dialogued over the role of literature in contributing to Partition scholarship; they have interrogated the forms and shapes taken by mainstream Partition historiography as well as the way the Indian and Pakistani states have dealt with Partition; they have rewritten and reformed the discipline of Partition historiography and pedagogy; and they have investigated how Partition continues to critically affect South Asians in the subcontinent as well as in diaspora abroad.

Scholars must be commended for their inquiries into the way Partition has transformed the geographical, demographical, political, cultural, social, and economic visage of those regions that have been commonly believed to be most affected by this event. These places most prominently include those areas that were cartographically cut up, such as Punjab and Bengal. There has also been some attempt by historians such as Pandey, Mushirul Hasan, Papiya Ghosh, Mukulika Banerjee, Parshotam Mehra, Kanchanmoy Mojumdar, Jayanta Sengupta, and K.S. Singh to analyze the impact of Partition on places that were not literally partitioned, such as Delhi, Kashmir, Sindh, Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Bihar, Central Provinces and Berar, Orissa, tribal communities and North-East India, and the North West Frontier Province. However, in spite of the ingenuity and determination of these scholars to look for forgotten or neglected experiences of people during Partition, there is an almost absent-minded tendency to assume that there was no impact of Partition in South India.

It is this gap that my dissertation seeks to fill (in some measure) through its focus on literary representations of Partition as it affected the princely state of Hyderabad, which was situated on the Deccan plateau of South India and consisted of a Hindu

majority ruled by a Muslim Nizam until 1948, when it was forced to “accede” to India.⁴ The comparatively less (than Punjab) communal violence in the princely states, reported by contemporary British commentators and administrative officials, appears to have become an indicator that nothing happened in places such as Hyderabad. But after Shail Mayaram’s astonishing essay “Speech, Silence and the Making of Partition Violence in Mewat” (1997) about the impact of Partition in the princely states of Bharatpur and Alwar, where Meos (a hybrid Hindu-Muslim community) were persecuted openly by the rulers and their forces and about thirty thousand are believed to have been killed in Bharatpur alone (129), it is impossible to believe that the princely states with their mixed populations of Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims remained unaffected by Partition.

Indeed, my research shows that Hyderabad, landlocked in the “belly” of India, was completely transformed during Partition. Not only did it lose its distinct identity as a sovereign, independent state dominated by a particularly Deccani (Urdu, “southern”) synthesis of Muslim and Hindu culture; it also underwent significant cultural, linguistic, social, political, and economic changes after acceding to India. In fact, the literal and metaphorical idea of “absorption” of Hyderabad into India can be read in oppositional terms from the literal and metaphorical idea of partitioning in Punjab and Bengal. Yet, as I argue in this dissertation, absorption was no less violent, dislocating, and devastating than partitioning.

Scholars have acknowledged “the culpability of state authorities in hardening [during and since Partition] borderlines and boundaries that were once flexible or porous”

⁴ The verb *accede* with reference to the princely states echoes the language contained in the Instrument of Accession, a legal document drafted by a Negotiating Committee consisting of native princes and Indian ministers on July 31, 1947. By signing it, individual rulers of India’s many princely states would effectively hand over the legislation and governance of their states in matters of defence, external affairs, and communications to the Indian government. The Instrument of Accession is reproduced in V.P. Menon’s *The Story of the Integration of the Indian States* (1972) (109-10).

(Kaul 5). But what about such cases as Hyderabad where considerable efforts were made to ensure that borders disappeared and people were forced to assimilate into hegemonic definitions of national culture and religious community? My dissertation explores what happens when a political entity from which one derives critical notions of self-identity simply vanishes off the map into a kind of cartographic oblivion. In other places, “[v]arious state agencies forced people to choose between one nation and the other, or one religious identity and another, or, more often than not, made the choice for them” (5). This was also true of Hyderabad. Through an engagement with questions about nationalism, communalism, gender, and class⁵, my dissertation explores how Hyderabadi were and continue to be affected by the turmoil of Partition. In doing so, I focus specifically on the violence enacted on Hyderabadi women during and since Partition and how responses to this violence have played with the different layered dimensions of silence and speech. The formulaic pattern of Partition violence in the North was also replicated in Hyderabad, as the numbers of people killed, raped, and dispossessed clearly shows. This violence as well as the metamorphosis of Hyderabad’s

⁵ My understanding and usage of the word “class” (and its associated terminology, such as “bourgeois,” “working class,” and “middle-class”) stems from the way it has been theorized and applied by Subaltern Studies scholars, such as Ranajit Guha and Partha Chatterjee, in their work on peasant struggles and insurgencies, and communist and Marxist scholars from Hyderabad and Telangana, such as the collective of left-wing feminist scholars from Stree Shakti Sanghatana as well as communist activists and intellectuals such as P. Sundarayya and Raj Bahadur Gour, in their work on the Telangana Armed Struggle (1946-1951). For instance, Ranajit Guha argues that class consciousness and identity amongst peasant insurgents stems from a “negative consciousness” (*Elementary* 23), i.e. one that is defined in opposition to the élite (bourgeois, middle-class, and/or upper-class) subject and everything that s/he stands for economically, politically, culturally, socially, and even linguistically. Peasant identity “amounted to the sum of his subalternity. In other words, he learnt to recognize himself not by the properties and attributes of his own social being but by a diminution, if not negation, of those of his superiors” (18). Furthermore, Guha goes on to clarify that sectarian and ethnic solidarities also have the potential to inflect class consciousness and either reinforce class solidarities or, as I argue later in this thesis, undermine them. In addition to this, ideological affinities across class lines between those who may be traditionally defined as élite and those who are subalterns may also play a role in class struggles, as some Telangana activists and researchers have argued in the case of the Telangana Struggle (Stree 9).

identity after it was forced to accede to India is largely unacknowledged in Partition Studies.

In fact, there appears to be a questionable presumption in scholarship that nothing much happened during Partition in regions that have not been studied so far by scholars. This is the perception that emerges from comments that assert that “Partition had a very different impact on different parts of this country, *with many regions not affected at all*” (Kaul 9, emphasis added). This statement begs a few questions. What regions are these that were “not affected at all,” and on what research does Suvir Kaul base his conviction that nothing happened there? It also appears that repetition has played a crucial role in firmly establishing a North-centric belief where Partition is concerned. Thus, Pandey writes that “a substantial part of the rural and urban population was implicated [during Partition], victims and aggressors were often, the same people, and attack followed attack, and revenge followed revenge, for several weeks, if not months, *in a large part of north-western India*” (“Community” 2037, emphasis added). In another article, he writes that “Partition was, for the majority of people living in what are now the divided territories of *northern India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, the event of the twentieth century*” (“In Defence” 560, emphasis added). While it is certainly true that Punjab witnessed intense and terrible horrors over a very short period of time, that Delhi burned and was in turmoil for many tense months, and that Bengalis still face the trauma of displacement and disenfranchisement, the repeated emphasis by competent and meticulous scholars that Partition affected North India seems to have crystallized in our minds to mean that it was only North India that was affected by it.

Pandey also mysteriously states that South Indian troops were deployed in Delhi during Partition because they “took a more neutral stand in the battle between Hindus and Muslims – whether because this was a largely north Indian affair, or because of the different signals emanating from the government” (*Remembering* 141). He does not provide sources for this information, nor does he elaborate on why he believes that the communal tensions of Partition were “a largely north Indian affair” or what the “different signals emanating from the government” were. It is also not possible to divine what this means from the context of Delhi in which he makes this statement. So, the question that arises is this: what provokes Pandey’s speculation that South Indian troops were somehow free of communal bias and that the South Indian regions from which they came remained immune from the religious polarization witnessed by communities in North India? Pandey’s implicit assumptions need to be scrutinized in light of the fact that South India has many pockets of large urban Muslim populations, such as Hyderabad city (41.17%), Dakshina Kannada (22.1%), Kozhikode (37.5%), Kannur (27.6%), Malappuram (68.5%), Kasaragod (34.3%), and Palakkad (26.9%) (Government of India, *Census*). Given the long reach and wide spread of Partition politics and violence in North Indian regions with majority or significant minority Muslim populations, scholars must not assume that South Indian majority and minority Muslim populations remained untouched by Partition until research has conclusively proved that this was the case.

Hasan too is not exempt from stating the occasional “fact” without citing his sources or his reasons for believing them. For example, he makes a case for studying Partition on account of the misery it caused to many people, even though “*only 33 per cent of the country’s population was affected by the communal eruption*” (*Inventing* 30,

emphasis added). He does not state what parts of the country come under this figure. Another puzzling discrepancy arises when Hasan claims that “only 3 per cent of the country’s population was affected by the communal eruption” (“Memories” 175, emphasis mine). From where does he collate these disparate figures? Such inconsistencies in numbers only testify to a need for more scholarship about how Partition affected localities, communities, and regions that are outside North India.

Pandey makes a pertinent point when he writes that “the task of analysing partition narratives and memories is much too large for any one researcher to aim at comprehensive coverage” (“Community” 2037). However, just because scholars must necessarily restrict themselves to zeroing in on a limited area in the interest of producing meaningful and in-depth research, this is no reason for us to believe or to encourage the belief, particularly in the absence of research to prove it, that South India was somehow sheltered from the impact of Partition. Perhaps the state of Partition Studies today can be understood through Pandey’s own theorization about the idea of a centre of knowledge. Pandey points out that standard historiographical procedure since the nineteenth century appears to have required the taking of a prescribed centre (of a state-formation, nation-state) as one’s vantage point and the official archive as one’s primary source for the construction of an adequate general history. This procedure is not

easily discarded, both because states and nations are central organising principles of human society as we know it, and because the historian must necessarily deal with periods, territories, social groups and political formations constituted into unities or blocs. However, the fact of their constitution – by historical circumstance and by the historian – needs to be borne in mind. The provisionality

and contested character of all such unities (the objects of historical analysis) must be underlined. (“In Defence” 571)

While Pandey’s context is that of political systems, it also applies to geographical locations. This mainstream historicizing of an Indian politics that is firmly anchored to Delhi and North India points to what Pandey calls “[t]he remoteness of Delhi” (571). In other words, by maintaining Delhi and North India as the epicentre of Indian politics and normative culture in historiography, historians have grossly overlooked how significant historical events that occur in India, such as Partition, affect those parts of the country that are geographically and normatively far removed from the North.

Perhaps what we need to recognize in Partition Studies is indeed the constructed centring of Partition politics in North India. The “Delhi” of Partition Studies must be decentred to incorporate new ways of thinking about Partition in parts of India where divisions were not cartographic. Pandey explains how any representation of Partition, whether it is stored in official archives or between the pages of a novel, is a fragment. The metaphor is also applicable to the contributions of Partition Studies thus far. The contribution of my dissertation is that it complements these existing fragments with its own fragmentary but vital intervention by focusing on the impact of Partition on Hyderabad.

A good place to commence this project is to acknowledge what has been said (however little or marginal) about Hyderabad in the existing body of work on Partition. Perhaps the most significant scholarly contribution to our knowledge of how Partition affected Hyderabad comes from the work of anthropologist Karen Leonard and scholar and librarian Omar Khalidi. While Leonard’s encyclopedic mapping of twentieth century

migrations of Hyderabadis in her book *Locating Home: India's Hyderabadis Abroad* (2007) as well as some of her earlier articles, such as “Construction of Identity in Diaspora: Emigrants from Hyderabad, India” (1999) and “Hyderabadis in Pakistan: Changing Nations” (2001), do not take Partition as a necessary starting point or rationale for her research, she does address the way Partition was a large factor (among others) for encouraging the migrations of Hyderabadis to Pakistan, the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, the Middle-East, and Australia during and since the late 1940s. One of these diasporic Hyderabadis is Khalidi, who has significantly redressed the mainstream silencing of the violence in Hyderabad during the late 1940s by reprinting parts of a confidential and damning Indian government report on the Indian army's activities in Hyderabad during its invasion of that state; producing an annotated bibliography of primary and secondary sources on Partition in Hyderabad; and editing a volume of essays and articles called *Hyderabad: After the Fall* (1988) on the experiences and memories of Hyderabadis survivors of Partition.

Albeit in much smaller measure than in Leonard's or Khalidi's work, it appears that the fate of Hyderabad has also been at the back of Hasan's mind when he edited his two books of essays on Partition because both *India's Partition: Process, Strategy and Mobilization* (1994) as well as *Inventing Boundaries: Gender, Politics and the Partition of India* (2002) contain an essay each on the upheavals in that state in the mid-twentieth century. The contribution of Ian Copland's essay in *India's Partition* to scholarship about Hyderabad lies in the fact that, by focusing on the Hindu-Muslim riots in Hyderabad between 1937 and 1940, it dispels the widespread notion that princely states such as Hyderabad or, for that matter, places in South India were free of communal violence. In

Inventing Boundaries, Hasan reprints Alec Reid's column (dated April 13 and 16, 1949) from the *Statesman*, in which Reid takes a clearly polemical position in favour of the Indian government's position vis-à-vis Hyderabad by arguing that the invasion of September 1948, which resulted in the forced accession of Hyderabad to India, was beneficent for Hyderabadis in general. While his analysis includes mention of several different strains of political activity in Hyderabad, such as that of the Congress, the violent paramilitary Razakars, and the communists, it does not take into account the extensive repression and persecution of communists and Muslims that the Indian army indulged in after Hyderabad's accession. My dissertation examines in detail the impact of Partition on Muslims in Hyderabad during and since Partition, thereby restoring to history in some small measure these experiences which have been and continue to be silenced by mainstream Indian culture, the Indian state, as well as Indian historiography.

There are also small hints in other scholars' work that suggest that all was not well in Hyderabad during Partition. Joya Chatterji points out in a footnote to her essay on the Indian state's treatment of Punjabi and Bengali Partition refugees that the "Police Action" (the Indian government's euphemistic term for its armed invasion of Hyderabad in September 1948) and the tensions caused by the Indo-Hyderabad dispute between India and Pakistan caused a sudden, sharp wave of migrations from East Bengal to West Bengal by Hindus who feared that they would face reprisals in Muslim-majority East Bengal (104). In addition to this, there are half-sentences in Pandey's work, tip-offs as it were, that South India did not remain unaffected by Partition, for he parenthetically admits that, in addition to Muslim refugees all over north India, there were Muslim refugees "in some parts of southern India too" (*Remembering* 128).

Besides these references in historiography and sociology to tensions in Hyderabad and South India, Bhalla's anthology consists of two stories by Lalithambika Antharjanam, which were originally written in Malayalam, a South Indian language. "A Leaf in the Storm" deals with the anguish of a pregnant woman "recovered" from her abductor and brought to a refugee camp in East Punjab, and "The Mother of Dhirendu Muzumdar" represents the predicament of East Bengali Hindus who not only faced communal violence during Partition but were also persecuted in 1971. Through direct addresses to Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi, the protagonist of the latter story holds up to scrutiny the divisive politics of Partition and the leaders who were instrumental in executing them. The fact that a Malayalam-speaking, upper-caste Keralan woman who lived in rigidly defined *purdah* all her life engages sensitively, politically, and knowledgeably with Partition as a theme in her oeuvre shows that Partition is not solely or exclusively a northern debate and that it has influences, resonances, and consequences that extend beyond the north. And while current scholars have remarked on the "unexpected and pleasant find" (Asaduddin 326) these two stories are, they have not bothered to examine why they are interesting and significant. Nor does Bhalla himself attempt to do that in his introduction to the anthology.

Thus, while there are a few significant nods towards Hyderabad as a region where the reverberations of Partition were felt, there has been no full-scale, multi-dimensional analysis of the experience and immediate and continuing relevance of Partition in the lives of Hyderabadis since the 1940s. While the social and political story of Hyderabad in the milieu of Partition forms the subject of my next chapter, the three chapters that succeed it examine the representation of Hyderabad in the context of the gendered

communal violence of Partition in three literary texts. And my analysis of these literary texts draws extensively from existing critical scholarship about the role of literature in Partition Studies.

This scholarship has underscored and emphasized the crucial importance of literature and creative representations in remembering, confronting, and understanding Partition. For example, significant perspectives on such representations emerge in the second volume of *Pangs of Partition* (2002). Edited by S. Settar and Indira B. Gupta, this volume abounds with approaches to Partition through literature (prose, poetry, theatre), linguistics, pedagogy, painting, film, history, personal narratives, and translation studies. The use of fragments in Bengali literature and film and how these operate to reveal the tremendously disruptive character of Partition is highlighted by Partha Chatterjee, who explains that Partition is never the openly obvious plot concern in Ritwik Ghatak's films. Instead of a central focus on Partition, the dispossession and fragmentation it caused are represented through the use of metaphors, such as the repeatedly drawn and erased chalk drawings by two little girls in *Komal Gandhar* (1961), which gesture towards the infinite and obsessive desire to start life all over again.⁶ Tapati Chakravarty makes a similar argument about the representation of Partition through fragments when she points out that Bengali poetry, which has extensively dealt with the theme of Partition, is a particularly apt medium to convey the affective sense of fracturing Partition involved because, unlike modern Bengali prose, it did not rely upon "experientially concrete history ... to

⁶ Somdatta Mandal comes to the same conclusion when he highlights Nemai Ghosh's *Chinnamul* (1951), Ritwik Ghatak's *Meghe Dhaka Tara* (1960), *Komal Gandhar* (1961), and *Subarnarekha* (1962), Buddhadeb Dasgupta's *Tahader Katha* (1992), Masiuddin Shaker and Sheikh Niamat Ali's *Surya Dighal Bari* (1979), Tanvir Mokammel's *Chitra Nadir Pare* (1999), and Supriyo Sen's *Way Back Home: A Documentary* (2002) as being crucial Indian and Bangladeshi cinematic memorializations of the 1947 Partition of Bengal, particularly relevant in light of the relative scarcity of Bengali prose on the subject. Like Chatterjee, Mandal explains how Partition is represented in Bengali literature and film as a metaphysical wound afflicting the mind, not the body, and characterized as nostalgia, not madness.

construct its diction” (277). In fact, being much more pliable and allowing for affective distance between “the discursive conditions of the production of a poem as a text, and the text’s formal structure,” poetry has been found to be more suited to take on a theme as overwhelming as Partition than the starkly realistic genre of twentieth century Bengali prose (277).

Historians such as Hasan as well as Pandey have also zeroed in on the fact that while historians have focused on the “grand narrative” of Partition (Hasan, “Memories” 175), which single-mindedly concentrates on the intricate manoeuvres between the high political players at the centre of the Partition debates before independence, writers and poets have taken on the difficult theme of Partition trauma and dispossession in their work. It is this general failure of mainstream and nationalist history to represent Partition that prompts Pandey to instead focus on the literary “fragment,” i.e. fragmentary narratives of communal violence suffused with “other [non-official] potentially richer definitions of the ‘nation’ and the future political community,” which undermine the patriarchal, nationalist history of Partition that represents a “shallow homogenisation” of Partition history through omniscience⁷ (Pandey, “In Defence” 559, 569). In doing so, he acknowledges the critical role played by literature in the absence of meaningful historiography that would grapple with difficult questions such as violence and trauma. He claims to analyze literature – Manazir Ashiq Harganvi’s poems, Kidwai’s first-person account of Partition, and Manto’s “Toba Tek Singh” – not as sources but as “the articulation of another subject-position arising from a certain experience (and

⁷ Scholars have now acknowledged that, besides many other reasons, it was difficult for Indians to engage or think about Partition amidst the celebrations of fifty years of independence in 1997 because “our memories of Partition are fragmented and painful” (Kaul 3). The fragmentation of experience caused by Partition-related trauma as well as the inherently fragmentary character of memory have resulted in the widespread representation of Partition in literature in fragments. The fact that historians, sociologists, and political scientists have also recognized and endorsed such representations has resulted in “fragment” becoming the operative word in Partition Studies.

understanding) of sectarian strife, which may say something about the parameters of our own subject-position and understanding” (569).

It is because of this crucial role of literature amidst a glaring lacuna in historiography till the 1980s that Hasan stresses that to understand what Partition signified to ordinary people, we must turn to literature. He zeroes in on the crux of the matter when he suggests that

[w]hat political debate will never fully do – and the reason we so badly need literature – is to defeat the urge to lay the blame, which keeps the animosity alive. Only literature can truly evoke the sufferings of the innocent, whose pain is more universal and ultimately a vehicle of more honest reconciliation than political discourse. (184)

But while Hasan recognizes the affective power of literature and its general success in crafting a sense of the psychological trauma that Partition caused to individuals and communities, his recourse to literature is perhaps too credulous. Partition literature does, certainly, succeed in destabilizing official narratives, and “in exposing the inadequacy of numerous narratives on independence and Partition, compel us to explore fresh themes and adopt new approaches that have eluded the grasp of social scientists” (185).

However, can it really be generalized that Partition literature represents “a grim and sordid contemporary reality without drawing religion or a particular community as the principal reference point” (185)? Hasan’s understanding of literature that represents the communal violence and rupture of Partition, which he takes at face value, does not consider the underlying motives and ideological bent of writers, poets, and playwrights.

It is in this context of the writing and reception of literary texts on Partition that Jill Didur's *Unsettling Partition: Literature, Gender, Memory* (2006) makes a crucial contribution. In this book, Didur raises questions about how literary texts about Partition, and the academic study of literature, culture, and history, are "enrolled in the production of nationalist imaginaries as well as how they subvert and rewrite them" (20). Employing Chatterjee's premise that nationalism sees the conduct of women within the domestic sphere as crucial to the survival of the spiritual life of the nation and, therefore, the nation itself, the category "woman" becomes a metonym for or even a synonym for nation in the "canonized narrative of partition" (16), effecting an "erasure of difference" (158), "leaving minorities, actual women, and lower castes/classes in a disjunctive relation with the nation" (28) because they do not conform to the scripted citizenship of the nation-state. This notion of communal and national identity located "in" women came to the fore when Partition happened and different communities and nations went into competition with each other (36). Furthermore, the abducted women who survived Partition became constant reminders to national patriarchal interests that they had failed to preserve the women's sexual "purity" (and, therefore, male communal and national honour) and that the only way to control the damage was to "recover" these women (38).

However, while Didur expresses appreciation for the relatively new trend begun by historians such as Pandey to focus on the literary fragment, she is skeptical about the way representations of abducted women and their silences in Partition literature are interpreted and used by historians. An approach to Partition through literature, she writes, "point[s] to a more contingent and polyphonic reading of national identity" (6). But, she writes, while historians such as Pandey claim to analyze literature not as sources but as

“the articulation of another subject-position arising from a certain experience (and understanding) of sectarian strife, which may say something about the parameters of our own subject-position and understanding” (“In Defence” 569), they fail to do exactly that. In other words, in complete contradiction to his avowed aim, Pandey ends up credulously deploying the literary as “evidence” of the everyday (Didur, *Unsettling* 17, 56). For example, referring to his analysis of Kidwai, Didur argues that Pandey naïvely overlooks how the material reality of women being raped, mutilated, and bearing children from unplanned pregnancies as a result of Partition violence necessitated reworkings of discursive domains such as conservative-nationalism, communalism, and patriarchy. As Didur points out, such women “destabilized their [own] convergence in the nationalist imaginings of the recently formed postcolonial state” (57). The postcolonial state, the developing nation, was thrown into a crisis of self-representation as a result of the existence of such women and, often, their refusal to conform to what was expected by them from the state and/or community. The role of abducted women in disrupting the confident progress of nationalism and making its patchwork narration visible is completely elided, the women’s agency stripped, in Pandey’s work.

Didur contends that the use of literary texts in such Partition historiography as Pandey’s is “insufficiently theorized with respect to their [historiographers’] understanding of literary language”⁸ (17). She is concerned about how historians are disposed to consider literature as documents (and not “re-presentations” of Partition violence), which will somehow “complete” our knowledge about Partition. Such a

⁸ It appears that this tendency of historiographers is also becoming a matter of concern for creative writers. For example, Manju Kapur feels the need to attach to her Partition novel *Difficult Daughters* (1998) a disclaimer that “[t]he historical events of this novel have been used in purely imaginative reconstructions.” In this way, she points out the literariness of her historical novel.

perspective ignores the fragmentariness and particularity of texts and perspectives and fails to recognize that literary representations of Partition are not “confessional chronicles of ‘emotional trauma’,” but “interested commentaries” on historical events (48). Didur’s point about the ideological investment embedded in any representation throws into doubt not only Pandey’s use of literary narratives in his work on Partition and communalism, but also Hasan’s idealized argument that Partition literature must be examined because it is presumed to be uniformly non-communal and deals with “the people’s suffering.”

Didur argues that by failing to recognize that there is art and ideology involved in literary writing, we risk reinscribing the same universalizations that are contained in official, patriarchal narratives of Partition, instead of considering how literary texts “might destabilize the concept of representation in this scholarship as a whole” (47). She explains that our reading practice must recognize how language and discourse “mediate and fragment all experience and textual analysis of the past” (48). She also underlines the “interpretive function of reading and writing about the partition, the discursive construction of subjectivity, agency, nationalism, and history that are involved in its narrativization” (5), and accentuates the “instability of meaning in the language of narrative” (40) as well as the “literariness of narrative” (43). Building on Donna Haraway’s theorizations, Didur argues that literature representing historical events should be read as “diffracted and metonymical (which recognizes the mutually constitutive relation between the literal and figurative in narrative) rather than as reflective and metaphorical (which understands them as related but independent)” (50). Such a “staged dialogue ... puts pressure on totalizing constructions of the self, experience, and agency and their relation to the notion of citizenship in the modern nation-state” (Didur 44).

Thus, she argues, literary and historical narratives, both of which are linguistically and ideologically constructed (43), must be read dialogically towards a revisionist history of Partition.

Hasan has also pointed out this subversive facet of Partition literature when he emphasizes the role of literature as a witness to trauma, one that provides “a framework for developing an alternative discourse [from the state’s] on inter-community relations ... [and which] unfold[s] certain critically important dimensions without religion or community emblem as the principal reference point” (*Inventing* 17-8). In fact, in an oblique way, Hasan makes a point that is a little similar to Didur’s, although Didur’s work explicitly centres on the critical role of literature in interrupting official narratives. Hasan’s implicit recognition that literature constructs Partition around a different set of coordinates, setting up solidarities through common suffering and sorrow instead of unities along religious or national lines (*Inventing* 39-40), is in accordance with Didur’s argument that literature frequently and crucially rebels against the way Partition is constructed and understood by nationalists and communalists.

Didur points out that, through a dual strategy of reading in which we situate the perception of abducted women’s experience in terms of gender and pay attention to the literariness of language in all Partition texts, hegemonic community and state narratives are undermined and other narratives are allowed to “emerge, interrupt, and question the hegemony of the assumed understandings” of Partition (*Unsettling* 13). And by focusing on the mediated character of narratives, literary or historical, the reader/scholar is directed away from women’s bodies and sexualities, which are the all-important focus of the patriarchal community as well as the nation state, and is instead led to concentrate on

how women's silences destabilize the loquacity of official discourses on the subject.⁹ In this context, Didur theorizes the silence surrounding communal violence that dominates in women's responses to Partition and is reproduced in testimonies and literary representations of Partition. Bearing in mind Anne Hardgrove's concerns about the efforts of scholars to "recover" women's absent narratives of Partition, she argues that the loss of an archive suggested by this silence necessitates that scholars adopt a pedagogy for the study of partition history that moves away from a model that seeks to 'recover' the past and instead focuses on how totalizing representational strategies smooth over ambivalent responses to the birth of the modern nation-state. (18)

What she means by this is that silence is strategically used often not only by women themselves but also as a literary device in Partition literature such as Jyotirmoyee Devi's *The River Churning* (1995) to represent abducted women's experiences that are at odds with the homogenizing narratives of the nation. Devi uses silence or absence of details of her female protagonist's experiences during Partition to avoid lapsing into the inevitable patriarchal, nationalist vocabulary of "honour" and "shame" associated with the female body. Pointing out that there were many who died during Partition, Didur explains that the Partition archive will, by definition, always be incomplete (136-7). Furthermore, the urge to "recover" trauma and testimony is often an attempt on our part to comfortably deal with Partition and hurriedly move on. But Devi's novel prevents the reader from being able to "complete" his/her understanding of Partition by conveniently and

⁹ At the same time, we must also bear in mind what Mayaram tells us as she writes about the present-day silences of Meo communities about the persecution they faced during Partition in the princely states of Bharatpur and Alwar. Mayaram reminds us that the silence of Partition survivors, whether self-imposed for reasons of self-preservation or imposed by others, is incorrectly and opportunistically interpreted by official channels as well as those who wield power that exploitation and conflict have ceased to affect survivors and do not matter anymore (161).

simplistically retrieving the history of the protagonist. Through silence, Devi gestures towards the “original incompleteness of history or an example of ‘loss as loss’” (139). In doing so, her representation critically cracks the state’s monolithic conception of women as “victims.” In Devi’s portrayal of silence and absence of testimony, therefore, the protagonist sidesteps the tyrannically singular, abstract categories of identity in which the state and the community would like to see her fixed through the (here) sinister agency of speech. And by surrendering to this silence, readers not only appreciate the history of loss as loss but also refuse to identify with a paradigm that forces authors to fix women within the singular vocabulary imposed by patriarchal, nationalist discourses on the experiences of women during Partition.

In fact, Didur’s research suggests that the specific relevance of literature in understanding Partition lies in its mediated character. Building on social anthropologist Veena Das’ formulation that the gendered subject’s body constitutes the mediating sign between the individual and society (*Critical* 184), Didur writes that realist literature becomes such an appropriate place to study this mediation because it too is mediated. In other words, realist literature represents “reality” through its mediation by language. Thus, instead of leaving unquestioned realism, the predominant genre of Partition literature and generally “interpreted as the unmediated, reflective, and subjective ‘T’ruth of partition experience” (*Unsettling* 19), Didur rigorously re-reads realist literature and finds that, while realist narratives help to “(re)produce an imagined community [patriarchal, masculinist, majoritarian nation], they also exhibit contradictions that produce slippages in that same narrative structure” (40). Therefore, realist literature too

must be read as mediated, since it “prompts us to scrutinize the gendered citizen-subject’s compromised position in relation to state and community agendas”¹⁰ (14).

Furthermore, the specific character of literature as “a form of writing that foregrounds the metaphorical and indirect properties of language,” gestures towards how that mediation takes place. Through the use of metaphoricity, which finds such friendly ground in the literary craft, literature represents which discourses are available to the gendered subject at any given time, as well as, significantly, “the specificity of the limits of what can be known about the subject’s experience” (12). It is here that Didur hopes that her study will contribute to the creation of the “therapeutic spaces” of socially shared expressions of pain that Das hopes for¹¹ (*Critical* 192-3, 196), by highlighting how realist narratives about women’s abductions during Partition can be sensitively and carefully read and brought to exert pressure against hegemonic, homogenizing patriarchal-nationalist narratives about Partition and the experiences of women during that event.

In addition to this, a mediated platform like literature is compatible with the inherent inconsistency of memory, as Didur points out with reference to Nandi Bhatia’s essay in *Pangs of Partition*, where Bhatia argues that the uncertainties created by ever-morphing memories lead the protagonist of Sidhwa’s *Cracking India* (1988) to question

¹⁰ A good example of how Didur thinks realist literature should be read comes from Das, who uses literature to write meaningfully about the socio-political crises that surfaced in an unprecedented manner during Partition. For example, she refers to a comment made by the protagonist in Krishna Sobti’s Hindi novel *Mitro Marjani* (1966), in which Mitro dwells on the inconsistency of social customs, so that the sperm of a man from her own religious community legitimizes a wife’s existence, but that of a man from the Other community destroys that existence. Das does not use Mitro’s musings here as a source to authenticate or validate experiences of women, but she uses her ironic, philosophical query as an entry point into a discussion of the dilemma in which abducted women found themselves, as well as the crisis of self-representation state and community in turn were thrown into. Like Mitro, who interrogates patriarchal codifications of honour within kinship relations, Das asks a similar question while extending the realm of inquiry to nationhood and asking how the nation approaches rape and how it addresses the question of raped women and their illegitimate pregnancies and children (*Critical* 56). Thus, she uses the discursive space within literature (Bhatia 195) to add credence to her point and to start off her chapter in a memorable way that makes an impact, but she does not use it to echo some kind of unassailable, omniscient truth about Partition.

¹¹ Das emphasizes the need for the expression of abducted and/or “recovered” women’s pain to become Indian society’s shared experience, so that a moral community can emerge that witnesses this pain, contemplates the guilt we carry within us, and helps survivors to cope and live.

and argue with herself, with others, with nations, and Partition. Thus, Bhatia explains that Lenny, the protagonist, constantly interrupts the novel's narrative with the contradictions of which her memories consist, and this, along with her already liminal status as the member of a supposedly neutral religious minority (Parsis) makes visible her "fragmented, nonlinear, and contradictory experience of 'independence'" (Didur, *Unsettling* 69).

Besides engaging with the question of memory, Bhatia's essay also elaborates upon the role of Partition literature and the dilemma of "authenticity" that historians are flummoxed by in their forays into testimonies and personal narratives of Partition. The crux of Bhatia's argument lies in the fact that she does not engage with the notion of authenticity as being the paramount criterion in determining the validity of Partition literature, testimonies, or personal narratives. Instead, referring to literature in particular, she argues that by employing techniques such as "storytelling, dialogue, flashback and description" (195), as well as different linguistic registers to convey class, regional, national, religious, and other differences (201), which became sharply and acutely visible in the late 1940s, literary texts that represent Partition offer a platform to readers and survivors for debating and discussing vital issues such as violence, agency, and communalism (195). To understand the value of testimonies and personal narratives, we must, therefore, turn to Partition literature and see how it not only affirms the experiences of suffering that people underwent during Partition, but how it also "functions as a discursive space that allows the silenced subjects to speak, interpret and raise critical questions" (195-6). Bhatia suggests that literary texts walk us through significant moments during Partition, and by means of the representation of affective responses,

experiences, and witnessing, they help in the mediated retrieval of silenced voices as well as provide a historical sense and sociological frame for the circumstances in which identities – “religious, familial, communal, gendered and national – were continually formed, deformed and reconstructed in the process” (195, 199, 203). And as she has argued here as well as elsewhere with Anjali Gera Roy, literary texts function as “sites of cultural memory about a shared experience” (Bhatia 199), as “memorials, memorials that are especially important in light of the absence of other public or sculptural monuments to commemorate the event of Partition” (Gera Roy and Bhatia xiv). In other words, in the absence of an institutionalized memory of Partition, literary as well as cultural texts such as films contribute to the public remembrance and reconstruction of “the pain, suffering, and survival of Partition” (xiv).

Bhatia’s and Didur’s theorizations about the nature of memory and literature allow for the formulation of a wider theory about the role of literature in Partition Studies. In their work, they underscore the constructedness and fragmentariness of both memories as well as literature. Furthermore, Didur goes on to connect women’s use of literary indirectness in the testimonies that Das observed during her own research to Cathy Caruth’s theorization about the emergence of history through and in spite of a limited cognition of traumatic experiences by survivors and their listeners/readers (*Unsettling* 142). Caruth argues that it is through gaps and through the excruciating fragmentariness of testimony that history, particularly the history of trauma (which is always, by definition, incomplete), emerges (11). It is this fragmentariness of trauma, in fact, that makes it a particularly good “host” for history, since it is in the gaps that trauma invariably contains that history as personal experience stands a chance of issuing forth

(11). It is in these configurations of memory, trauma, fragment, literature, and history that a sensitive Partition narrative, which pays attention to the officially, patriarchally, and nationally neglected experiences of ordinary people, can arise. In other words, the craftedness of literature makes literature a hospitable ground for the fragmentariness and the constructedness of memories and traumas of Partition. In this way, the “history” of Partition that can be read in Partition literature is located in the incompleteness of trauma and memory. And even though literature is constructed and memory is fragmentary, both search for cohesion and structure, which is what the traumatized individual too often endlessly seeks. Das has, indeed, accurately understood the connection between trauma, history, and literature when she suggests that “[s]ome realities need to be fictionalized before they can be apprehended” (“Language” 69).

Didur’s and Bhatia’s theorizations about the role of literature in addressing the difficult subject of Partition, as well as my own work in this dissertation on the gendered violence faced by women during and since Partition in Hyderabad, are explicitly and implicitly informed by the work of Das, a social anthropologist, as well as feminist historians Urvashi Butalia, Ritu Menon, and Kamla Bhasin. In fact, one of the most path-breaking moments in Partition Studies has consisted of the pioneering scholarship produced by Butalia in her book *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India* (1998) and Menon and Bhasin in their *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India’s Partition* (1998). Butalia’s and Menon and Bhasin’s work marked a conscious decision to depart from the usual trend in Partition Studies at the time (and which Pandey had already critiqued in the early 1990s) to focus on the intricate political manoeuvres between the Muslim League and the Congress, between Jinnah and Gandhi, Nehru and

Patel etc. Butalia writes that through her book, she puts centre-stage “the small actors and bit-part players [of Partition], whose lives, as the lives of all people, were inextricably interwoven with broader political realities” (71). The research conducted by Butalia and Menon and Bhasin consists of interviews and oral narratives of the experiences of ordinary people, women, children, and Dalits;¹² this work becomes even more relevant when they remind us that there are no monuments on either side of the Indian and Pakistani borders that memorialize the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people. Butalia’s and Menon and Bhasin’s work also highlights the dual and often conflicting perspectives of officialdom and eye-witness narration in Partition memoirs written by female state social workers such as Kidwai in her *In Freedom’s Shade* (1974) and Kamla Patel in her *Torn from the Roots* (1977).¹³ But out of several contributions to constructing a people’s history of Partition, the most important achievement of their work so far is that it inserted women, hitherto forgotten, back into the history of Partition by highlighting the specific nature of Partition violence.

Focussing largely on the experience of Punjabi and North Indian women, Butalia and Menon and Bhasin argue that violence against women during Partition was gendered and formulaic, connected to communal and patriarchal conceptions of honour and shame vested in the female body that were deployed in inter-communal conflicts. Furthermore, they show that, contrary to widespread perceptions that men only abducted women of

¹² Besides these sources, their work also considers diaries, memoirs, newspaper reports, letters, records of constitutional debates, reports of enquiry commissions, pamphlets, and books.

¹³ Both Kidwai and Patel represent their own dilemmas over the Central Recovery Operation and poignantly express their helplessness in the face of regulations which allowed “recoveries” that ended in the separation of children from their desperate mothers or doting foster parents, or lovers from one another, or even wives from husbands. Their doubts, censure, as well as self-censure mark points of rupture where the ostensibly undeniable legitimacy and confidently linear trajectory of the patriarchal nationalist state is radically questioned. In doing so, they also undo the state’s rhetorically constructed “victim” image of abducted women and represent them with subjective agency (Didur, *Unsettling* 53, 55).

Other communities, men often abducted women of their own communities. When the threat of violence from the Other community became imminent, they frequently killed “their own” women to prevent their conversion to the Other religion or, what was deemed worse, to prevent their impregnation by men of the Other community. In problematic patriarchal assertions, such women are glorified as martyrs, usually by male Partition survivors.¹⁴ Another myth that Butalia and Menon and Bhasin debunk about the abductions of women is that only young women and girls within reproductive age were kidnapped; they point out that older women were often abducted because they owned or were trustees of property. They also highlight the fact that there were many cases where families were reluctant about taking back female relatives, especially if they had had children from their abductors or were pregnant with the children of their abductors, because this would be a constant reminder of the women’s violation and consequent “impurity.” Such women were expected to abort or give up their children if they expected their families to take them back; if they refused to do so, they ended up living the rest of their lives in *ashrams* originally set up by the state as transit points for abducted women. The measure of the social taboo over sexual transgression is seen in the fact that many abducted women were not accepted by their families even after they had given up their children.

But families and communities were not the only ones who added to the traumatization of abducted women. Butalia’s and Menon and Bhasin’s work also ascertains the often dubious role the state played in “recovering” abducted women. In fact, women became scapegoats for the state’s assertion of Indian national identity vis-à-

¹⁴ Many women also killed themselves, immersed in patriarchal anxieties that their conversion and/or impregnation by men of the Other community would be an indelible blot on the “honour” of their communities (Butalia, *Other* 168-9).

vis Pakistan. As the records of the Indian Constituent Assembly debates reveal, the state's recovery operation became an opportunity to malign the character of Pakistan (Butalia, *Other* 140). Pakistan's very existence, the allegedly communalist rationale for its construction, its reluctance to open up certain areas of the country for the recovery of abducted women, and its protestations against the use of the military instead of the police in the recoveries, became opportunities for elected members of the Indian government to slander Pakistan as uncivilized and barbaric. Pakistan became identified by its men, "tarred with the same brush"; it did not act, it was alleged, as a "civilized" country should, and it did not display "moral standards" (142).

India, on the other hand, was constructed very differently in both the Assembly debates as well as right-wing Hindutva organs, such as the RSS mouthpiece the *Organizer*, as a civilized but weak, passive, and guiltless victim¹⁵ (145-6). Thus, the recovery of women in both the Indian state's perspective and the Hindutva outlook had nothing to do with the interests of women because women were simply not consulted about how they would like to live their lives. It was the retrieval of national honour that lay behind the concerted efforts of the Indian state to "recover" women; therefore,

¹⁵ The bodies of women became conflated with the "body" of the nation in parliamentary and Hindutva discourses. While Pakistan was envisaged as masculinized and tyrannical, parallel images of a feminized, maternal India were set up, so that "[t]he very formation of the nation of Pakistan out of the territory of Bharat (or, the body of Bharatmata) became a metaphor for the violation of the body of the pure Hindu woman" (Butalia, *Other* 145). This metaphor was accompanied by a call to arms for Hindu men, to man up as it were, in the service of the feminized nation (145-7). Thus, just as Pakistani men and Pakistan were constructed as one and the same thing, Hindu manhood and Hindu/Indian nationalism came to be connected, and gendered violence against Hindu/Sikh women became (and has since remained) an excuse for Hindu nationalist platforms such as the *Organizer* to call for Hindu men to militarize against Muslims/Pakistanis. For a detailed analysis of the role of V.D. Savarkar, the foremost ideologue of Hindutva, in the public, mainstream construction of Muslim men as (invariably) rabid, fanatical invaders and Hindu men as non-violent and weak, and the need for Hindu men to militarize, see Purshottam Agarwal's "Savarkar, Surat and Draupadi: Legitimising Rape as a Political Weapon" (1996). See also Ashis Nandy's *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism* (1988), Partha Chatterjee's *National Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse* (1986), and Mrinalini Sinha's *Colonial Masculinity: The 'Manly Englishman' and the 'Effeminate Bengali' in the Late Nineteenth Century* (1995). The careful sculpting of this image is important because it contributes to defining the role of Hindu men in the sexual violence of Partition as somewhat mitigated, owing to "weakness," a benign impotence of sorts, as if Hindu men would have been unable (even should they wish it) to perform the kind and extent of violence that the rabid and highly sexual Muslim men of present-day Pakistan had committed. For another Hindu nationalist endorsement of this highly problematic view, see the account of K.M. Munshi (257-8).

Hindu/Sikh women had to be “retrieved” in order to restore India’s honour (read Indian men’s honour), and Muslim women had to be sent “home” to Pakistan in order to show how morally superior India was to that country. Thus, abducted Muslim women were seen to rightfully belong to Pakistan, even though India claimed to be a secular state and clearly made a great show out of distinguishing itself on this count from Pakistan (Butalia, *Other* 111); and Hindu/Sikh women had to be returned to India because they were automatically assumed to belong to India.

The discourse of “honour” and, consequently, “purity” and “impurity” also threw into crisis the lives of women who had borne their abductors’ children, and the callous attitude towards their fate belied the Indian State’s construction of itself as secular against its criticism of Pakistan as Muslim and communal. Not only were women denied by the nationalist state the right to exercise their agency and decide what they wanted to do, i.e. stay with their abductors or return to their pre-Partition families, but their right to keep their children was also taken away from them on account of nationalist considerations. There were strong objections in Constituent Assembly debates about children of Muslim women by Hindu/Sikh men being taken to Pakistan since paternity was believed to define religious and, consequently, national identity. The wishes of the mothers did not matter, and it also did not concern staunchly nationalist members that the fathers were abductors and rapists. At the same time, these children were “impure” on account of their Muslim maternity, which made it impossible for them to have claim to full Indian citizenship. Where the fathers were Muslim abductors and the mothers Hindu/Sikh, the mothers’ rightful place was clearly established as India; again, if these women were pregnant, they

would have to either abort their unborn children,¹⁶ or if they were already mothers, they would have to leave their children behind in Pakistan, which was believed to be the best place for children of Muslim paternity (Butalia, *Other* 213-9). Whether their fathers could be traced or even convinced to keep the children was another matter entirely.

In fact, as Das has pointed out in *Critical Events: An Anthropological Perspective on Contemporary India* (1995), the state appropriated the patriarchal anxieties of families and communities about sexuality and reproductivity and gave them an unrelentingly forceful and singular impetus as far as the futures of these women were concerned, thereby wilfully overlooking and undermining the subtle, tactful strategies that communities and families often deploy to reabsorb abused women and their questionable children within the communal fold.¹⁷ Thus, she argues in *Critical Events*, in “Composition of the Personal Voice: Violence and Migration” (1991), and an essay co-authored with Ashis Nandy and titled “Violence, Victimhood, and the Language of Silence” (1985), that women’s bodies became the unambiguous site on which nationalist ideologies publicly debated over the significance of sexual and reproductive violence¹⁸ for the honour of the nation. In this way, the state’s recovery program had unhappy ramifications for those women who had managed to settle down to some semblance of

¹⁶ Significantly, the state had no qualms about abortion or even setting aside a special budget for it at a time when it was actually illegal (Butalia, *Other* 128; Singh, “Lady” 190-1). Camp workers, who were, of course, arms of the state, often felt a sense of wrongdoing because performing abortions constituted bending the law and thus “kept [them] a closely guarded secret so that no one would find out about them and they [the pregnant women] wouldn’t have difficulties in the future.” In an attempt to justify the state, one of them displaces concern onto the women by saying that “[t]he circumstances were such that we had to do this, otherwise the women might have committed suicide. All this was done behind closed doors” (190-1).

¹⁷ This is not to suggest, Das clarifies, that communities did not discriminate vehemently and even reject recovered women and their children, relegating them to lives of loneliness and oblivion in *ashrams* and refugee camps (*Critical* 78, 81). In fact, it was in the centre-stage of violence between communities that women were thrust during Partition (81). However, what is also highly relevant in terms of the complicity of the state in this ill-treatment of women is that “there is evidence of state intervention aimed at maintaining norms of honour and purity *in violation of* the practical exigencies of kinship in the community” (78).

¹⁸ Das’s argument is that the violence against women and their communities during Partition was not only pointedly sexual but also purposefully directed towards women’s reproductive and maternal functions (*Critical* 68-9).

normalcy with their abductors; the state uprooted them and, arguably, abducted them all over again (Butalia, *Other* 117). Yet, we must not forget, and Butalia and Menon and Bhasin remind us about this, that there were many women who were happy to be recovered and reunited with their families.

This last point needs to be emphasized periodically in Partition Studies because the questionable aspect of the state's notion of recovery has resulted in gross overstatements by scholars who have used Butalia's and Menon and Bhasin's research in their own work. In "Partitioning Bodies: Literature, Abduction and the State" (2009), Bede Scott has drawn attention to the fact that the reluctance of some women to be returned has been naïvely understood by some literary scholars, who have examined the work of Sidhwa, Pritam, and Manto, as the unconditional wish of all abducted women. Their simplistic interpretation of complex and varied situations reveals the dangers of misunderstandings related to feminist historians' research. Feminist history has itself come under some criticism in "South Asian Women's Communal Identities" (1995), where Hardgrove raises vital questions about the need for scholars to be self-reflective about their practices when it comes to "recovering" the experiences of women during Partition. Hardgrove points out that we may be doing more damage than good if we are not sensitive to "the ways that our use of both witnesses and written evidence can become another act of abduction and/or 'fixing' of women's communal identities"¹⁹ (2427). Like Butalia, Hardgrove also goes so far as to suggest that the state kidnapped women to (forcibly) return their rights to them (2427), and she is concerned that scholars should not

¹⁹ Such concerns are well-founded, especially when scholars unthinkingly give expression to what appears to be an almost greedy quest for knowledge. Take for example, Kaul's comment, "Many members of the generation that lived through those times are still alive, and they are an invaluable historical archive" (5). His words suggest that Partition survivors are repositories of testimonies that scholars are entitled to ransack.

do the same. If we are not careful, she points out, we may end up discursively repatriating women in the same way that the state did through its own recovery program (2427).

Hardgrove points out how women resist such incorporation into scholarly recovery programmes, which, she alleges, aim to retrieve them as “symbols of identity” (2429), by refusing to talk about certain things to scholars. She exhorts scholars to rethink the space and place of research, to remember that we ask these women to speak in times when communalist violence has only escalated to new levels of organized horror, and to recognize that their speech may expose the guilt of their close male kin and thereby jeopardize the semblance of normalcy that their lives may have achieved after experiences of intense trauma (2430). Thus, she cautions us to be mindful of how we change the lives of women we interview. She represents our position as scholars as precarious and insidious when she asks, “Do women constitute themselves as ‘victims’ before or after our interviews?” (2430). Butalia is also troubled by the ethics of revisionist research, and asks the following questions: “How do we reach beyond the stories into the silences they hide; how can we assume that speech, the breaking of silence, is in itself a good thing?” (*Other* 10). Therefore, while Butalia’s book is an attempt to (partially) restore forgotten histories of Partition, and is driven by her conviction that it is by remembering and, in the process, memorializing Partition that we can forget and move on, it is also periodically haunted by the question of whether or not recovery is necessarily a good thing.

Besides their revisionist approach to Partition as well as their extensive theorizations of the gendered nature of Partition violence, I also draw in my dissertation from Butalia’s, Menon and Bhasin’s, and Das’s complex examinations of the silence

surrounding Partition. There is, of course, as they point out, the state's silence on Partition as it affected individuals, communities, and also localities and regions such as Hyderabad. This silence is masked by the enthusiastic loquacity of the state about the history of independence from British rule. In addition to this, Butalia and Menon and Bhasin encountered various degrees of silence surrounding the people who had lived through Partition and who were reluctant about excavating memories which they said they had put past them. Their work reveals the different workings of silence in the private memories of Partition: the arrested silence that is born from the sheer horror and trauma of one's experiences of violence and dislocation;²⁰ the guilty silence of those who had not only suffered themselves during Partition but also inflicted suffering upon others;²¹ and the self-preserving silence of those who had suffered the taboo of losing honour through rape and/or were aware that their kinsmen had committed similar violent acts during Partition. The last kind of silence incorporates also an inability to mourn ritually and publicly; it is an indicator of "poisonous knowledge" ("Act" 221-2), as Das argues in "Language and Body: Transactions in the Construction of Pain" (1997) and "The Act of Witnessing: Violence, Poisonous Knowledge, and Subjectivity" (2000), because women are often painfully aware that the men whom they love are also the men who killed not only Others, but also often their own kinswomen for the sake of honour. They know that

²⁰ In a later article, Butalia suggests that it was the trauma of Partition that forced people into silence and that it is the contemporary polarizations on the basis of religion in Indian political life that have compelled them to speak about their experiences during Partition ("An Archive" 209). Butalia also wonders whether the silence of historians about the trauma of Partition has something to do with the belief that Partition was a topic that needed some time before it could be discussed again (*Other* 36).

²¹ Unlike the Holocaust, there was no clear-cut, binary sense of aggressors and victims associated with Partition, and virtually every family had both. Butalia writes that this could be one explanation why Partition memories were alive only within the private circle of the family, where the "'ugly' parts of this history could be suppressed" (*Other* 8-9).

this violence may be directed towards them too, if they do not cooperate with established conventions of silence.²²

Thus, silence is also gendered, and Butalia observed patriarchy at play when she noticed that it was not only difficult to get women to talk about Partition, but it was difficult as well to keep them talking when men were around. If husbands or sons were around, these men tended to take over the interview, whether inadvertently or otherwise, thereby “making the women lapse into a sort of silence” (*Other* 12). She adds further that “[t]he men seldom spoke about women. Women almost never spoke about themselves, indeed they denied they had anything ‘worthwhile’ to say, a stance that was often corroborated by their men”²³ (100). This kind of silence, as well as the fact that when women spoke, they spoke of the minutiae of their experiences during Partition, while men usually concentrated on the relations between communities and broad political realities, forced Butalia and Menon and Bhasin to think that there may be such a thing as a “gendered telling of Partition” (Butalia, *Other* 12) or even a “gendered telling of violence” (Menon and Bhasin 54).

Butalia also points out that the silence of survivors is also contingent upon who poses the questions and how and who takes the responsibility for what that silence

²² However, this complicit as well as traumatized silence is much more complicated than being just a singular imposition by external factors, as Das herself indicates. In her essay (1991), Das shows how Indian society enforces silence upon “recovered” women such as Manjeet, a woman she interviewed, not only to enable the continuity of the norms of family and community about “honour” and “shame,” but also to allow such women to have some semblance of a normal life in the family and community. Das emphasizes that she does not intend to essentialize the therapeutic qualities of silence (70). But she notes that this kind of contract of silence in exchange for a relatively normal life was in sharp contrast to other stories she had heard about recovered women who had been rejected by their families (70). She points out how Manjeet’s husband often called her a prostitute when he was drunk, but that the society of women around her could continue to ignore this, “allowing an existence, however fragmented, however poisoned, to continue” (70). She also writes about the dangers a breach of silence and the ensuing confrontation would create because it would require Manjeet’s husband, her uncle, her brother, etc. to occupy “well defined positions in languages of honour and shame and confront each other as adversaries” (70).

²³ Furthermore, because “[m]uch of the time the interview had to be conducted in the nooks and crannies of time that were available to women between household tasks” (*Other* 12), the way women lived or, in other words, the gendered practical and logistical duties they were responsible for as homemakers, wives, and mothers, increased the degree of difficulty the interviewers experienced in getting them to produce their testimonies.

unleashes. With regard to the silence of women, she emphasizes the importance of “learning to listen differently, often of listening to the hidden nuance, the half-said thing, the silences which are sometimes more eloquent than speech” (*Other* 12). She writes that she only spoke to those who willingly spoke, for “speech is not always cathartic, not always liberating” (42). Furthermore, not only were women who actually experienced violence during Partition silent, but also silent for many years were those women who worked as state social workers and tried to recover and rehabilitate abducted women. For example, it took Patel and Kidwai many years before they felt comfortable publishing their memoirs because old memories brought back long-lasting personal traumas as well as the public realities of severe breaches during Partition between Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims that could be misused in today’s political landscape to further divisive interests.

Das has also interpreted the silence of “recovered” women to mean an exercise of agency; recovered women often do not feel the need to speak (“Language” 84). She shows how women whom she interviewed tactfully deployed the use of silence through indirectness (the literariness of metaphor and metonym), thereby surmising that they indicated pain as part of their experience, but evidently saw no need to give voice to its specifics. For instance, one woman mentioned “a cousin” who was abducted and later recovered from a Muslim’s house. Das posits that this woman, who warned that “carelessly uttered words” could destroy the lives of married women, could very well be the speaker herself²⁴ (“Composition” 70). These fragmentary testimonies may be examples of the “half-said thing” (*Other* 12) that Butalia mentions and cautions that

²⁴ Pandey also finds that indirect testimonies exist in the use of rhetorical devices such as euphemisms and hyperbole. Thus, a converted male Partition survivor spoke to him euphemistically of “meat” instead of pork, the forbidden meat which some Muslims were fed during Partition as part of a symbolic conversion to Hinduism. This survivor also spoke hyperbolically about “rivers of blood” and “thousands of corpses” (“Community” 2039).

researchers and scholars must be alert to. The advantage that the indirect agency of silence gives to women, and that I have already mentioned in connection with Didur's work, is that it often enables them to have some control over the way they prefer to be remembered or forgotten by history. However, Pandey notes that women are also culpable in maintaining patriarchal silences at the expense of other women's interests behind a façade of loquacity. He finds "histories of assertion and suppression at one and the same time" ("Community" 2041) in narratives by female Partition survivors. One such story is that told by an elderly woman about a very young girl who had been abducted and brought by a male relative to the woman's home, where she "became a part of the family" and later went away "cheerfully" with the recovery people ("Community" 2039). Pandey writes that this narration is clearly an attempt by the woman to normalize the experience of abduction and thereby wish away the violence and brutality of the times in recollection. While this testimony shows concern for girls and women, it is still complicit in the professed, false conviction that their village was an exception where no violence ever took place.

In fact, Pandey argues in his book *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism and History in India* (2001) that in general, narratives of Partition violence constitute the making of the community as well as the subject of history. He has pointed out that violence is always represented in Partition testimonies as well as testimonies of present day communal violence²⁵ as being 'out there' and "never in us" ("Community" 2037),

²⁵ Present-day communal violence between Hindus and Muslims on the subcontinent is inextricably connected to Partition. For example, Partition is invoked again and again to justify propaganda and systematic pogroms against Muslims in India. For more on this, see the contents of a Hindu Mahasabha pamphlet translated and reproduced in full by Pandey ("In Defence" 566-7).

perpetrated by Others and outsiders, and never by the Self or by insiders.²⁶ Therefore, violence is what marks the perimeter of the community, so that it “can occur only at or beyond that limit” of community (2037). And like Butalia, Menon and Bhasin, and Das have also suggested, Pandey explains that the limiting of violence to the outside of the perimeter of the community means that the violence that takes place within the community, such as martyrdom and revenge, is not really violence at all (“Community” 2037), but acts that are required to be performed to maintain the purity of the community (2045).

Besides Pandey, Sukeshi Kamra has also explained in her book *Bearing Witness: Partition, Independence, End of the Raj* (2002) how the *mohalla* (Hindustani, “locality”) is sanctified in Partition testimonies as well as certain examples of Partition fiction; the oneness of the local community is almost always visualized as being torn apart by “outsiders,” or “insiders” who were struck with a temporary insanity (122-6). This is why people produce new visions of an exceptionally harmonious pre-Partition past, in which lives, cultures, happiness, and tears, were shared in ways in “our town,” “our village,” or “our locality” that Partition and its politics made impossible to uphold. These memories stand out against Partition violence and “[n]one of this [violence], it is suggested, happened here” (Pandey, “Community” 2037). Thus, rape, forced conversions, and the “half-acknowledged violence of revenge” took place elsewhere, and never to people whom one knew or to whom one was related (2037). Moreover, the declared memories of an affectionately shared community life is mingled with the refusal to recognize violence done to others and the rejection of any meaningful admission of the culpability of loved

²⁶ Politicians are held responsible for misguiding those members of a community who have committed violence “outside,” in other communities (“Community” 2044). In some cases, this disavowal is so complete that people assert that violence happened because “God willed it” (2041).

ones in the terrible brutality that prevailed. Indeed, Pandey observes sharply that “[t]he partition survivor’s narrative, it needs to be noted, is always a victim’s narrative, only occasionally slipping into – or acknowledging – an account of attacks in which the ‘victims’ themselves participated” (2044).

Through his focus on violence within *mohallas*, Pandey has also ascribed value to limiting the scope of discussion about Partition to localities (such as Hyderabad).

Remembering Partition examines what Partition as a moment of nation-state formation means for populations, cultures, and histories, which became nationalized by the 1940s. Zooming in on Partition violence in the areas of Delhi and Garhmukhteshwar, he discusses how the local is subsumed in the national at such moments; Pandey argues that by localizing events and entities and stripping them of their “history, complexity and contested character” (120), historians confiscate from people an entire sense of history. They do this by eliminating the importance of the concrete details of how Partition affected localities; such details are significant because they often incorporate difference and divergence on account of varying regional contexts and have the potential of disrupting the homogeneous narrative of Partition constructed at the national level. By undermining them as merely localized and, therefore, not relevant to the big picture of Partition, historians annihilate historical and experiential difference and generally deny the ability of local experiences to inflect and interrogate the official, mainstream, singular narrative of Partition. Hyderabad, which experienced Partition in ways that are similar as well as vastly dissimilar from the manner in which Partition affected other parts of India, such as those regions which were geographically split, is a case in point. As I show in Chapter II, those Partition-related experiences of Hyderabadis that differ from the version

of history the Indian state would like to maintain are completely hushed up by both the state as well as dominant sections of Indian society.

In this way, as Pandey argues, the index of power that operates to frequently reduce and dismiss the dissonant possibilities in details of local experience by rendering them “local” and nothing more, acts to maintain an account of Partition that overlooks nuances, complexities, and contradictions. By slapping a singular, universalizing, nationalizing version of Partition history and experience upon a large collection of diverse communities and regions that have experienced Partition in particular, and not general, ways, historians homogenize, dehumanize, and demonize whole communities. In this regard, Pandey also raises critical questions about citizenship which my dissertation benefits from. He makes crucial inquiries into how women, Muslims, Dalits, and Anglo-Indians are denied citizenship in the post-Partition nation, and upper-caste, middle-class Hindu men are entitled to a kind of citizenship that is so privileged and normative that it is “invisible.” Such (often institutionalized) perceptions of citizenship and identity stem from the moment of rupture that Partition was, and the concrete conviction with which they are affirmed by the logic and ideology behind state policies and interventions continue to marginalize and discriminate against people on the basis of gender, religion, caste, class, and race.

In this way, the radical body of work on Partition that Pandey, Butalia, Menon and Bhasin, and Das have produced reveals that there has been profoundly thoughtful and multi-dimensional research into the Partition experiences and silences of various groups and subject positions. However, a lacuna that becomes visible in their work, and that Butalia and Menon and Bhasin openly acknowledge, is that no interviews from Bengal or

even from Pakistan or Bangladesh are included in it. Nor are the experiences of Hyderabadis, which I address in my dissertation, present in their work. While language issues are common in any kind of cross-regional or cross-state research connected to an area as linguistically diverse as the Indian subcontinent, and perhaps call for the need for more translations of existing research from different parts of the subcontinent as well as multi-lingual projects involving scholars with different language skills, the bigger problem that Butalia uncovered in the course of her research was the official attempts in India and Pakistan to restrict researchers from the other country from accessing archives, records, or even people. In this, the living legacy of Partition – bitterness, hostility, and distrust – makes itself known. This inheritance is also manifested when those researchers who are able to access people in the other country find themselves at the receiving end of the interviewees' bitterness and pain.

Nevertheless, Menon was able to focus on Partition from a larger, subcontinental framework in her book *No Woman's Land: Women from Pakistan, India and Bangladesh Write on the Partition of India* (2004), a collection edited by her which consists of cross-border experiential accounts by Pakistani, Indian, and Bangladeshi women of various communities. These writings address shared gendered concerns or histories as a consequence of 1947 and 1971. The central theme of all the narratives, which is revealed in the title itself, is that dominant, patriarchal discourses dictate that women have no country to claim and no citizenship to defend or acquire and that even their bodies, which do not belong to them, become akin to territorial acquisitions and sites on which dominant ideologies work to assert their superiority (7). The anthology includes narratives of camp workers whose accounts are absent from government records or

ministry reports, such as Lady Camp Commandant Jogendra Singh, a refugee from Lahore who worked in camps in Karnal and Kurukshetra and describes the delicacy with which “mixed” pregnancies were aborted in camps with covert official approval. The diversity in the narratives and speaking subject positions in this anthology are seen in the inclusion of the accounts of Shehla Shibli, a Hindu married to a Muslim and now living in Pakistan, who writes that her post-Partition identity may be “Either, Neither, or Both,” and Bangladeshi professor and human rights and gender activist Meghna Guhathakurta, who reproduces her mother’s and paternal grandmother’s accounts of being members of a family of intellectuals that had refused to migrate to West Bengal in 1947 and were ruthlessly persecuted by the Pakistani army in the Bangladesh War of Independence in 1971.

Such recent efforts to revise the known, hegemonic state narrative of Partition and incorporate into the field a human history by introducing a comparative element that brings together different communities and countries to confront and cope with the past and present trauma of Partition have also included significant scholarly interventions from the perspective of South Asian diaspora based in western countries.²⁷ My own work

²⁷ Other recent contributions to revisionist history that help us better appreciate and dismantle the hegemonic narratives of Partition erected by the state as well as nationalist historians include the following texts: Asim Roy’s review essay in *India’s Partition*, which explains that while mainstream historiography argues that Jinnah’s entire personality, ideology, and policy changed after the disastrous performance of the Muslim League in the 1937 elections, the revisionist school argues that there was no real change in his political goals and it was only his strategies and tactics that had changed; Chatterjee’s essay in the same volume, which shows that the mobilization of Muslim masses to support the Pakistan demand in Bengal revolved around the question of class, since in Bengal peasants were mostly Muslim, and landlords, Hindu; and Ramnarayan Rawat’s essay in *The Partitions of Memory*, which focuses on the activities of the Scheduled Castes Federation in the United Provinces (present-day Uttar Pradesh, India) and shows how Partition provided new opportunities to marginalized groups such as Dalits, who organized politically as a community separate from caste-Hindus (as well as Muslims) and demanded the constitutional rights accorded to minorities. A radically new approach also emerges in Priyamvada Gopal’s interpretation of the much-analyzed, canonical Partition oeuvre of Manto. Her essay in *The Partitions of Memory* on Manto’s short story “Thanda Gosht” (“Cold Meat”) and the accounts of the obscenity trials in Pakistan that were launched as a result of the publication of this story underscores the fact that Manto’s Partition-era short stories and fragments not only represented women’s experiences of sexual brutality, but also men’s own crises of self and sexuality after such encounters. In other words, Manto asked crucial questions on what it is to be violent, what violence means to the existence of men, and does violence rebound upon the perpetrator and “push him to face his own contradictions as brute (‘haivaan’) and as human being (‘insaan’)?” (247)

in this dissertation includes an analysis of how Partition is remembered by different generations of Hyderabadi survivors and how present-day communal violence in Hyderabad is connected to Partition in Indian-American writer Samina Ali's debut novel *Madras on Rainy Days* (2004). This recent realignment of Partition Studies to include the memories, postmemories, and experiences of diaspora is best represented by Papiya Ghosh's pioneering and encyclopedic work *Partition and the South Asian Diaspora: Extending the Subcontinent* (2007). This book outlines the persistent relevance of Partition and its politics in the lives of subcontinental diaspora and transnational subjects, as well as North American and British diaspora and transnational subjects, arguing effectively that "the nation-making scripts of the twenties and the forties ... [must be considered] in the backdrop of a context that is increasingly transnational" (xix). Specifically, the first part of Ghosh's book deals with the predicament of the *mehsoor Pakistani* ("stranded Pakistanis"; twice or thrice migrants originating from the Indian state of Bihar) still living in refugee camps in Bangladesh, awaiting endlessly a passage by land, air, or sea that will take them to Pakistan, the promised land for which they believe they have made numerous sacrifices, but where they are not wanted even if they manage to get there. Indeed, the fact that the Bihari *muhajireen* ("refugees") are not

Partition drew Manto towards the conclusion that masculinity must be radically reconstituted if society is to be meaningfully transformed (254). For Manto, not only was nationalism a "gendered and sexualized process," but nation-formation was also "the flashpoint for struggles over the meaning of community, morality and even the nature of reality itself" (244). The remarkable thing about the entire debate over "Thanda Gosht" during and after the trial is, Gopal writes, that there is no reference to female sexuality and womanhood, and the "burden of scrutiny is on the character of the state and its male citizens" (258). Another significant contribution to creating a revisionist history of Partition is Kamra's *Bearing Witness: Partition, Independence, End of the Raj* (2002). Besides a detailed exploration of the high politics of Partition from the new angle of political cartoons, Kamra's book includes an astonishing and novel variety of texts and genres connected to Partition, such as oral testimonies by urban lower middle-class and working-class people, agricultural workers, and farmers and the writings of displaced colonials as well as the British press. Kamra also furnishes insights into aspects of Partition violence that have thus far not been examined and that merit our attention, such as the sexual violence and mutilation of men, violence perpetrated by women, and the fate of abducted middle- and upper-class women, who appear to have dropped out of the pages of history. Kamra points out that most of the women "recovered" by the state during Partition belonged to the lower classes, and it is ironic that it is their voices that are recorded and not the voices of middle- and upper-class women, who usually find it easier to make it to historical records on account of their class privilege.

welcome in Sindh (where they were supposed to be relocated during Partition) or in East Pakistan/Bangladesh critically undermines the Muslim League's ideal of Pakistan as a sanctuary for all South Asian Muslims. Today, the international Bihari diaspora fight for those Bihari *muhajireen* left in perpetual transit in Bangladesh. The significance of Ghosh's contribution lies in the fact that, until her book was published, the experiences of Bihari *muhajireen* was an "unwritten strand of the subcontinental partition diaspora that folded into the South Asian diaspora in a staggered sort of way" (book jacket).

The second part of Ghosh's book concentrates on how the spectre of Partition is consistently resurrected in the political ideology and practice of religious majoritarianisms in the South Asian diaspora in North America and the United Kingdom. Ghosh focuses on how the privileged middle-class South Asian diaspora in North America and the UK and the politically mobilized working-class South Asian diaspora in the UK have furthered right-wing Hindutva ideology in the subcontinent politically, financially, as well as discursively. Their extensive and successful propagation of Hindutva is "inflected by the remains of the nation-makings around the partition experience" (xxvi) and plays a crucial role both in diasporic politics and in subcontinental politics. This "diasporic mediation" (xxvi) is achieved through many political and social organizations as well as the prolific print and web presence of diasporic Hindutva forces, which are supported as well as followed by Hindutva organizations in the subcontinent. At the same time, Ghosh's research shows that there is also a fierce response to this potent, destructive ideology from diasporic Indian Muslims, secularists, and left-wing adherents and that, therefore, these solidarities are also examples of how diaspora interrupt nationalist politics in the subcontinent. These groups fight a sustained battle

against Hindutva in both the subcontinent as well as diasporic locations and employ for their cause the memories of a common, syncretic heritage lost during Partition. The pathos of this nostalgic narrative often successfully disrupts the violent communal passions distilled and deployed as “natural reactions” to Partition by sectarian forces amongst the international diaspora, particularly since it emphasizes how international locations furnish platforms for reunions of the communities that were rent asunder by the cracking of India in 1947.²⁸

The fact that it addresses Partition from the perspective of South Asian diaspora abroad is also the most significant contribution of *Partitioned Lives: Narratives of Home, Displacement, and Resettlement* (2008), edited by Gera Roy and Bhatia. In incorporating essays on films (about Partition experiences from Punjab and Bengal), which is a medium that is especially and increasingly popular amongst nostalgic diasporic and displaced populations of Indians, the essays in *Partitioned Lives* enable “a reassessment of Partition for global audiences” (xii); Partition Studies is, therefore, acknowledged to be no longer limited to or relevant to subcontinental audiences alone. This opening up of the field is also achieved in this volume by the incorporation of essays written about diasporic representations and significations of Partition by scholars such as Paulomi Chakrabarty, Shubh Mathur, Prabhjot Parmar, and Amber Fatima Riaz. For example, Parmar points out the validity of diasporic engagements with Partition on account of two things: the postmemories of Partition that South Asian American and Canadian writers and filmmakers such as Shauna Singh Baldwin and Deepa Mehta have, and the “ongoing trauma” (Gera Roy and Bhatia ix) of Partition that diasporic subjects like them and large

²⁸ I borrow this metaphor of violent rupture from the title of Sidhwa’s Partition novel *Cracking India* (1988).

sections of their audience experience in new global political contexts of communal divisions and separations.²⁹

Other scholarship that is also concerned with the repercussions of Partition today includes *The Partitions of Memory: The Afterlife of the Division of India* (2001), a collection of diverse essays edited by Kaul. It is driven by the urgency that Partition and “its known and unknown legacies” (3) continue to play a central role through communal violence, and in notions of political identity and citizenship, the establishment and conduct of public institutions, as well as the playing out of private lives in India and South Asia. In India, he writes, secular thought constantly struggles against “the legacy of religious difference, a legacy sharpened to murderous point by Partition, which insists on the violent separateness of ‘Hindus’ and ‘Muslims’” (8). This tension is such a potent force in South Asian politics generally that Kaul points out that state policies are guided by “fear legitimized by the processes of Partition” (9). So, the question is not only how Partition created nation-states, but how these nation-states need and sinisterly utilize memories of Partition violence (made possible through subtly meted doses of fear about future partitions by interested political parties and agendas), to justify their own authority (8-9). Besides essays by Mukulika Banerjee, Chatterji, Rawat, Butalia, and Gopal, which I have already mentioned, this volume also contains Richard McGill Murphy’s article,

²⁹ There were many such events in the 1990s that Parmar suggests fuelled diasporic interventions by writers and filmmakers; these included the following: the possibility of the separation of Québec from Canada, the ethnic violence in Rwanda and Bosnia, and the continued aggression between India and Pakistan, which became nuclear states in the latter part of that decade. Jonathan Greenberg’s essay in this volume also emphasizes the influential role of postmemory in defining the steady proliferation of not only creative but also scholarly texts that have examined or brought to light varied perspectives on Partition. Therefore, he points out, not only have revisionist scholars or communalist groups contributed to keeping relevant debates about Partition alive, but there is also a “generational resistance” (262) to silencing and forgetting of Partition by scholars through the use of postmemory. For example, the work of Butalia and Sudhir Kakar, as well as many others who are based both in western diaspora, such as Kamra and Bhatia, and in South Asia, is inspired by and infused with autobiographical accounts of how Partition affected their own families. Cf., for example, Kamra’s book *Bearing Witness*, which contains a foreword by her father Mulk Raj Kamra, a Partition eye-witness and survivor, who has finally been given the chance to speak of the disruption and despair that Partition means to him.

which explains how the nation-states of India and Pakistan elaborately, ritually, and constantly construct and reiterate their difference from and enmity towards each other during public displays of ceremonial nationalist aggression such as the daily flag-lowering ceremony at the Wagah border.

It is this assertion of political and national authority at the expense of communities and localities by the Indian state that I explore, amongst other things, in the next chapter, where I lay out the events that took place in the princely state of Hyderabad in the late 1940s. My reading of the integration of Hyderabad as part of the histories and experiences of Partition in the subcontinent is legitimized by the contexts and details explicitly and implicitly provided in Indian and Hyderabadi government reports, memoirs of officials, political pamphlets, Communist Party reports, and feminist histories and oral histories of and by Hyderabadi women. I also refer to archival resources about the Indo-Hyderabad dispute that I had consulted in May 2011 at the National Archives in New Delhi. The significance of this last set of sources lies in the fact that these newspaper accounts from the 1940s have not been consulted in detail in any account about this subject. The sense of immediacy that these accounts contain, as well as the different, often opposing perspectives from which they capture in minute detail the nuances of the debates surrounding Hyderabad's future, make these sources invaluable in any significant scholarly undertaking about the Partition experiences of Hyderabadis.

After explaining how profoundly the embedded context of Partition as well as the actual upheavals of the 1940s affected and transformed the political, social, cultural, economic, demographic, and cartographic identity of Hyderabad, I proceed to examine how literary texts represent these tumultuous changes. Chapter III examines how Anita

Desai chooses to represent Hyderabadis and their Partition experiences in her English novel *Clear Light of Day* (1980). I argue that although Desai's novel must be acknowledged as an early representation of Partition at a time when historiography was not even ready to mention the topic of Partition, it nevertheless perpetuates the official silence surrounding Partition as it affected Hyderabad. The fact that Hyderabadis too experienced violence during Partition is completely elided in Desai's novel, which evokes static Orientalist stereotypes of decadence and excess in its representation of Hyderabad Muslim. By also avoiding any recognition of Hyderabad subject positions that were embroiled in Partition politics in Hyderabad, Desai's text becomes complicit in the general and official silencing of the Hyderabad Partition subject as well as the effacement of Hyderabad from mainstream history.

From the representation of Hyderabadis and Partition by a writer far removed from Hyderabad, I move in Chapter IV to an analysis of an English novel about the same topic written by an American author of Hyderabad origin. Samina Ali's *Madras on Rainy Days* engages with great urgency with how Partition continues to hound not only survivors but also those who have been born after Partition; these generations live with deeply ingrained, traumatic postmemories of Partition and also face reinforced and bolder outbreaks of communal violence in present-day Hyderabad city. Ali's novel irrevocably connects the language of horrifically meaningful present-day violence, in which women's bodies are etched, marked, and carved up with communal hatred, to the formulaic violence of Partition. In addition to this, *Madras on Rainy Days* creates grounds for further debates about the citizenship (or lack thereof) of Muslims in the Indian nation; it also raises questions about the treatment of internally displaced Muslim survivors of

Partition. Besides these interventions, this novel also allows for a critical examination of how the silence of working-class characters about Partition remains unexplored in middle-class narratives such as Ali's; it shows how silence as a potential exercise of agency is not recognized by Hyderabadi élites as a form of covert resistance by women who do not want to be part of the hegemonic and homogenizing patriarchal narratives of Partition.

In the last chapter, I shift from explaining how a novel by a Hyderabadi-American Muslim woman represents the cost of Partition and what it does to women's bodies to a Hindi story written by a Hyderabadi Hindu man, who represents the rapes of Hindu women by Muslim Razakars in Hyderabad during the 1940s as an implicit justification for the present-day persecution of India's Muslims. Not only does Kishorilal Vyas "Neelkanth" argue in favour of pre-emptive crack-downs on Muslims; his Hindu nationalist perspective also narratively appropriates the politics of Sikhs to further a violent cause and seeks to undo their attempts to forge a separate identity from Hindus since the anti-Sikh riots of 1984. Furthermore, Chapter V also considers other aspects of Hindutva as they are embedded in Neelkanth's writing. Since the late nineteenth century, there has been a huge and continuous investment by some upper-caste, middle-class sections of Hindu society in two sacrosanct symbols of Hinduism – women and cows. It is these two symbols that Neelkanth sets up in his story "Durga" (2005) as emblematic of a peaceful, prosperous Hindu-by-definition India; by representing the defilement of one (cows) and the imminent danger of violation of the other (women) during Partition violence in Hyderabad, Neelkanth uses Partition narratives to promote communal violence against Muslims.

In this way, by engaging with texts that retrospectively represent Partition as it affected/affects Hyderabad, I seek to uncover what Partition did to Hyderabad, how mainstream India silences the trauma and dislocation experienced by Hyderabadis as well as their struggles and resistances against oppression during this period, and how that silencing is being challenged and/or propagated in some measure through literary interventions.

“An Enemy Within Her Belly”: Material Conditions in Hyderabad in the 1940s, and the Indo-Hyderabad Dispute

In this chapter, I outline the material conditions in the princely state of Hyderabad during the late 1940s, when the reality and imminence of Partition loomed high over the horizon of British India. I describe in detail the activities of the various political players, big and small, as well as outline the nature of the ideologies that thrived in Hyderabad at the time. These players and ideologies consisted of the following: the Hyderabad minority ruling class of Muslims, led by the seventh Nizam of Hyderabad, Mir Osman Ali Khan (1886-1967) of the Asaf Jahi dynasty (1720-1948); the peasants and workers who participated in the Telangana Armed Struggle (1946-1951), an uprising against the feudal, political, and cultural hegemony of the ruling class in Hyderabad; the paramilitary Muslim Razakars, who terrorized the populace in general and non-Muslims in particular; and the Hyderabad State Congress (HSC), which was set up to represent the democratic aspirations of Hyderabadis and align these aspirations alongside those of people in British India. In addition to this, this chapter also explores the nature of the intervention of the Indian state in Hyderabad in 1948 and explains the role prominent Congress statesmen played in the invasion and forced integration of Hyderabad as well as the subsequent hushing up of the violence perpetrated by arms of the Indian state against sections of the Hyderabad population.

The description of the material conditions in Hyderabad in the context of Partition and independence that I provide in this chapter is crucial because the literary texts that I analyze later in this dissertation respond to these events and represent them from varied political perspectives and attitudes. In order to construct my arguments in this chapter, I

refer to several sources: feminist histories and oral testimonies by Hyderabad women, reports by Communist Party leaders who participated in the Telangana Struggle against the Nizam and the subsequent Indian military regime, Indian and Hyderabad government reports, memoirs of officials of both governments, and political pamphlets from Hyderabad. In addition to these sources, I also refer to archival resources, which consist of newspaper accounts that represent in minute detail the events that took place in Hyderabad and New Delhi in the 1940s. These resources occupy an important place in this chapter because, first, they drive home the urgency of the time-bomb that was Hyderabad in the context of Partition and Partition violence and, second, they have not been consulted in detail in any scholarship so far about the Indo-Hyderabad dispute. What is also significant is that some of these newspaper accounts make manifestly clear the questionable morality behind India's invasion because they provide not only a minute account of how the tension between India and Hyderabad escalated on a daily basis, but also fine details such as particularly revealing turns of phrase employed by Indian journalists, statesmen, and military men in their dealings and reports about Hyderabad.

Additionally, this chapter outlines the violence that was perpetrated by the Razakars, the Nizam's forces, and the Nizam's police on non-Muslims as well as poorer sections of society, such as landless peasants and members of the working-class, and also elaborates what forms of political and social resistance these groups used to respond to such aggression. I also describe how the Nizam's government clamped down on such resistances and fiercely suppressed them. Furthermore, my sources illustrate that such resistances often worked across communal lines and that there were sections of Muslim society in Hyderabad that were against the Nizam's misrule and Razakars' tyranny

against non-Muslims. These Muslims were, consequently, at the receiving end of the Razakars' violence. And, as I will show, they also faced tremendous repression at the hands of the military administration established by India after it invaded Hyderabad and forced the Nizam to accede in September 1948. The reprisals that were carried out by Indians against Hyderabadi Muslims for Razakar atrocities against Hindus as well as the Muslim atrocities against Hindu/Sikh minorities in other parts of the subcontinent during Partition is denied or not acknowledged by the Indian state.

That Partition violence was indeed a concern for Hyderabad is seen in the state's official position on accession, represented in *Hyderabad's Relations with the Dominion of India* (1948), a government publication which reprinted correspondence and speeches pertaining to the relations between Hyderabad and Britain, and Hyderabad and India, towards the end of the British Raj. Thus, the Nizam's *firman* (Farsi, "decree") of June 11, 1947 cited Partition as his reason for being unable to accede to India. He wrote,

The basis of the division of British India is communal. In my state, however, the two major communities [Muslims and Hindus] live side by side ... By sending representatives to either of the Constituent Assemblies [of India or Pakistan], Hyderabad would seem to be taking one side or the other. (1)

On September 18, 1947, he informed Lord Mountbatten (Governor-General of India – 1947-1948)³⁰ that

³⁰ Much to the despair of his Prime Minister as well as the annoyance of India's Agent-General in Hyderabad, the Nizam depended heavily on Mountbatten as well as Sir Walter Monckton QC, Constitutional Adviser to the Nizam and related to Mountbatten (Ali, *Tragedy* 61; Munshi 35). Hyderabadi Prime Minister Mir Laik Ali writes that the Nizam did not seem to realize that major decisions about free India did not lie with Mountbatten anymore, that Mountbatten was now working as the representative of the Indian Government, and that he (the Nizam) would now have to negotiate with the Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Deputy Prime Minister Vallabhbhai Patel instead (62). Disappointed with the deadlock, Monckton left Hyderabad in frustration and returned on request several times, and finally helped Hyderabad draft its presentation before the UN in September 1948 (253).

the political effects of division of territory and government on a purely communal basis have become tragically clear. I am apprehensive that accession would introduce the same ruinous disturbance and bloodshed into my state and I am satisfied that it is my duty in the interests of my subjects to avoid this. (11)

Throughout his correspondence with India as well as his *firman*s to his subjects, the Nizam stressed that Hyderabad would definitely have a “close association” (11), a “political relationship other than accession”³¹ (5) with India, and that it desired to “live in the closest friendship and amity with both [India and Pakistan]” (1). Hyderabad had ties with both India and Pakistan, as the Nizam reminded Mountbatten in a letter dated August 8, 1947 (3). While he emphasized that Hyderabad would cooperate with India’s defence and external affairs expectations, he also expressed his inability to commit to the exact nature of association between Hyderabad and the two new countries, for he was uncertain about their relationship with each other (4). He specified for the moment that in the case of hostility between India and Pakistan, Hyderabad would remain neutral (5, 10). This condition was incorporated into the Draft Heads of Agreement produced by Hyderabad as part of the ongoing attempts at the time between India and Hyderabad to come to some sort of agreement about the future relationship between the two states (12).

The Nizam’s double bind, which was born out of the decisive divisions of Partition, also proceeded from his desire to hold onto political power as the hereditary ruler of Hyderabad. In fact, it is probable that Partition gave him the pretext to claim that he was in a dilemma over which country to accede to, thereby deferring accession for the time being. However, other contemporary sources, such as the last Hyderabadi Prime

³¹ He also reminded Mountbatten that this was an alternative open to the princely states, as specified by the Crown’s Memorandum of May 12, 1946 as well as the Statement of June 3, 1947, both of which were accepted by both the Congress and the Muslim League (5).

Minister Mir Laik Ali's account *Tragedy of Hyderabad* (1962), testify to the communal anxieties that bubbled up to the surface in Hyderabad as a result of the violence that took place in the subcontinent in 1947. *Tragedy of Hyderabad* represents Ali's perspective on his premiership (November 1947 – September 1948) and the events that transpired in Hyderabad in this period. It was published in Karachi, where Ali lived in exile after escaping in 1950 from house arrest by the Indian army in Hyderabad. The book was banned in India till September 2011 (*Siasat*, "Tragedy"); after the ban was lifted, it made it to *The Hindu's* best-seller list on April 7, 2012 ("Best Sellers"). However, it is still next to impossible to find in popular, urban-based bookstore franchises in India such as Crossword or even online stores such as Flipkart.

At the time when Mir Osman Ali Khan was Nizam of Hyderabad and Mir Laik Ali was his Prime Minister, there were approximately five hundred and sixty-five princely states in India, and the largest with an area of 82,000 square miles was the southern state of Hyderabad. The Muslim Nizam ruled over a feudal state which consisted of a majority Hindu population totalling 18.6 million in 1951. Hyderabad had three linguistically divided regions: Telangana, which had nine districts of Telugu speaking people; Marathwada, which consisted of five districts of Marathi speaking people; and Karnataka, which was home to three districts of Kannada speaking people (Stree 2; Sundarayya 7). The linguistic breakdown of the state at that time pointed to a forty-seven percent Telugu³² speaking majority, and a twelve percent Urdu speaking minority. However, Urdu was the only medium of instruction both at the middle and high school levels (Stree 7, 77; Sundarayya 7). There were few educational facilities for girls

³² The Andhra region was also Telugu speaking, but was under the Madras Presidency (Stree 9). The Telugu spoken in Telangana is different from the Telugu spoken in Andhra. It has many Urdu words and idioms and is different from the "purer" Sanskritized Telugu of Andhra (282).

(Stree 7). When Telugu medium high schools such as the Girls' High School in Narayanguda emerged, they were refused affiliation to Osmania University³³ while Urdu institutions were granted affiliation (2). Osmania University, established in 1919, was the only university in the state (7), and its medium of instruction was Urdu. Public meetings, literary associations, and libraries could be organized or established only with the government's permission, which was rarely bestowed, and students could not join any political, cultural, or social organizations (Stree 7; Sundarayya 18; Reddy 12; Rao, *Refutation* 3). There were no Telugu, Marathi, or Kannada daily newspapers while there were five in Urdu before the breakout of the First World War (Stree 7). Not only was it necessary to get Cabinet approval for bringing out Telugu newspapers, but it was also mandatory to get its content approved (Reddy 2). Literature consisting of any anti-colonial or anti-Nizam content was banned, and customs police not only kept an eye on the people but also the books that entered the state (Sundarayya 18).

Although the Muslim population of the state was only twelve percent, the administrative set-up consisted of an overwhelming ninety percent majority of Muslim officials³⁴ (Sundarayya 8). However, the communal non-representativeness of the state's administrative apparatuses pales in comparison to its everyday misrule and complete inability to justly govern the area under its jurisdiction. At this time, ownership of land in Hyderabad involved ownership or control of everyone who lived on the land (Stree 3). Hereditary estates, called *paigahs*, *jagirs*, and *samsthanams*, were held by Muslims and Hindus who were loyal to the Nizam (4); these loyal subjects not only enjoyed land

³³ The school was then affiliated to the Karve Women's University in Pune (Stree 2).

³⁴ It is important to remember, however, that sweeping generalizations about the privilege of belonging to the "Muslim ruling class" of Hyderabad do not account for more than half of Hyderabad's Muslim population, which was desperately poor and lived in both towns and villages (Smith 4; Copland 368-9).

revenue but also had rights over excise, forests, and fisheries, and exercised police and judicial functions (Stree 4; Reddy 3; Sundarayya 10). In exchange for their rights, they paid an annual tribute to the Nizam (4). These lands accounted for thirty percent of the total land in the state, while the *sarf-e-khas* lands, which were used by the Nizam for his personal expenses, constituted ten percent of Hyderabad land. The rest were *khalsa* or *diwani* lands, which belonged to and were administered by the Nizam's government (Stree 4; Sundarayya 9). Taxes were collected by government officials in these areas under the *ryotwari* system, and the middle-men received titles such as *deshmukh*, *sar deshmukh*, *desai* or *sardesai*, and became powerful landlords who came to own state land legally through careful manipulation of the law³⁵ (Stree 5; Chakravartty 122; Sundarayya 10-1). They cultivated these lands partly through *vetti*, or the forced labour of bonded tenants (Chakravartty 122). These upper- and middle-caste landlords controlled sixty percent of arable *khalsa* or state land in Telangana.

Conditions were more oppressive in *jagir* lands, which belonged totally to individual landlords, than the *sarf-e-khas lands*, which were used by the Nizam, because civil courts had no jurisdiction over the privately owned *jagirs*; taxes were also higher in private *jagir* lands than state-owned *khalsa* lands (Stree 5; Sundarayya 10). There were also arable *khalsa* lands lying fallow that could easily be leased by the state to desperately needy cultivators, but were left uncleared and unoccupied (Stree 225). Furthermore, while steps were taken by the Nizam in the form of a *firman* to prevent illegal exactions by *deshmukhs* on *khalsa* lands, this was merely a "paper proclamation," and exploitation continued with the active cooperation of corrupt government officials

³⁵ The most powerful and cruel landlords were the Jannareddy Pratap Reddy family and Visnuru Ramachandra Reddy, who are known to have owned 150,000 acres and 40,000 acres of land respectively (Stree 4-5; Sundarayya 15).

(Sundarayya 16). Such mismanagement of resources by the state, as well as its inability to implement even those policies which were designed to help landless peasants, only aggravated the peasants' suffering and paved the way for the mass resistance that followed in 1946 in Telangana.

In fact, the worst feudal exploitation in Hyderabad was in Telangana, where peasants were subjected to the dehumanizing practice of *vetti* in both *jagir* as well as *khalsa* lands.³⁶ *Vetti* included not just agricultural labour and household chores and errands performed in landlords' houses, but also free "caste services" by barbers, washerfolk, weavers, blacksmiths, carpenters, and potters, and services rendered during visits by state officials to the villages (Sundarayya 12-3; Stree 5; Chakravartty 122; Reddy 4). While no one, not even the upper castes such as Brahmins remained unaffected by *vetti* (Reddy 4; Sundarayya 12), the groups that suffered most by this practice were the lower and untouchable castes of *malas* and *madigas* (Stree 5). Other marginalized communities that were even worse off than the lower castes were tribal communities such as the *konda reddy*s, *koyas*, *chenchus*, *lambadis*, and *banjaras* in Warangal and Nalgonda districts; these communities were bound to landlords by *bhagela*, a system that tied them through heredity to be indebted serfs to their masters (Stree 5; Sundarayya 247). Peasants could work for themselves only after they had finished working in the landlords' fields (Stree 6; Reddy 39). Their own crops could be confiscated by the landlords at any time (Stree 6). In addition to such debilitating and crushing circumstances associated with their livelihood, the Telangana peasants also had to contend with the molestation and

³⁶ The condition of factory workers appears to have been no better. While industries were heavily subsidized and industrialists received large loans from the government, the workers received very low wages. Muslim employees were forced to turn to handicrafts such as carpet-making and hand-weaving to supplement their meagre incomes (Sundarayya 17).

sexual slavery of female peasants in landlords' houses. *Vetti* included the oppressive, traditional practice in landlords' houses of sending slave-girls along with brides to their marital homes (Sundarayya 14; Stree 3; Custers 143). Telangana women have told researchers that those women who protested against sexual slavery or concubinage were punished with gangrape and sexual torture by landlords' goons (Stree 44-6). They also explained that women avoided even wearing flowers in their hair, for fear of attracting the landlords' or the Razakars' attention (46, 61, 63).

The Razakars were a paramilitary group associated with the *Majlis-e-Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen* ("Council of United Muslims"; henceforth, Majlis). Although the Majlis had been around since 1927, it was under Bahadur Yar Jung's presidency (1938-1944), and in the face of increasing Hindu-Muslim, Congress-League tensions in British India, that it went from being a social and cultural body to an explicitly political one (Ali, *Tragedy* 40-1; Wright, "Revival" 132-3). Its slogan now became *An-al-Malik* (Arabic, "I am the king"); it propagated the theory that Asaf Jahi rule was the symbol of Muslim power in India and that Muslims were the legitimate rulers of Hyderabad, which, according to the Majlis, should remain independent and not accede to the Indian union like most other princely states (Reddy 9; Sundarayya 17; Ali, *Tragedy* 44-5). These positions were only affirmed further when Qasim Razvi, a practicing lawyer in the western districts of Hyderabad and the leader of a local branch of the Majlis (Ali, *Tragedy* 76), became President of the Majlis in 1946.

The White Paper on Hyderabad (1948), which represented the independent Indian government's official position on what became known as the Indo-Hyderabad dispute in 1947, estimated that there were seventy thousand Razakars by the middle of 1948. Both

the *White Paper* (31) and Hyderabad's last Prime Minister (*Tragedy* 68) acknowledged the rapid and continuing growth of the Razakars during the late 1940s. Ali claimed that they "were not a private army but small groups of people"³⁷ (195), "local civil defence units, primarily of the Muslims," and organized by the Majlis to fight off Indian raiders, who killed people and looted or destroyed property³⁸ (67). On the other hand, the *White Paper* claims, in response to Hyderabad's protests (letter from Ali to Munshi dated March 20, 1948, *Hyderabad's Relations* 34, 44), that it was in order to prevent the incursions and attacks of Razakars into Indian territory that Indian troops had to be stationed on Indian borders with Hyderabad (28, 34-5). It also claims that the Razakars had access to military vehicles, proper weapons, liberal supplies of petrol, and large sums of money from questionable and illegal sources and that they carried out a sophisticated propaganda campaign against India³⁹ through news dailies, magazines, and even Hyderabad Radio⁴⁰ (31-2). *The White Paper* alleges that the Razakars, led by Razvi, made explosive declarations about their descent from Muslim invaders (32) and that they

³⁷ The Secretary to the Indian Government made this allegation in a letter to Ali dated March 23, 1948 (*Hyderabad's Relations* 32). India's Agent-General K.M. Munshi also subscribed to this line of thought (Munshi 122).

³⁸ Commentators such as Clyde Eagleton agree with this assessment where the Indian raiders are concerned. Eagleton points out that the Razakar organization grew rapidly as danger of attack from India grew, and their intent was to protect Hyderabad and Muslims from border raids and invasion (76). Munshi writes that Ali told officials in Delhi, including Mountbatten, that the Razakars had come into play spontaneously after Hyderabad Muslims began to feel endangered by India (123).

³⁹ While the *White Paper's* claims about how well-organized and well-equipped the Razakars were remain unsubstantiated, Wilfred Cantwell Smith points out a telling fact that reveals the investment of the Nizam's government in the Razakar organization: when retired Muslim officials published a protest against Razakar atrocities, they found themselves in trouble not only with the Razakars but also with the government (Smith 16; see also *White Paper* 16; Munshi 188). Such incidents of repression of Hyderabad Muslims who tried to challenge the Razakars did not go unnoticed by the international press, and the *Manchester Guardian* observed that the attack on freedom by Muslim extremists in the state not only affected Hindus, but also "the more conciliatory Moslems" ("Hyderabad" 14 Sep. 1948). Further evidence of this covert support is found in Ali's account, a fact which undermines his own point that the Razakars had no money or were given only "a few thousand rupees" on a few occasions by the government, when he reveals that "the only comparatively large amount that was ever paid to the Majlis was to assist the victims of the border raids [allegedly by Indians], but even there it was under five hundred thousand rupees" (84).

⁴⁰ In turn, Hyderabad argued that India had been sustaining and reinforcing anti-Hyderabad propaganda through All-India Radio (Ali, *Tragedy* 142).

asserted that they would soon hoist the Asaf Jahi flag on the ramparts of the Red Fort in Delhi, the symbolic seat of power over India (7-8, 32). The last point is confirmed by Ali's account, which maintains that Razvi's declaration to conquer Delhi did irreparable harm to the cause of Hyderabad's sovereignty⁴¹ (83), and the oral account of B. Narsing Rao, former President of the Nizam College Students' Union and former Chairman of the Communist Action Committee, which states that Razvi made the following declaration at a condolence meeting held in Hyderabad city after Gandhi's assassination: "*Woh din door nahin jabke Asafia parcham Dilli ke Lal Qile par lehraya jayega*" ("The day is not far when the Asafia flag will be unfurled on the Red Fort of Delhi") (DVD 9 1:31:51-1:32:12).

Hyderabad communist leader Raj Bahadur Gour writes that Razvi emphasized to the Razakars that it was they and they alone who could save Hyderabad from India because they were willing to die for the cause of Hyderabad independence ("Hyderabad" 77, 82). After Gandhi's assassination on January 30, 1948, Razvi pointed out to Hyderabadis that the assassination was the Hindu nationalist faction's way of clearing the path to destroy those Muslims who had survived Partition and stayed in India (Munshi 148). He made references in his speeches to the treatment of Muslim minorities in India during Partition, and urged Muslim women in Hyderabad to contemplate the fate of their Muslim sisters in India (143). Razvi even distanced himself and his Razakars from the violence they were busy perpetrating by suggesting that "communists and congressmen dressed as Muslims commit all the atrocities and plunder the villages. They even shout

⁴¹ Ali adds that when Razvi was censured in Hyderabad for this comment, he defended himself by saying that it was in response to an Indian minister's declaration that the Indian tricolour will soon fly over every Hyderabad village (83).

‘Alla Ho Akbar’ so that the people may be misled into believing that they are being attacked by Muslims” (*Rahber-e-Deccan*, 31 Jan. 1948, qtd in Gour, “Hyderabad” 111).

It is also probable that Razvi greatly exaggerated the numbers of Razakars in his speeches and addresses (Ali, *Tragedy* 79), thereby contributing to the wild figures quoted by the Indian press. However, Ali writes that while the Razakars and their leader were very enthusiastic, they were not very effective in protecting Muslims in the state (79). This interpretation can be attributed to the inherent, divisive nature of this organization, which sought to violently segregate Hyderabadis along communal lines. Religious communal affiliation was not the only category on which solidarity was based in Hyderabad; there were class-based as well as political solidarities amongst those who wanted a democratic government in Hyderabad. Radical journalist Shoebullah Khan’s assassination on August 22, 1948 is only one example of the ways in which these affiliations amongst Hyderabadis were often crucially attacked by the Razakars, who were eventually unable to contribute in any productive or positive way to the political or social culture of Hyderabad in the 1940s.

Gour writes that Razakars were given military training in Hyderabad city as well as the districts. Centres were run by retired and serving officials of the Nizam’s army and police⁴² (“Hyderabad” 83). Razakars were trained and armed with long sticks, steel or iron spears, swords, some matchlocks, and muzzle-loaders⁴³ (Sundarayya 61; Ali, *Tragedy* 67-8). Unleashed amongst the Hyderabad population, they raped women (Sundarayya 65, 68, 73; Gour, “Hyderabad” 15), looted and burnt houses, forcibly

⁴² For details about how Razakars were recruited, trained, armed, and deployed, see Ali’s chapter on the subject in *Tragedy of Hyderabad* (76-87).

⁴³ For details about how the Razakars were armed by local manufacturers as well as through factories run by the Majlis, see Gour (83-5).

collected levy and excise duty, and killed people (Sundarayya 65). The Nizam's police and military also tortured⁴⁴ and raped women, especially when they came from villages that supported Communists by giving them food and shelter (Sundarayya 68, 148-9; Stree 56, 61-2, 64, 137, 242). The kind of brutality that the police were involved in can be judged from the rape of Kankamma in Potlapadu (Suryapet *taluka*). Kankamma had delivered a child only a few days before she was gangraped by policemen and left bleeding profusely and fatally (Gour, "Hyderabad" 60). Telangana women's narratives also describe the mass rapes carried out by Razakars in the village of Akkirajupalli.⁴⁵ Women remember how uniformed Razakars came to Communist villages in carts, separated the men from the women, tortured and stabbed the men, tore off women's marriage beads and stripped them (Stree 55, 56, 58, 62, 63).

Moreover, male survivors of Partition in Punjab have claimed that Hindu/Sikh women were desperate to preserve their and their community's "honour" and did so by killing themselves to avoid being raped and, consequently, "dishonoured" by Muslim men (Butalia, *Other* 163-66; Menon and Bhasin 49-56). Such assertions have also been made about Telangana (Chakravartty 125). But women who participated in the Telangana struggle emphasized that cherished social values and even relationships were suspended in favour of self-preservation during the brutal repression by the Razakars. Take for example a remark by Vajramma: "In those days when the Razakars asked us to dance *bathkamma* we danced. We stripped when they asked us to strip. In those days where was

⁴⁴ A clear trend that emerges suggests that the police were far more wary of torturing middle-class or upper-class women protestors in both Hyderabad city and in the districts for fear that they may be connected to influential people (Stree 69, 119, 218). This bias emphasizes two things: the chokehold that nepotism had over state apparatuses in Hyderabad and the classed nature of the violence perpetrated by the state.

⁴⁵ Mass rapes were also committed in Akunuru by the police, and Padmaja Naidu set up a Congress All-Party Committee to inquire into these incidents after the invasion of Hyderabad by India in September 1948 (Stree 109-10; Reddy 44; Sundarayya 82). Many other organizations were also involved, but the inquiry was abandoned when people felt that the women did not want to talk about their experiences, even with other women (Stree 110).

the honour, where was the shame? We were all like this ...” (Stree 56) When the police came, Vajramma says that even mothers abandoned their infant children in their cradles in their haste to get away (56).

Sugunamma talks about how Razakar terror against Hindus in Bibinagar and Secunderabad forced many Hindus to come to the villages and how people feared that by raping women and looting jewellery and money, the Razakars were trying to eliminate the Telugu people (77). Of course, the Razakars’ chief purpose was to target non-Muslims and undermine their majority presence and influence in Hyderabad. However, the conviction that they specifically wanted to eliminate Telugu-speaking Hindus arises from the divisive politics they played amongst the people. P.S. Sundarayya, a prominent leader of the Telangana struggle, describes in his book *Telangana People’s Struggles and Its Lessons* (1972) how the Razakars tried to polarize Hindus and Muslims in Pedaveedu and Chintalammagudem. Hindu landlords were trying to communalize an agricultural labour strike by refusing to issue grain to the mostly Muslim labourers in these places, and so the Razakars attempted to shepherd the Muslim labourers into a separate organization from their Hindu counterparts (70).

Similarly, in 1946, during a raid on a village called Mallareddygudem (Huzurnagar *taluka*), the Nizam’s military carried out terrible brutalities. They also separated the Muslims from the non-Muslims, taking four hundred non-Muslims as prisoners (Sundarayya 48). This became an opportunity for “anti-people elements in the village” to spread rumours that the Muslims were behind the attack and that they were sheltering the military in their houses. The communist village now had doubts about the loyalty of the Muslim villagers and sent word to its leaders to stay away until things had

calmed down (Sundarayya 48-9). This pointed segregation of Muslim peasants and Hindu peasants seems to have been a common political strategy used during the Nizam's rule and, in spite of Sundarayya's attempts to underplay it, appears to have often succeeded in communalizing the identities of the villagers and sowing discord between them.⁴⁶

However, in spite of everything, Hindu and Muslim peasants were united in the Telangana struggle, and this unity was a "nightmare to the bureaucrats and the landlords" (Sundarayya 32). Gour makes the same point about the Majlis' often ineffectual attempts to mobilize Muslims extensively against Hindus ("Hyderabad" 40) and points out along with Sundarayya⁴⁷ how Muslim activists, workers, peasants, rural artisans, and the rural poor fought against Razakars and Nizam's police and army during demonstrations⁴⁸ (Gour, "Hyderabad" 53, 60; Sundarayya 8-9). In his article "Anti-Nizam Struggle: Participation of Muslims" (1972), Gulam Hyder names several Muslims in Hyderabad cities as well as the rural areas who actively participated in the struggle and kept it going. He also points out that the Razakars were not only unable to cut much ice in villages, but that they also could not break the unity of the working-class and recruit new members from it (150).

⁴⁶ For Gajjela Bamma, for example, who was interviewed by Stree Shakti Sanghatana, the enemy was definitively Muslim, and she narrates the story of how a Muslim, who had lived on the charity of the village, went and informed the Razakars and police about the Communist sympathies of the village. Bamma, whose infant daughter died in the attack that followed, concludes that "[i]t's because the Muslims came in that such a thing happened. It was the Muslims who did this" (59).

⁴⁷ In fact, Sundarayya writes that the heroic and fatal struggle of a poor Muslim peasant called Bandagi against landlord Visnuru Ramachandra Reddy in the 1920s was immortalized during the Telangana struggle in the 1940s in a play called *Ma Bhoomi* (Telugu, "My Land"), which was performed by two hundred amateur Telugu performing groups (14). Ravi Narayan Reddy, another Telangana struggle leader, notes that after Bandagi was murdered by the landlord, the people built a tomb at the site of his martyrdom and visited it every year (39).

⁴⁸ Gour points out that in spite of the partial success the Majlis achieved in poisoning Muslim youth with communalist notions in order to protect the "decaying feudal regime," the Muslim workers were united with their non-Muslim colleagues in their "day-to-day struggle for bread" ("Hyderabad" 108). He writes of Razakars whose views were transformed and who joined the struggle after they realized that the Majlis' agenda would not address their lot (108).

However, this unity amongst the people does not mean that Razakar violence was significantly diminished by the middle years of the movement. We learn more about the impact of their atrocities from a political pamphlet titled *Lawyers Admonish the Nizam* (undated) and issued by the Department of Publicity, Propaganda, and Information of the Hyderabad State Congress (henceforth, HSC), which was formed by Ramachar and B. Ramakrishna Rao in July 1938 (Munshi 22). The pamphlet contains a “Declaration made by 99 Members of the Legal Profession in Hyderabad City Before the Chief Justice, on 25th February 1948,” in which the impact of the atrocities carried out by the Razakars is described in detail. The declaration points out that “while thousands have migrated out of the State with their families, hundreds of the poorer [*sic*] have sought shelter behind hills and jungles, leaving their homes and hamlets” (3). The lawyers, who declare themselves distanced from “political, communal or religious objectives” (3-4), suspended their practice of law in protest against conditions in the state and ask for the establishment of Responsible Government in Hyderabad under the Nizam⁴⁹ (4).

The pamphlet also consists of a “Memorial submitted to the Nizam by the Pleaders Protest Committee on the 5th April 1948,” which lists the HSC and the Majlis as “two divergent and opposite camps drifting poles apart” (6). According to the committee, the HSC wanted Hyderabad to accede to India and the Majlis did not (6). It noted that “[a]s it is, the loose talk of possible war with Indian Union and the highly provocative propaganda in the local press, platform and radio have created a thick mask of prejudice outside and panic inside the State” (8). Furthermore, the Majlis had not only helped

⁴⁹ The Communist Party’s own position on this was that the first step towards full responsible government and (simultaneously) an intermediate step towards dissolving the state and reconstituting three states along linguistic lines would be an Interim government based on a joint executive council consisting of fifty percent Majlis representatives and fifty percent State Congress, or Andhra Mahasabha, Maharashtra Parishad, and Kannada Parishad representatives. These would transfer power to elected representatives after the war. But all the other democratic parties were opposed to this suggestion and wanted the immediate break-up of the state (Sundarayya 27).

develop “an unreal sense of racial superiority among the Muslims in general,” it had also produced out of them the “fascist” Razakars (9) who, “[i]n the name of helping the Government to maintain peace and order,” had joined hands with the police and burnt and looted hundreds of villages.⁵⁰ Such means of suppressing the uprising were justified by the Majlis as *jihad* or “just war,” states the memorial (9). Majlis office-bearers⁵¹ were reported to have participated in raids conducted by Razakars (9). Attacks by Razakars and police were not limited to the borders but also took place in the interiors. Normal life had ceased, and while those who had means migrated, those who did not were “leading [a] precarious existence, sleeping in fields or the jungles” (10).

Ali’s own account estimates that between fifty to sixty thousand Hindus fled Hyderabad after having suffered Razakar attacks (81). Gour also writes that Razakar attacks created a panic that engulfed Hyderabad city and dislocated the social and economic fabric of the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad. For example, transport staff could not come to work and only six out of thirty double decker buses could travel between Hyderabad and Secunderabad (“Hyderabad” 70). The debilitating impact of Razakar activities on businesses and middle-class professions in the city centres resulted in large scale migrations of upper- and middle-class Hyderabadi Hindus to neighbouring Indian union provinces in 1947; thousands poured out of the state (Gour, “Hyderabad” 70; Smith 19; Munshi 1, 137). And no less than thirty thousand people, mostly from the working- and lower middle-classes, whose lives and possessions were at

⁵⁰ Telangana women’s narratives confirm these instances of arson and state that these incidents led the women and their families to join the Communist Party and retaliate (Stree 47). Forced migration, arson, looting, and murder by Razakars are also attested to in the *White Paper* (32-3). For extensive details on Razakar atrocities in the villages, see the resignation letter and report written by J.V. Joshi, a Minister in the Hyderabad Government, attached as an appendix in the *White Paper* (52-7).

⁵¹ Gour claims that Razvi himself commanded the perpetration of crimes by his Razakars (“Hyderabad” 106).

the receiving end of Razakar violence, took shelter in Bolarum, where Indian forces were stationed (Gour, “Hyderabad” 70). The striking lawyers added that the Government had been telling the world that the complaints and inquiries which confirmed violence and brutality were nothing but lies and propaganda. Even protests, publication of facts, resignations of legislators, non-cooperation of lawyers, and strikes by merchants were being described as political stunts.⁵² The Memorial warned that if the Razakars were not disbanded soon, there was risk of “a fratricidal war without any hope of reconciliation whatsoever in the near future” (10).

The Razakars provoked angry reactions in Indian newspapers and public culture. Thus, in May 1948, the British Information Services press report notes that *Hindustan Times*, *Pioneer* and *Indian Express* all prominently and “conspicuously” featured Razakar violence in and around Hyderabad (“Extract from Daily Press Summary, British Information Services dated 13th May, 1948”). Wilfred Cantwell Smith writes that these reports were often exaggerated and in many cases fabricated. In an atmosphere already highly communally charged, their effect was provocative (18). Ali credits the Indian press with the “extensive though negative publicity” of the Razakars and writes that it gave them the limelight and importance they needed (*Tragedy* 76, 81). In fact, part of Razvi’s strategy to instil awe of Muslims in Hindu minds appears to have been to certify the exaggerated stories in Indian newspapers (85). Amongst many such occasions (179-80, 186, 211-14), Ali writes about one when the *Hindustan Times* published a front-page headline about a “Hyderabad Weapons Week” that featured the Razakars on parade and reproduced the gist of an inflammatory, communal speech allegedly made by Razvi

⁵² Munshi too writes that he encountered great difficulties in authenticating reports about Razakar violence, owing to the influence of the Razakars and the interference of the Nizam’s government (82-4).

(111). This report obviously incensed Delhi and all its political quarters, until it was proven false (112). In any case, the organized publicity given to the Razakars in Indian newspapers became an important factor in the Indian government's approach towards Hyderabad, because it hyped the abilities and activities of the Razakars (86). Thus, even though the report was proved false, according to Ali, the *Hindustan Times* feature did significant damage to Indo-Hyderabad relations (112). There was also a great deal of confusion, with both sides constantly denying each other's accusations and reports. For example, the *Evening Times* reported on May 20 that, according to New Delhi Radio, there was a second train attack in Hyderabad following one on a mail train in which nine were reportedly injured. The second attack had no casualties but approximately £250 worth of property was looted. The Hyderabad Government spokesperson had said that the first incident had occurred because of an argument between drunks, and a statement was released which denied that train passengers were killed and women and children abducted when a Madras-Bombay train was attacked at Changapur, Hyderabad. The statement adds that, prior to the Changapur incident, six Hyderabad Muslim passengers were attacked at Dudni, the first railway station in Indian territory adjoining the Gulbarga district ("New Train Attack"). Hence, there were considerable offensive and defensive thrusts between the Indians and the Hyderabadis over the Razakars and the law and order situation in Hyderabad.

However, even though the Press exacerbated the situation by excessively sensationalizing it, oppression by the Razakars, the Nizam's police, the Nizam's army, and above all, feudal landlords, was a pervasive reality for the Hindu as well as Muslim peasantry and working classes of Hyderabad. It was in revolt against such a system of

oppression that the Telangana peasantry rose. The leadership and ideological bent of the peasants' struggle came from the Communist Party, which had been banned in 1939. In 1940, the banned Party was working through the Andhra Maha Sabha ("Great Andhra Assembly"; henceforth, AMS), which was originally conceived of as the Andhra Jana Sangham ("Andhra People's Organization") and established in 1921 by Madapati Hanumanth Rao (Stree 7). Working covertly, the Party wanted to develop the AMS as "a fighting all-in-united front organisation" of the people in Telangana⁵³ (Sundarayya 20). In 1942, the ban on the Communist Party was lifted and all Party workers started working openly (19), although they still chose to work through the AMS (Stree 11). In 1945, the AMS held its eighth and last session in Khammam, and it called on the people to struggle actively and overthrow the autocratic Nizam and the oppressive feudal system (Sundarayya 21; Stree 12). It was at this point that the character of the organization became openly political (Reddy 19).

The Telangana Armed Struggle proper (1946-1951), which at its height involved three million people in three thousand villages (Stree 3; Sundarayya 2), is said to have been triggered when Chaityala Ailamma of Palakurthi succeeded in retaining her land and crop in the face of force by landlord Visnuru Ramachandra Reddy. Her resistance generated support from other villagers and Sangham (local branch of the AMS) volunteers in large numbers, and they protected her property from being stolen (Stree 11; Sundarayya 35-6, 329; Reddy 41; Chakravartty 126-7). Another important incident in the early phase of the movement was when the *lambadas* in Mundrai resisted attempts by the

⁵³ Sundarayya writes that, thus far, the AMS had recommended constitutional, administrative, and educational reforms, but had not gone to the extent of mobilizing people in a political struggle. Nevertheless, it had successfully been "a focal point for the rising democratic aspirations of the people" (19) and had given "an organisational form to the people's resentment against the autocratic rule of the Nizam and their anger at the deprivation of even simple liberties" (Stree 10).

landlord to illegally occupy their lands (Stree 11; Reddy 41). Finally, there was Doddi Komarayya, a village Sangham leader who was killed by Ramachandra Reddy's men in Kadavendi (Jangaon *taluqa*) in July 1946 as he led thousands of people against the landlord (Stree 36; Sundarayya 36; Reddy 42). Komarayya's death was seen as martyrdom (Sundarayya 36), and slogans testifying to his immortality as "Amarjeevi" (Sanskrit, literally "immortal(ly)-living") and songs about Ailamma's struggle became narrative rallying points for the uprising. The movement greatly intensified after Komarayya's death when many more outraged people joined it, and a people's court was elected by thousands to try the culprits (Sundarayya 36-9; Reddy 42-3; Stree 12).

Besides poor peasants, the rich and middle-class peasantry, who also faced landlord oppression in some form or the other, joined the struggle (Stree 6). In addition to peasants, there were some rich landlords who supported the peasant uprising against the Nizam (102, 189). The anti-feudal agrarian programme of the Communist Party consisted of mobilizing people to refuse to perform *vetti* or deliver forced grain levies. People were also motivated by Party workers to prevent illegal exactions and to seize, occupy, and cultivate the state's *khalsa* lands and waste lands illegally controlled by landlords. They also grabbed and redistributed the landlords' grain stocks and burnt landlords' and moneylenders' records and promissory notes. There was a call for fair rent for tenants, fair wages for agricultural workers, and the abolition of exorbitant interest on grain and loans given by the landlords to peasants (Sundarayya 58; Chakravartty 124; Reddy 40-1; Gour, "Hyderabad" 26).

In the early days of the Telangana struggle, landlords would send their men to usurp land and steal the peasants' produce. But when the peasants' resistance grew

stronger, the landlords brought in armed police (Sundarayya 29). It was to defend the people against the police and its increasing repression that armed guerilla squads were organised across the state by the Communist Party (working through the AMS) at the district, zonal (*taluqa*), and village levels (Sundarayya 40, 65; Reddy 47, 50). These squads were led by village people's committees (Chakravartty 124) and were given elementary training in field-craft, handling small arms, use of explosives for mining and bomb-making, and tactics about attacking enemy targets. They armed themselves with whatever they had and, with the sanction of the Politburo, began to seize fire-arms (sporting guns, muzzle-loaders, revolvers, and rifles) from willing or unwilling landlords and officials (Sundarayya 40, 63-4; Stree 239). These guerilla squads restricted and resisted the Razakars and police, attacked and destroyed police camps,⁵⁴ protected the people, carried out propaganda in villages, and found and seized weapons (Sundarayya 66-9). At the height of the struggle, the people built an army of ten thousand village squad members and about two thousand regular guerilla squads to defend themselves against the Razakars and the Nizam's police (Stree 2).

Sundarayya estimates that although exact details such as names and villages are uncertain, and the truth of numbers is "sought to be suppressed by the authorities" (viii), there were about four thousand⁵⁵ people killed, fifty thousand beaten, tortured, and terrorised by the Nizam's police and armed forces (and later the Indian police and armed forces) as well as landlords from 1946 to 1951 (viii, 1). He argues that the anti-Nizam movement did not grow in the cities the way it did in the villages because there was little

⁵⁴ Sundarayya writes that constant attacks by guerillas on police camps, which were usually situated in landlords' houses, ensured that the police lived in perpetual fear, and the raids on villages decreased significantly (103).

⁵⁵ According to Sundarayya, other calculations fix this number as closer to six thousand (viii). His own history of the Telangana movement is based on "factual material contained in reports, that were received from different area organisers of the Telangana struggle ... and also on the basis of personal experiences" (5).

industrialization in the cities (and, therefore, few workers) and a largely middle- and upper-class intelligentsia that tended to sympathize with the Nizam and the landlords (136). In fact, Sundarayya writes, the cities became bases for the enemy's military and police operations and also harboured exiled landlords and their agents (136). While it is true that the Razakars carried out raids from their city centres, Gour's account as well as Hyder's account paint a picture of the people's struggle in the cities that is very different from Sundarayya's report of the same. They state that there was a consistent resistance against the Nizam's government, the arms of the state, as well as the Razakars, that was launched by students and workers in the cities; this political mobilization was nourished by specific programs designed to keep the movement going and different trade, students', and women's organizations connected and united (Gour, "Hyderabad" 27; Chakravartty 124). Hyder writes that in cities and industrial centres such as Hyderabad, Secunderabad, Aurangabad, Nanded, Warangal, Gulbarga, and Shahabad, "trade-union activity was touching ever new heights" (145), and the All-Hyderabad Trade Union Congress was formed in August 1946 (146). Strikes in July 1947 by textile workers, cement workers, municipal workers, students, and farmers in towns and cities across the state plagued the Nizam's government (Gour, "Hyderabad" 7). Sundarayya does concede that the few Communist cadres in Hyderabad, Warangal, and the mining areas were very important because they helped purchase and supply to guerilla squads writing and duplicating paper, medicines,⁵⁶ essential items, and some arms and ammunition (300, 136). It was not easy to gain access to and deliver such supplies to communist cadres and guerilla squads, and things often became difficult for the movement in the rural areas because vital things

⁵⁶ For an account of how medical aid was organized and rendered during the struggle, see B.S. Paranjpe's "Medical Work in the Telengana Armed Struggle" (1973).

such as medicine supplies had to be procured from the Indian Union when it was not possible to get them from Hyderabad cities. City contacts also helped to organize underground offices from where contact could be maintained with neighbouring fighting regions. This was very expensive and also dangerous, and underground centres were blown up repeatedly, and Communist cadres were arrested, tortured, and shot (136-7).

Stree Shakti Sanghatana's *We Were Making History: Life Stories of Women in the Telangana People's Struggle* (1989) takes into account the role of women in the struggle. This role has been either ignored or assigned peripheral space in accounts by communist leaders, both male and female. So, Renu Chakravartty, in her admirably detailed and comparative account titled *Communists in Indian Women's Movement: 1940-1950* (1980) cites examples of Telangana women confronting the enemy as exceptional and astonishing instances of women's initiative. Most of her examples and analysis reveal her uncritical conception of women's main role in the struggle as merely assisting or supporting men⁵⁷ (125, 127, 129). AMS, Congress, and Harijan leader Ravi Narayan Reddy also consigns women to a supportive role in the struggle in his *Heroic Telangana: Reminiscences and Experiences* (1973). Sundarayya's account is more promising, for he acknowledges that women had participated "equally along with the men" in the struggle (126). He points out that they were elected to village committees (126-7) and highlights instances such as the labour strikes in twenty villages in Khammam district in the latter phase of the struggle, where "women labourers were in the forefront and went independently on strike," influencing other villages that also struck (259). He dedicates an entire chapter to women, in which, in addition to providing detailed accounts of

⁵⁷ An example of her short-sightedness is that she fails to appreciate the nature of the problematic reasoning put forth by the Communist Party leadership whenever it refused to allow large numbers of women to join guerilla squads because they were women (130).

gendered violence against women by state apparatuses, he also points out new political roles that women played, as fighters, orators, and propagandists. His account is valuable because it is a critical account by a prominent leader of the struggle about women's participation as well as women's limitations in the struggle, owing to gender discrimination on the part of the Communist Party leadership.⁵⁸

We Were Making History is a vital and unique book because it not only presents the perspective of specific heroines of the struggle such as Mallu Swarajyam or Acchamamba⁵⁹ but also remembers those who belonged to the "prehistory of the movement" (260) and conveys "a sense of the pain, the isolation, the courage, the ingenuity, the creative brilliance of their lives" (27). Significantly, Stree Shakti Sanghatana discovered from the women it interviewed that the demand that women should join the movement in large numbers came from women themselves and that the Party did not encourage it⁶⁰ (265). Testimonies by women express bewilderment over the fact that they were trained in self-defence, but were never "expected or allowed" (215) to

⁵⁸ For example, while the Party promoted widow remarriage (Sundarayya 144), women's education (Stree 144), the right of women to divorce (192-3), and interfered in cases of known domestic violence amongst its cadres (152), its active stance nevertheless often went against the interests of women on questions such as sexual harassment (87, 163), unplanned pregnancies (265-6), and pressure from husbands and families to return to traditional roles and expectations (102, 231, 263). This was done in order to not alienate mass opinion against the Party (72, 93-4, 263). By not radically questioning such premises that ultimately determined women's lives, the Party failed to see that women had the right to choose between family and political life and, therefore, the question of whether or not it was "right" to take women away from their families was unfounded (269). Many women felt betrayed as social reform swiftly took a backseat in the struggle on the Party's pretext that fighting against class oppression was a more urgent concern (236, 240, 245). They felt isolated because they were discouraged on disciplinary grounds from speaking to or supporting other women with similar gender-related problems (90, 102, 244). They also felt that the Party leadership had let them down by encouraging them to imagine a world where freedom, independence, and equality would be their due rights, but failing to deliver on those promises even on its own turf (71, 72, 89, 102, 103, 252). For more on these points, besides *We Were Making History*, see Vasantha Kannabiran and K. Lalitha's theorization of women as the "small voices" in Telangana historiography (1989), and Ranajit Guha's review of their article in "The Small Voice of History" (1997).

⁵⁹ This Acchamamba was named after Dr. Acchamamba, who was not only a prominent member of the Andhra Mahila Sangham ("Andhra Women's Assembly") but also went on to become a key figure in organizing medical aid and facilities during the movement. Her house was a hub for progressive political and literary figures (Stree 9).

⁶⁰ The fact that there were relatively few women in the movement is explained away by Party leaders in terms of the "traditional backwardness" of women (Stree 262). In this way, the Party not only failed to realize that consciously politicizing the gender aspect of the struggle would usher in a new, progressive philosophy, but as a consequence also made it difficult for women to survive politically (264).

participate in confrontational situations such as violent protests and guerilla warfare⁶¹ (199). They say that it was assumed that they would fall behind or get caught by the enemy if they did participate. In spite of this, in Hyderabad city, Brij Rani Gour organized men and women to keep the Razakars away from residential localities, and both men's squads and women's squads kept a vigil at night (199). The assumption that women would be unable to physically cope with guerilla warfare is disproved by women such as Venkatamma, who dressed in men's clothes and fought with hand grenades (Stree 51-2; Sundarayya 348-9), and Nagamma, a fierce fighter who overtook her husband amidst great patriarchal criticism to attain the rank of squad commander (Stree 243-4). There were other armed guerilla fighters too, such as Rangamma (Sundarayya 245); there were also couriers such as Savitramma (346) and suppliers such as the *koya* girl Budemma (350). Many women also became part of the cultural squads of the Communist Party, composing, reinventing, and performing old and new songs and plays⁶² that spoke of class and gender justice and equality⁶³ (48). In this process, regional genres of poetry and drama such as *burrakatha* and *golla suddulu* (shepherd's tales) were performed on a large scale (Reddy 46). Women also travelled to different villages, trained and educated

⁶¹ Swarajyam points out that unless women had run away from home, they were not allowed to be part of the guerilla squads (Stree 241). We do not know the reason behind this logic because she does not elaborate on this further. Moreover, we know of female guerilla fighters such as Nagamma, who were not runaways.

⁶² These performing traditions that mixed performing arts with political propaganda flourished and were met with great success, not only in Telangana but also in the cotemporaneous Tebhaga movement (Chakravarty 19-20). An example of how well-known some of these traditions became is seen in the case of Moturi Udayam, a greatly admired Telugu singer in the Party, who sang a song about Hitler and Stalin in front of Jawaharlal Nehru. She also performed in a *burrakatha* at the All-India Women's Conference in Tenali in front of Soviet visitors who took photographs of the production and displayed them in Moscow (196).

⁶³ In doing so, they drew on the narrative resources that were available to them as women who were either unlettered or possessed limited formal education. Then, and now, when their stories and testimonies emerge in *We Were Making History*, they narrate a specific women's history of the struggle through songs, anecdotes, and storytelling, with different linguistic registers and literary strategies such as metaphors, similes, and hyperbole (28).

other women in housekeeping, childcare, and workers' rights,⁶⁴ and persuaded people that they could trust the communists (Stree 66, 68, 141). Pramila Mahendra informs us that this training of women by female communist cadres also took place in Hyderabad city (101). Women in both Hyderabad city and the rural areas used creative strategies drawn from familiar domestic life to defend and protect themselves and others from the enemy. For example, they armed themselves with pounding sticks, chilli powder (Stree 12), stones, and boiling water (Sundarayya 40). Chilli powder in particular emerges as a common weapon used not only by the enemy as a means of torture (Stree 50; Sundarayya 35, 41), but also by the insurgents themselves against Razakars (Stree 56, 67) and police (Stree 242; Gour, "Hyderabad" 39) and, later, Congress workers (Stree 192). In addition to this, *purdah* became a means by which women hid and transported not only weapons but also male colleagues (Stree 120, 175, 234; Sundarayya 80). In one case, *purdah* was combined with the taboo of menstruation (believed to be a state of "pollution"), and a hunted male squad leader was saved by being dressed up as a girl by the women, who pretended that "she" had to be sequestered because she had reached puberty (Sundarayya 245).

In addition to the Telangana struggle, women also participated in Hyderabad social and political life in the 1940s through other organizations which were part of the anti-Nizam and, later, anti-Congress struggles. The growing Hindu intelligentsia as well as a thriving business and industrial community in early twentieth century Hyderabad had seen to the nourishment of the political consciousness of many middle-class

⁶⁴ Many women who performed *vetti* were not allowed to go home to breastfeed their babies. They were told that they could squeeze the milk out on the *bunds* and send it home through a shared babysitter, but that they would not be allowed to go home. The Party workers involved in training and educating these women stressed that they must insist on their right to go home and feed their children (Stree 68, 237).

Hyderabadis⁶⁵ (Stree 8). In spite of the odds, the end of the nineteenth century had witnessed a cultural revival in Hyderabad state. Ganesh Chaturthi was first publicly celebrated in 1895, and the first Telugu library was opened in 1901 (7). Vaman Naik formed the first Congress committee in Hyderabad in 1918 (7). Marathi and Kannada educational societies were formed and schools were opened (7). In 1921, books on the history of the Telugu people were published by the Andhra Jana Sangham, which renamed itself the AMS in 1928 (Stree 7-8; Sundarayya 19). Telugu newspapers such as *Nilagiri Patrika* and *Golconda Patrika* began to appear (Stree 7-8). Telugu medium girls' schools such as the Andhra Balika High School, established in 1928, began to come up (8). Maharashtra Parishad and Karnataka Parishad were established in 1937 to look after the concerns of Marathi and Kannada speakers respectively (8). At a time when it was unthinkable for upper- and middle-class Muslim and Hindu women to speak publicly, reformist women's organisations such as the All-India Women's Conference (1927) and the Andhra Mahila Sabha (1930) were founded (8). The Navjivan Mahila Mandal, which consisted of two thousand Hindi speaking members from different economic classes and political affiliations, and also contributed active members such as Pramila Mahendra, Brij Rani Gour, Sarju Behen, and Yasoda Behen to the left movement, was established in Hyderabad in 1937 (8). There were also some women in the Congress (97). However,

⁶⁵ A prominent member of the Hyderabad intelligentsia was Dr. Aghorenath Chattopadhyaya, father of poet and Congress leader Sarojini Naidu (1879-1949). Chattopadhyaya was twice deported from the Nizam's dominions for his endorsement of *swadeshi* and other radical political and social movements in Hyderabad (Paranjpe, *Sarojini* vii). His house was a hub of "intellectual adventurism and free thinking" (viii). Naidu's own distinguished career as a Congress politician is marked by a puzzling lack of direct participation in Hyderabad's democratic struggles. This dissonance can probably be understood in terms of the fact that she was a pet of both Nizam VI, who gave her a scholarship that enabled her father to send her to study in England (viii), as well as Nizam VII. She wrote two poems dedicated to Nizam VI: "Ode to the Nizam" (1905) and "Ya Mahbub" (1911). The latter is a funeral lament written as a tribute to Nizam VI after his death. Makarand Paranjpe suggests that Naidu may have tactfully decided to involve herself in politics outside Hyderabad in order to remain in the good books of Nizam VII (xviii). Naidu also preferred to live and work in British India because there was no literary circle in Hyderabad for Indian writers who wrote in English (xxiv, xxv).

Pramila Mahendra observes that there were very few Muslim women who attended meetings of the Andhra Mahila Sabha or the Navjivan Mahila Mandal in Hyderabad⁶⁶ (99).

Furthermore, there were other political establishments such as the Arya Samaj, which was established in 1892 (Stree 7) to respond to ruling Muslim class hegemony and look after Hindu interests. Significantly, Sundarayya marks the rise of the Arya Samaj as the point when the anti-Nizam struggle became organized on communal lines (8). Reddy emphasizes that the Anjuman-e-Tabligh-ul-Islam, which was supported by the Nizam in its drive to convert Dalits and other marginalized and disillusioned Hyderabad non-Muslim groups to Islam,⁶⁷ and the Arya Samaj, which responded by converting Muslims to Hinduism through its *shuddhi sabhas* (“purification assemblies”), were the two organizations that contributed to the polarization of Hindus and Muslims in the state (8-9). Both were subsequently banned by the Nizam’s government (9).

⁶⁶ Of the few that we know who were politically visible in Hyderabad, Princess Durreshahwar and Princess Niloufer, who were in the Nizam’s government, are examples (Stree 97). Remarkable examples of prominently political Muslim women are the sisters Jamalunnisa Baji and Razia Begum. Middle-class Urdu-speaking women, they attended meetings of the Progressive Writers’ Association. They stopped observing *purdah* during World War II, and then launched a movement against it (173). They were labelled *kafirs* (“unbelievers”) for supporting and wearing only indigenous *swadeshi* cotton textiles (172). They also started a magazine called *Tameer* and published short stories in the Osmania journal (172). They attended the Hindi conference in Lucknow, sympathized with the Quit India Movement, supported the nationalist struggle, hoisted red flags, and finally joined the Communist Party in 1946. During the struggle against the Nizam and after the ban on the Communist Party, they stored arms and sheltered comrades who had gone underground (174), in spite of being threatened by the Razakars (Chakravartty 134). They even hosted all-India communist leaders such as A.K. Gopalan, who had come to Hyderabad to visit leaders of the struggles in Hyderabad city and Telangana (135). They held clandestine meetings of the Progressive Writers’ Association in their homes (Stree 175; Chakravartty 134). Makhdoom Mohiuddin, the renowned communist and Progressive poet and leader, went underground, but still held classes for political activists in their house (Chakravartty 134-5).

⁶⁷ Reddy (9) and the Stree Shakti Sanghatana researchers (11) situate this particular drive to convert non-Muslims to Islam within a ruling class anxiety about the numerical minority of Muslims in Hyderabad. Ali writes that he took great pains to impress upon Gandhi that Hyderabad Muslims were an insecure minority by the 1940s, and that migration of Muslims into the state would not only resolve their problems but also that of Muslims in the Southern Provinces (117-8).

In spite of the ban on Indian national leaders from entering Hyderabad⁶⁸ (Stree 7), many young Hyderabadis had participated in Salt *Satyagraha* and other anti-colonial non-cooperation movements in British India in 1930-1932 and had even courted arrest and gone to jail. They brought this political consciousness back to Hyderabad with them (Sundarayya 19; Reddy 6). The first *satyagraha* in Hyderabad took place in 1938. *Satyagrahis* were arrested by the Nizam's police, and the HSC was banned and remained banned till 1946⁶⁹ (Reddy 24-5, 29). In June 1947, the HSC passed a resolution “expressing the twin Congress demands of accession to the Indian union and establishment of responsible government under the aegis of the Nizam”⁷⁰ (Gour, “Hyderabad” 3). While the HSC raised a slogan that promoted the merger of Hyderabad with India, the Communist Party took this further by advocating not only abolition of the Nizamate and unification with an Indian people's state, but also the dissolution of the state along linguistic lines⁷¹ (Sundarayya 57). Swami Ramanand Tirth, who was elected

⁶⁸ Regardless, Gandhi made his way to Hyderabad city in 1934 to inaugurate a *khadi bhandar* in the city to help raise funds for the Harijan Sevak Sangh. Despite obstacles, he managed to raise twenty thousand rupees for the cause (Reddy 8).

⁶⁹ Reddy writes that after their release in early 1939, the first batch was summoned by Gandhi to Wardha. Gandhi insisted that the Hyderabad *satyagraha* be put down, because he was convinced that it was communalist in character and, therefore, made the HSC comparable to other organizations in Hyderabad such as the rabid Arya Samaj and the Hindutva organization the Hindu Mahasabha (27). Ali's account informs us that the HSC's *satyagraha* was carried out arm-in-arm with the Hindu Mahasabha and the Arya Samaj (32-3). Furthermore, the Arya Samajis and Hindu Mahasabhaites were trying (in vain) to help the HSC by smuggling in *satyagrahis* from British India (Reddy 26-7). Crediting the HSC with dividing the people (35), Ali also writes that the 1938 *satyagraha* created communalist feelings amongst people in border areas, particularly in the western districts near Bombay, and that Muslim lives and property were attacked as a result (34). For an analysis of the 1938 *satyagraha* and a markedly different assessment of the communal tensions in pre-accession Hyderabad, see Ian Copland's “‘Communalism’ in Princely India: The Case of Hyderabad, 1930-40” (1993).

⁷⁰ The HSC also echoed the Indian (Congress) government's claim that no matter whether they were Hindus or Muslims, the people of Hyderabad were from the same stock as their brothers in India, and the barriers that had been created to isolate them were artificial political barriers (Gour, “Hyderabad” 3). The *Andhra Prabha*, the leading Telugu daily published from Madras, also editorially expressed similar views about “our brothers in Hyderabad” (30 Nov. 1947, qtd in Gour, “Hyderabad” 78).

⁷¹ In fact, Sundarayya writes that the Telangana struggle played a significant role in the subsequent reorganisation of Indian states on linguistic lines, inspiring the struggle that led to the formation of Andhra Pradesh in 1956 and forcing the ruling Congress leadership to “demolish the unprincipled and arbitrary division of the country made by the former British rulers” (3).

President of the HSC in 1947 (Ali, *Tragedy* 37), organized a second *satyagraha*.

Satyagraha centres were established in Hyderabad, Madhira, and Aurangabad (26).

Communists collaborated with the HSC during this period and held joint meetings and discussions with its workers. They unfurled both the HSC and communist flags together and supported the HSC's *satyagraha* by participating in demonstrations and picketing (Sundarayya 56-7); boycotting colleges, schools, and courts; and recruiting students to the AMS (Reddy 49; Sundarayya 57). They supported the HSC's practice of breaking customs barriers along the state border by destroying official records at customs posts (Reddy 49; Sundarayya 57; Munshi 58).

However, because of the spread and increase of Razakar terror, a large number of people, "especially from the rich top sections," left for Union territory (Sundarayya 59). Gour writes that HSC *satyagraha* camps and squads also left and established themselves on the borders, from where they started counter-raids into Hyderabad territory ("Hyderabad" 109-10). Gour condemns the HSC, particularly its leaders, such as Tirth, as well as the Indian Congress, its parent organization, for refusing to cooperate with the people's struggle against the Nizam in Hyderabad (7, 8, 29-30, 112, 118). Referring to the forced accession of Hyderabad to India in 1948, after which the deposed Nizam still retained his wealth and was made Rajpramukh of Hyderabad, Gour condemns both the HSC and the Congress for compromising with the feudal princes (79). Sundarayya points out that while there were some "militant and honest members" (59) of the Congress who remained behind to fight the Nizam and the Razakars alongside the communists and AMS workers, the only significant contribution of HSC leaders was to fight a press battle against the Hyderabad government from Bombay and Madras (150). Thus, in the

Congress' refusal to work hand in hand with the Communist Party and the AMS, and the unwillingness of the HSC to stand their ground in Hyderabad and fight against the Nizam, we see that the Congress party, which claimed to empathize with and represent the democratic aspirations of Hyderabadis, largely left the people to their own devices and preferred to protest and play politics from the sidelines.⁷²

Many Hindu students boycotted Osmania University after it banned the song "Vande Mataram" and went to other institutions such as Shantiniketan in Bengal (Stree 99, 9). This Hindu nationalist song propagated the idea of the elimination of Muslims from the Motherland that was India and was hugely controversial in British India. Yet the fact that the Hindu students' demand for their right to be able to sing this song was backed up by Progressive Muslim students shows that many Hindu and Muslim students in Hyderabad were united in spite of differences and launched a concentrated resistance against the Nizam's misrule. Such Muslim students joined the new Comrades' Association (1938-1944), which not only functioned as a platform for communists while the Party was first under ban (1939-1942),⁷³ but also contributed active members to the Telangana movement (Stree 9; Hyder 140). Prominent members included Makhdoom Mohiuddin (1908-1969), the Progressive poet and revolutionary, and Gour (Reddy 30). The All-Hyderabad Students' Union (AHSU), which actively participated in the struggle against the Nizam and later the oppressive Indian military government that replaced it, was founded in 1939; at a time when *purdah* restrictions succeeded in holding back many

⁷² In fact, the landlord-dominated, bourgeois leadership of the Congress went out of its way to crush the people's struggle. In 1945, communists were formally expelled from the Congress under pressure from Vallabhbhai Patel (Reddy 29). To remain in the Congress, people were required to give up their Communist Party membership. Chandragupta Chaudhary argues that Gandhi was against this move, but his views were ignored (131). Sundarayya writes that this decision was motivated by the Congress's conviction that the communists had tried to undermine the anti-colonial struggle by siding with the British during World War II (39).

⁷³ The Party was banned again in November 1946 by the Nizam. Prominent leaders, who were in any case underground, fled Hyderabad city and operated out of Vijayawada (Reddy 46).

upper- and middle-class Muslim and Hindu women, the AHSU boasted three women members (Stree 10).

At this time, there was a proliferation of progressive literature in Hyderabad in the form of newspapers such as *Payam* and *Rayyat* (9). Niaz Fatehpuri's *Nigar* was banned by the Nizam (Hyder 138-39), as was Qazi Abdulghaffar's *Payam* (147). In addition to these newspapers, the Hyderabad people's resistance and the subversive activities of students were also reported, supported, and promoted by other newspapers that attacked the Nizam's misrule and criticized the Razakars' oppression. These were Shoebullah Khan's *Imroze*, and Syed Hasan's *Taj* (edited by "Maikash" and Husaini Shahid). *Taj* was known not only for its prominently placed reports about the Telangana struggle, but also because it published Maikash's poems about the struggle, such as "Talash," "Kadvandi," and "Jag Uthaa Jangaon" (151). Such activities by Muslim journalists and poets also showed, like the political activities of Progressive Muslim students, that there were large sections of Hyderabad Muslims who dynamically resisted the communalist activities of the Razakars as well as the Nizam's misrule. However, these radical journalists were frequently targeted by the Razakars for daring to challenge them and rouse Muslims against them. Thus, Khan was attacked on August 22, 1948, and his hands were chopped off; he later succumbed to his injuries⁷⁴ (151). Resistance by a defiant Communist Party also continued unabated as it took over a weekly called *Naya Daur* after the Party had been banned; this was edited by Mahendra and Hyder (147). In addition to the Hyderabad newspapers, pressure on the Nizam's government and the

⁷⁴ The message that the pen, in fact, is not mightier than the sword, is received loud and clear in the symbolism contained in the Razakars' act of chopping off Khan's hands. Narsing Rao, who witnessed this assassination, has told researchers that a week before Khan was killed, Razvi addressed a meeting in the Zamarud Mahal Talkies in Hyderabad city and said: "*Jo log hamaare khilaaf likhte hain, unka panja kaat diya jayega*" ("Those who write against us will find that their hands have been chopped off") (DVD 9, 1:35:16-1:36:25). Munshi too mentions this part of Razvi's speech in his memoir (192).

Razakars was consistently maintained by the nationalist literature and Communist Party literature from India, which was smuggled into the state and which exerted influence on its youth (Stree 10).

The HSC's call to observe August 7, 1947 as "Join Indian Union Day" by holding public meetings despite bans was answered by people as they organized and attended many meetings in villages and as students and workers struck in many towns (Gour, "Hyderabad" 8). On August 13, 1947, two days before India became independent from British rule, the Nizam's government as well as the Majlis banned the hoisting of the Indian flag. Violation of the official ban involved imprisonment for up to three years or a fine or both (10-1). As a pre-emptive measure, Tirth and other HSC leaders were arrested on the night of August 14, and rigorous police arrangements were made in the Sultan Bazar area in Hyderabad where the offices of the HSC and the AHSU were located. However, on August 15, as planned, a hundred AHSU students shouted slogans in favour of responsible government and accession to India. Rafi Ahmed, AHSU Joint Secretary, unfurled the Indian flag (10). The flag was also hoisted at the All-Hyderabad Trade Union Congress, the road transport department, and by women's groups in Hyderabad city (10-1). Three hundred students of Kamareddy High School in Nizamabad district took out a procession with the Indian flag. While the police did not intervene, some teachers and staff members severely caned many students (11). The Razakars' response to these events was to tear and trample the Indian flag and burn it down, even in case of Indian post offices and trains coming from Indian territory (despite assurances from the Hyderabad government that this would not happen) (12). Gour writes that, supported by the police, "[b]atches of armed Muslims" terrorised people in the streets on August 16

(13). They attacked people in Moosakhan Bazar, Regimental Bazar, Kummarguda, and other places in Hyderabad city. Shops and houses were looted and burnt, and eight people were killed (13). In these accounts of disorder and chaos during August 1947, it is the inability of the Nizam's government to curb the violence and control the Razakars that emerges.

On August 14, 1947, the day Pakistan got its independence, and a day before India became independent, the Nizam conveyed in a letter to Mountbatten that he was "not prepared to execute an Instrument of Accession" (*Hyderabad's Relations* 7). An agreement "short of accession" was acceptable, as he clarified to him via telegram on August 23, 1947 (10). Mountbatten responded that India thought that the Instrument of Accession "contains terms most generous to the States," and that in light of what India had committed to in other states, it would "find it very difficult to offer any other Instrument to any State" (16). India's objection to Hyderabad's Draft Heads of Agreement was also that it withheld all legislative powers from India and that Hyderabad's demand for the right to enter into direct political relations with any foreign power was not in consonance with its promise to conform to India's foreign policy (*Hyderabad's Relations* 16; Munshi 112).

Independence came and went, and the dispute between India and Hyderabad became worse. After much back and forth between the two states, it was decided that in the absence of a permanent arrangement, a Standstill Agreement should be negotiated which would determine the relationship between India and Hyderabad for a year. Several drafts were made and many negotiating sessions took place (Ali, *Tragedy* 69). Finally, against the disapproval of many of his ministers and also the Majlis, the Nizam was ready

to sign the Standstill Agreement with India (71). To prevent this from happening, a crowd thirty-thousand strong, led by the Majlis, prevented the Chhattari delegation from leaving for Delhi⁷⁵ (72). A new delegation was appointed by the Nizam and the Standstill Agreement was signed on November 29, 1947⁷⁶ (74). According to the Standstill Agreement, agreements and administrative arrangements over matters of common concern such as external affairs, defence, and communications were to remain the way they had been between Britain and Hyderabad, and India did not have the right to station or even send troops to Hyderabad to help in the maintenance of internal order (*Hyderabad's Relations* 27). The Agreement also involved the appointment of Agents-General, and India appointed K.M. Munshi its Agent-General in Hyderabad in January 1948.⁷⁷

However, the Standstill Agreement did not create the environment that would facilitate the process of devising a permanent arrangement. The atmosphere of hostility, intrigue, and suspicion only became worse. This is made clear by the highhanded tone in the *White Paper*, which aggressively lays the groundwork to argue that accession was the

⁷⁵ *The White Paper* notes that the extent of Razakar power can be measured by the fact that they succeeded in preventing the Chhattari Delegation from leaving for Delhi to negotiate the Standstill Agreement by mobilizing thousands of people to stage a demonstration in front of Prime Minister Chhattari's house. The Delegation was forced to resign. That the Nizam was powerless to prevent any of this from happening is interpreted as a sign of his weakness in both the *White Paper* (8, 25) as well as Ali's account (73). Gour writes that after this demonstration, Hyderabad city became a ghost town and only armed Pathans, Arabs, and Razakars could roam on the streets after dusk ("Hyderabad" 68). Working-class localities in Hyderabad and Secunderabad cities were attacked by Razakars; Majlis leaders and office bearers; local, immigrant, and refugee Muslims; and armed Pathans. The police either participated or looked the other way (68).

⁷⁶ Gour highlights the irony of the situation when he writes that on November 29, 1947, when Mountbatten, the representative of the Indian government, signed the Standstill Agreement with the Nizam, the Nizam's police fired at a demonstration of four hundred in Alir (Bhongir *taluqa*). Two people were killed on the spot, while sixty were injured. Out of the sixty injured, three died in Bhongir hospital and one in Osmania hospital ("Hyderabad" 63).

⁷⁷ Ali writes that Munshi's appointment as Agent-General was received with alarm by Hyderabad because he was "a rank communalist" (102). Gour indicts him as the man who had betrayed the people of Bundi and Udaipur by giving them an authoritarian constitution and who spoke of the Nizam "not as a murderer of people but as the 'representative of that great Moghul tradition which Akbar founded in India' (*Times of India*, 26 January)" (qtd in Gour, "Hyderabad" 113). He also condemns Munshi for his conciliatory tone towards the Nizam, when he declared that he was in Hyderabad to "establish friendly contact. I only want to see that the Nizam takes his legitimate place among the order of our noble princes in free India" (*The Hindu*, 6 Jan. 1948; qtd in Gour, "Hyderabad" 114; see also Munshi 73-4).

only way forward for Hyderabad and gives away the Indian government's fears of a foreign conspiracy between Hyderabad and anti-Indian parties (read Pakistan) against India. It elaborately discredits Hyderabad's claims of having an independent history by pointing out that it was founded by "the agents of foreign invaders" (4) and that it, therefore, pales in comparison to princely states such as Udaipur, "whose history enshrines glorious deeds of chivalry and sacrifices in the cause of freedom or personal honour" (11). In doing so, *The White Paper*, as the official voice of the so-called secular Indian (Congress) government, betrays the complicity of the Indian government in perpetuating the ideas embedded in Hindu nationalist discourses created by nineteenth and twentieth century ideologues such as Bengali writer Bankimchandra Chattopadhyaya (1838-1894); V.D. Savarkar (1883-1966), who was the president of the Hindu Mahasabha ("Hindu Great Assembly") from 1937 to 1943; and M.S. Golwalkar (1906-1973), who was the General Secretary of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh ("National Self-Volunteers' Organization"; RSS) between 1940 and 1973. In his canonical novel *Anandamath* (1881-1882), Bankim represents Muslims as foreign oppressors and tyrants who deserve to be liquidated; Savarkar and Golwalkar write on exactly the same lines in their treatises *Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?* (1923) and *Bunch of Thoughts* (1966) respectively.

Furthermore, the *White Paper* continues to systematically demolish Hyderabad's argument that it had existed as a sovereign state since the eighteenth century by claiming that Hyderabad was never independent. It points out that after Hyderabad had managed to covertly reject Mughal domination in the eighteenth century, it came under the complete political, administrative, and military control of the British through paramountcy (4-5).

The White Paper also exposes the oppressive feudal structure and inequitable taxation system of Hyderabad, the uneven communal representation in its administrative set-up, and its inferior currency and uncontrolled expenditure. These factors become justifications for the demand for accession (5). In addition to this, the *White Paper* claims that increasing communist activity in Hyderabad, which first acted as a check to Razakar terror, is now a “menace” since the communists have joined hands with the Razakars “to make common cause against India”⁷⁸ (40, 8). *The White Paper* also emphasized that Hyderabad had no international status; it could not communicate or negotiate with any foreign state. Moreover, means of communications such as railways, airways, postal, telegraph, and telephone systems connecting North and South India all run through Hyderabad (17). *The White Paper* goes on to make valid points about how the popular aspirations of Hyderabadis and Indians have been the same, as seen in the enthusiastic response by Hyderabadis to the Khilafat Movement and in the formation of the HSC (19). However, it claimed, these aspirations were being suppressed by the Nizam’s government through various means such as bans on political parties and political literature as well as laws prohibiting public gatherings because the Nizam feared the impact democratic movements could have on his autocratic control over Hyderabad and Hyderabadis (24).

⁷⁸ Sundarayya attributes this mistaken conviction to a press statement made in mid-1948 by members of the Hyderabad City Committee of the Communist Party, headed by Gour and Mahendra. The statement announced that since the Indian government was a bourgeois-landlord government and was allied with British imperialism, the imminent entry of Indian forces into Hyderabad must be opposed and that Hyderabad must remain independent and democratic (having rid itself of the Nizam). Other Party leaders such as Ravi Narayan Reddy, Baddam Ella Reddy, and Devulapalli Venkateshwara Rao immediately denounced this statement as being completely contrary to the Party’s stance on Hyderabad’s integration into a democratic, people’s India in the form of linguistically determined states. However, the damage was done, and the Indian Government in its radio and press ignored the Party statement and reported that the communists had joined the Razakars (179). The Indian government’s overlooking of the official statement of the Communist Party that explicitly denied any anti-India thrust behind its activities is a mark of how the Indian government deliberately distorted the news coming out of Hyderabad to suit its aim of compelling Hyderabad to accede. Because the Razakars were definitely anti-India in their pronouncements and activities, the Indian government cleverly aligned the communists with the Razakars in order to turn public opinion in India against the communists and the Telangana struggle.

The main argument of the *White Paper* is that the Indian Independence Act, which relieved the states of their obligations to the British rulers, also threatened India with disintegration (3). It suggests that while other states swiftly (ostensibly) cooperated with India and acceded without complications, Hyderabad alone refused. It also points out although the British Cabinet Mission's Statement of May 16, 1946 clarified that British paramountcy would not be transferred to the succeeding Indian government, it presumed in addition to this that the princely states would accede to India in the matter of defence, foreign affairs, and communications. Other commentators have highlighted the fact that the princely states were declared free by the British to join India or Pakistan or remain independent both by the Cabinet Plan as well as the subsequent Indian Independence Act of 1947⁷⁹ (Gour, "Hyderabad" 1; Ali, *Tragedy* 19). As Ali points out, the British had categorically specified in both documents that they would not transfer paramountcy to the Indian government (108). So the Nizam issued a *firman* on June 11, 1947, declaring that after the lapse of paramountcy he would become a sovereign monarch (*Hyderabad's Relations* 1). In response, the recently unbanned HSC launched its second *satyagraha*, in which nine thousand people participated (Munshi 57-8).

The White Paper finds that the Nizam's declaration of sovereignty was based upon "mere legalistic claims of doubtful validity" (6). In fact, it maintained that India had made a gesture of goodwill by adhering to the terms of the Standstill Agreement and removing its troops from Secunderabad. On the other hand, Hyderabad had breached the

⁷⁹ To Smith, it was the interpretation of the Independence Act of 1947 by Prime Minister Clement Attlee in the House of Commons and Lord Listowel in the House of Lords that led to the conviction that the princes would be free to accede to India or to Pakistan or even choose to be independent (9). Eagleton writes that official statements by Listowel, Attlee, and Mountbatten show that the British government's intention was to leave the princely states free to decide their own future. However, he points out, these statements were "usually coupled [with] the fervent hope that these States would choose to join with one or other of two new Dominions" (69-71). On his part, Winston Churchill thoroughly disapproved of India's aggressive attitude and urged the Ministers of the House that Britain had a personal moral obligation to prevent India from subjugating a sovereign state (Eagleton 70-1).

Standstill Agreement by lending two hundred million rupees to Pakistan (*White Paper* 7, 23; Ali, *Tragedy* 142). In order to repair the damage, Hyderabad, which explained that the loan was given to Pakistan before the Standstill Agreement was concluded (letter from Ali to Munshi dated March 30, 1948, *Hyderabad's Relations* 34), requested that the Pakistani government not encash the securities as long as the Standstill Agreement was valid. Ali describes how he travelled to Pakistan as Hyderabad's Prime Minister to personally make this request (*Tragedy* 153). *The White Paper* claims further that Hyderabad had violated the Agreement by increasing its army, and manufacturing, purchasing, and "smuggling" in arms and ammunition⁸⁰ (7, 23). There had also been no check on Razakar power in spite of repeated requests from India and reassurances from the Hyderabad Prime Minister (27).

In response to these accusations, the Hyderabad Prime Minister reminded Munshi in Hyderabad that the Nizam had been given to understand by Mountbatten that India would provide Hyderabad arms and ammunition to maintain internal order (letter from Mountbatten to Nizam dated November 29, 1947, *Hyderabad's Relations* 28), but that Hyderabad had received no such supplies since July 1947 (letter from Ali to Munshi dated March 30, 1948, 34). In such circumstances and amidst such violations of the Standstill Agreement, Ali writes, Hyderabad could not deal on an equal footing with Indian raiders, "the whole *raison d'être* of the Razakars" (41), who had been organized solely (ostensibly) to deal with Indian raiders terrorizing Hyderabad border populations.

⁸⁰ Ali confirms that arms and ammunition were procured from the British through the efforts of the Hyderabad Agents-General in Karachi and London (*Tragedy* 228-30). They were also manufactured in modest numbers under his supervision in Hyderabad (171). But the Nizam had made it clear to Mountbatten on November 29, 1947, the day the Standstill Agreement was signed, that if India did not supply arms and ammunition to him as it had promised to do so, he would approach "other sources of supply" (*Hyderabad's Relations* 25; Ali, *Tragedy* 145).

He told India that if it were to provide arms to Hyderabad, the Razakars would be disbanded (Munshi 121).

The White Paper also denied Hyderabad's claims that India had violated the terms of the Standstill Agreement by upholding an economic blockade against it since 1947, which resulted in overseas consignments of goods destined for Hyderabad languishing in Indian ports, railway stations, and roads (Ali, *Tragedy* 95, 128; letter from Nizam to Mountbatten dated March 9, 1948, *Hyderabad's Relations* 29), but instead claimed that Hyderabad had been hoarding essential items such as foodstuffs, salt, chlorine, and medical supplies⁸¹ (*Hyderabad's Relations* 37). In fact, the *White Paper* claimed that the only obstacle to goods reaching Hyderabad had been caused by Razakar attacks on trains, as a result of which the number of trains passing through Hyderabad from India had been reduced (38). Finally, it alleged that Hyderabad's June 1948 offer of plebiscite was "a farce," for it was impossible to hold a plebiscite under the conditions in which the Razakars were openly terrorizing the populace⁸² (37). It pointed out that the Indian Government had originally suggested a plebiscite on August 27, 1947, but Hyderabad had rejected the idea. When India suggested a plebiscite again in April 1948, Hyderabad rejected it on the inexplicable grounds that the announcement of the intention to hold a plebiscite would cause law and order to deteriorate in the state (8, 36-7).

Every argument for the accession of Hyderabad to India is prefaced or concluded in the *White Paper* with a vehement emphasis on the danger that a sovereign Hyderabad

⁸¹ However, Ali counters that even essential commodities such as X-ray films, penicillin, and baby food, which were no longer available in Hyderabad due to the blockade, had to be procured from the British through the Hyderabad Agents-General in Karachi and London (*Tragedy* 228-30). Narsing Rao points out that the Indian government placed restrictions on vital things such as petrol (gasoline) and diesel, thereby crippling Hyderabad's transport and communication systems (DVD 9 1:23:17- 1:23:45).

⁸² In his response to the *White Paper*, Desmond Young, writing in *The Tribune*, points out that during the negotiations in June 1948, the Indian Government had (paradoxically) refused to accept a plebiscite unless Hyderabad first agreed to accede to India ("India and Hyderabad" 10 Sept 1948). Ali elaborates on this in some detail (*Tragedy* 209-10, 212).

would be to India. It appears that the future of Hyderabad and Hyderabadis was something that had to be determined on the basis of what was good for India and Indians.⁸³ This is why the *White Paper* emphatically claims that “India cannot accept Hyderabad’s claim to independence as an independent Hyderabad will be a grave threat to the defence, internal security and economy of India” (9). Furthermore, there is a clear sense of hostility and fear towards Hyderabad’s Muslims on the part of Indian officials and representatives, attitudes which Ali notes were the reason why an independent Hyderabad was so unpalatable to the “Hindu overlords” of India (*Tragedy* 28). Feverish and repeated arguments are made in the *White Paper* about how an independent Hyderabad will become “a base for foreign anti-Indian influence, or vested interests”⁸⁴ (10, 40).

It can be safely assumed from the bitter context of Partition that the “anti-Indian influence, or vested interests” that India feared were located in Pakistan. However, these objections to Hyderabad’s supposed pro-Pakistan bias were launched in spite of the fact that the Nizam had already declared, as I have mentioned above, that he envisaged a close relationship with both India and Pakistan and emphasized repeatedly that because Hyderabad is situated within India, it would cooperate more closely with India than with Pakistan. Furthermore, it is known that M.A. Jinnah, the Governor-General of Pakistan,

⁸³ Ali’s account reveals that this attitude was markedly visible in Nehru’s approach. Nehru told Ali that for India’s economic and social development, it was essential for Hyderabad to accede to it. Ali also claims that Nehru said that India was willing to bring this about by hook or by crook (140). This is confirmed by Nehru’s own theorization in his autobiography about the nuisance of separatist movements amongst marginalized groups and princely states, and how India could only progress if it remained undivided and defence, transport, and communications were centralized under one authority (78-80). Asim Roy attributes this need for a strong centre to Nehru’s socialist leanings (123), but Nehru’s open aggression and willingness to do almost anything to bring about Hyderabad’s accession to India suggests that his motivations and actions had more to do with his desire to increase India’s political power than with any socialist sensibilities.

⁸⁴ According to Ali, Nehru expressed this view in his public speeches in June 1948 (*Tragedy* 206). And Munshi writes, “India ... could not have survived with an independent and hostile Hyderabad anchored to Pakistan” (252).

had refused to meet representatives of the Majlis and had reasserted his view that Hyderabad is an independent, sovereign state free to accede to India or remain independent. He also said that India should not resort to coercion or violence to compel Hyderabad to accede (British Information Services, “Extract from Opdom No.43 for period May 27th to June 2nd, 1948”). In addition to this, Ali writes that Jinnah did not believe that Hyderabad needed to accede to Pakistan or India at all (*Tragedy* 12), but that he believed that Hyderabad should no longer be an autocratic state, and the administration should pass into the people’s hands as soon as possible (11). He made it perfectly clear to the Nizam when he was privately asked for advice about who should be the Prime Minister of Hyderabad that he did not want to influence Hyderabad’s internal decisions while he was Governor-General of Pakistan (88). In early 1948, when India objected to Hyderabad’s act of lending a large sum of money to Pakistan and Hyderabad was forced to request that Pakistan not encash it, Jinnah assured Ali that the money was not a problem and that he would do whatever he could “to bring about a better understanding and build up a lasting and satisfactory relationship between India and Pakistan” (156). Hence, these sources reveal that the leadership of Pakistan was cautious about its interactions with Hyderabad, for it did not want to damage Pakistan’s relations with India any further. As it is, Partition had created long-lasting wounds in the hearts and minds of most Indians and Pakistanis. In addition to this, India and Pakistan were already at loggerheads over Kashmir; perhaps this is why Jinnah firmly refrained from touching any matter connected to the Indo-Hyderabad dispute.

But the *White Paper* persists in outlining the threats that Hyderabad signified for India because it had a dominant Muslim ruling class. As both the *White Paper* and

Munshi argue, led by the Razakars' communalist agenda, Hyderabad would become "a base for subverting the loyalty of the Muslims in India to the Indian Dominion" (*White Paper* 40, 10; Munshi 122-3). *The White Paper* claimed that the goal of the Razakars was ultimately "to create disaffection among the Muslims of India and to rouse them against the Government of India"⁸⁵ (31). That the impact of the Razakars never extended beyond Hyderabad is a fact deliberately ignored by the *White Paper*. The communalist tint of this official statement is also seen in its observation that Razakar atrocities in Hyderabad "against the majority population naturally arouse great indignation in India" (40) and that they have "natural repercussions" (40) on the Indian side. Here, in what is a very questionable and dangerous assumption any self-professed secular government can make, Hindu violence against Muslims in India is depicted as a "natural" response to Muslim violence against Hindus in Hyderabad. *The White Paper* also refers to Muslim refugees in Hyderabad as the "so-called refugees" (23), asserting that those Muslims who were persuaded to come and settle in Hyderabad "are not strictly refugees, for the conditions in the Indian Provinces do not warrant such emigration" (32). It, therefore, suggests that there was no reason nor any existing condition for Muslims to feel threatened in India in 1948.

However, other sources suggested that there was a great influx of Muslims into the state and that they did indeed find reason enough to migrate to Hyderabad, widely considered to be a safe haven for Muslims. Anis Kidwai notes that Muslims from Ajmer fled to Pakistan and Hyderabad when riots struck that city (27). Gour writes that there were about two hundred thousand Muslims from India who migrated to Hyderabad

⁸⁵ Indeed, accounts such as Anis Kidwai's Partition memoir suggest that the violence in Kashmir and Hyderabad became an excuse to question the loyalty of Indian Muslims after Partition (218, 244-5).

during and immediately after Partition (“Hyderabad” 66). Ali’s account also makes note of the fact that during Partition riots, many refugees fled to Hyderabad in search of sanctuary (*Tragedy* v). After border raids by Indian raiders intensified just before Partition, there were also many Muslims from Hyderabad border villages who had been advised by officials and Razvi himself to give up their homes, fields, and cattle, and move to larger centres (64, 67-8, 77, 142). Ali points out that the refugees from the border areas poured into Hyderabad city and “narrated the most woeful tales of the happenings there” (77). Partition turmoil also drove many Southern and Central Indian Muslims to Hyderabad. According to Ali, in the last quarter of 1947, almost a million Muslims had entered Hyderabad state from various routes (127).

The perception that Hyderabad was a safe haven for Muslims was created by a certain section of the Hyderabad Press, Hyderabad government propaganda, and the Razakars. Aside from the progressive trend represented by *Payam*, *Rayat*, *Imroze*, *Taj*, and *Nigar*, there was another press faction in Hyderabad that represented the Nizam and the Majlis. Thus, in his *Clarion*, Syed Abdul Latif pointed out that there were linguistic provinces in the Indian dominion for upper-caste Hindu speakers of Marathi, Kannada, and Telugu, and that if they were unhappy in Hyderabad, “the Government of India may arrange with the government of Hyderabad for a peaceful exchange of Caste Hindu and Muslim populations ...” (editorial, 17 Oct. 1947, qtd in Gour, “Hyderabad” 41). Gour informs us that this view was not an isolated one,⁸⁶ because the government supported the

⁸⁶ Nor was it a new one. As early as 1919, Prime Minister Ali Imam had developed “what he called a colonization scheme” to bring in more Muslims to Hyderabad to swell the Muslim minority. But this did not work except for attracting a few Muslim families who went into lucrative government posts (Ali, *Tragedy* 23). Bahadur Yar Jung, the force behind the Majlis’ openly politicized *avatar*, also believed that there should be a numerically stronger Muslim minority in Hyderabad (44). Smith too speculates about Razvi’s encouragement of Muslim migrations to Hyderabad and writes that following the immense exchange of populations in Punjab in 1947, Razvi may possibly have believed

idea of the transfer of populations by broadcasting it on Hyderabad Radio (“Hyderabad” 41). *The White Paper* also asserts that such a view existed and that the Razakars were behind it (32). It is present too in the daily *Meezan*, which warned that measures to prevent Muslims from leaving their homes in the wake of Partition “would only create greater distrust” between India and Hyderabad (editorial, 17 Oct. 1947, qtd in Gour, “Hyderabad” 41). The *Clarion*’s special political correspondent also noted that leading Muslim dailies such as *Rahber-e-Deccan*, the *Nizam Gazette*, the *Meezan*, and the *Subha-Deccan* felt that the transfer of populations was the only solution to Hindu-Muslim problems (7 Nov. 1947, qtd in Gour, “Hyderabad” 41-2). Gour writes that, around this time, leaflets began to appear in places such as Vizagapatnam that reported that Hindus “have chalked out a plan to finish away with all the Muslims.” They advised Muslims to “leave off everything and proceed at once either to Pakistan or Hyderabad Deccan – it is not necessary to go to Hyderabad [city], settle in one of the districts” (qtd in Gour, “Hyderabad” 42). Muslims of Hyderabad are also addressed: “Get outsiders ... and provide them with every facility you can. You will increase the Muslim population. This will help you to defend your country. You are already a minority” (42). Therefore, it is clear that propaganda circulated by the organs of the Hyderabad state contributed to creating an environment where Muslims in British India began to look at Hyderabad as a place where they could seek asylum.

Like other parts of India during Partition, there may have been an intensification of communal sentiments in Hyderabad based on the testimonies of suffering the refugees brought with them. Haunted by their experiences of violence, they became easy recruiting

that Hyderabad could become a Muslim state in terms of population if only Muslim minorities could be attracted from India and the local non-Muslims driven out or outnumbered (19).

grounds for the Razakars, who manipulated them to reinforce their own ranks (Gour, “Hyderabad” 42; Smith 19; *White Paper* 32). In other words, Razakar violence against Hindus was charged with communal sentiment fuelled by the divisive contexts of Partition and violence against Muslims elsewhere. This fact is overlooked in Ali’s dishonest and misleading assertion that “despite tense feelings and bloody riotings all over the sub-continent, conditions in Hyderabad had remained peaceful”⁸⁷ (*Tragedy* 11) and blatantly downplayed in the Nizam’s description of “little communal strife; indeed what there has been is negligible compared with communal discord in British India. Where it has occurred in the State, it has not been indigenous but an infection from outside” (*Hyderabad’s Relations* 11). While it is true that the violence in Hyderabad is not comparable to the carnage in Punjab, the Nizam’s pronouncement about the definitive role of outsiders is part of a larger narrative of Partition amongst officials as well as ordinary people in the subcontinent that maintains that it was always “outsiders” who created trouble (Pandey, “Community” 2037; Kamra 122-6). Such statements, which have been refuted by scholars, usually blame violence on “outsiders” in order to avoid acknowledging the culpability of “insiders” in rape, murder, loot, arson, and destruction (Pandey, “Community” 2037, 2041, 2044, “In Defence” 565; Butalia, *Other* 248). At the same time, the fact that refugees were recruited as Razakars also shows that “outsiders” did, to some extent, contribute to escalating violence in Hyderabad.

The Hyderabad government built houses and large huts for the Muslim refugees, and it also prevented employment extensions to old employees so that the refugees could

⁸⁷ This pattern is also visible in Ali’s consistent underplaying of the activities of the Razakars. He does not mention any instances of violence against non-Muslims by them, but does acknowledge that they did not adhere to the secular principles that had (ostensibly) been imparted to them and that “instances were reported of the highhandedness of the Razakars with the local population” (*Tragedy* 80). Another outrageous remark is that there was “no serious discontent amongst the masses,” for “enough food, some shelter and clothing was available to everyone and despite poverty” (29-30).

be accommodated. Railway, electricity, public works, and rationing departments were ordered to give preference to these refugees and employ them without consideration for age or ability (Gour, "Hyderabad" 43). Industrialists were told to be ready to do the same and to be prepared to cut existing wages to accommodate these people (43). Refugees soon realized that the rosy pictures of Hyderabad that they had been fed by propaganda machinery were illusions. They could not find jobs easily and were instead met with cholera in their camp in Qazipet. Many returned to their homes (43-4). Not only was there a campaign by the Muslim League in the Central Provinces and Madras to assure Muslims that they were safe where they were and that they did not need to migrate to Hyderabad, but Makhdoom Mohiuddin, Ravi Narayan Reddy, and Baddam Ella Reddy issued a statement from Bezwada on October 11, 1947 on behalf of the AMS and the Communist Party that appealed to migrating Muslims "to see the trick behind this game of reaction" and return to their homes. They appealed to Muslims outside Hyderabad to not fall prey to "malicious propaganda by reactionary forces," and beseeched their "non-Muslim brethren in the Indian union to see that Muslims in their areas feel quite at home and no ground is given to the reactionary and disruptionist forces to provoke conflicts or misguide the Muslims" (qtd in Gour, "Hyderabad" 44-5) They pointed out that the main aim behind instigating this migration was to strengthen the social base of the autocracy in the towns and to provoke conflicts between different religious communities and undermine democratic struggles in Hyderabad (45).

By June 1948, after many discussions and several drafts, India had produced a permanent settlement which left it free to station troops in Hyderabad not only during an external war, but during any situation that it deemed a state of emergency. Furthermore,

parity, the condition of constitutional safeguards for Hyderabad Muslims that Ali felt was essential to assuage their insecurities in the face of the recent communal violence against minorities in British India during Partition,⁸⁸ was rejected by India (Ali, *Tragedy* 201, 205). Attempts to elect an executive council of ministers based on the ideals of responsible government (during both Ali's tenure as well as that of his recent predecessors) were repeatedly boycotted by the HSC because of this issue (Munshi 31; Ali, *Tragedy* 58-9, 201, 205). An indicator of the hollowness of India's professed secular credentials is that representatives of the Indian government said that Indian leaders would be embarrassed if they openly agreed to an arrangement where a minority (Hyderabad Muslims) community would have the same rights as the majority community (Hyderabad Hindus) (Ali, *Tragedy* 221).

A few months later, the *Economist* was to observe that Nehru had rattle[d] the sabre at a press conference on June 17th, when he said that India had delivered its final terms 'and the Nizam can sign on the dotted line as and when he likes ... Hyderabad, situated as it is, cannot conceivably be independent and India can never agree to it, whatever happens and whatever may be the consequences.' (18 Sep. 1948)

Ali writes that a mark of how aggressive India had become towards Hyderabad around the middle of 1948 is seen in Nehru's comment at the above-mentioned press conference that India was ready to use force to make Hyderabad accede to it (*Tragedy* 224-5). In

⁸⁸ Ali writes that Muslims in government positions were also concerned about their career possibilities in India (122). The tables were about to turn in terms of industry and commerce as well, as Smith points out: after the "Police Action," "the same device of government control which had previously discriminated to help Muslims now operated on the whole against them" (22). Educated Hindus, who were disillusioned with their limited choices where government employment in Hyderabad was concerned, were in favour of accession because they believed that being part of a majority Hindu India would bring them better professional opportunities (Ali, *Tragedy* 124). This is the section from which the HSC and other Hindu organizations drew their support (124).

fact, the idea that the Indian leaders believed that the influence of Muslims and Muslim culture on the politics, society, and economy of Hyderabad could be eliminated only if Hyderabad were to be “completely absorbed and closely knit into the general pattern of the future India” (125) is present in Ali’s account. Even after Partition, he argues, there were forty-five million Muslims in India who posed a threat to Hindu hegemony in the minds of Indian leaders. He accuses the Indian leadership of creating plans that would progressively “absorb ... the Indian Muslims in the social and cultural fold of the Hindus” (125). These comments are pertinent and penetrating in light of the subsequent absorption of Hyderabad into India as well as the activities and attitudes of both the Hindutva right-wing as well as some Congress governments against the interests of Indian Muslims.

By June 1948, many Indian newspapers also expressed impatience over the “protracted negotiations,” and “[t]otal economic sanctions or military action or both” (British Information Services, “Daily Press Summary – June 3-14, 1948 (Weekly)”) and “decisive action” was advocated by newspapers such as the *Indian News Chronicle* (“Daily Press Summary, June 10, 1948”). *The Hindustan Times* praised the patience of the Indian government, asserting that it was glad that it had issued instructions to the army and the police to pursue the Hyderabad perpetrators (Razakars) of border raids into Indian territory, “even if it involves crossing Hyderabad territory” (“Daily Press Summary, June 10, 1948”). *The Times of India* wrote that India’s instructions to its army and police constituted “the writing on the wall” for Hyderabad (“Daily Press Summary – [date illegible] June 1948”). This metaphor suggests that *The Times of India* saw the accession of Hyderabad as imminent in light of the instructions given to the army and

police by India to pursue Razakar raiders even if it meant trespassing on Hyderabad territory. The newspaper implicitly urged the government of Hyderabad to realize that the consequence of refusing to accede to India would end in India invading Hyderabad, thereby also insinuating that the onus for ensuring peace lay with Hyderabad. *The Hindustan Standard* pointed the finger for the Indo-Hyderabad dispute at the British Government and maintained that “[t]he Government of India cannot at all be blamed for it.” Finally, the *Indian Express* tantalizingly hinted that “[d]oubtful ‘friends’ abroad are already indulging in evil counsel.” By “evil counsel,” the newspaper probably refers to sections of the British press as well as politicians who were sympathetic to and tried to defend the Nizam’s position on the accession question. It adds ominously, “Whether negotiations are resumed or abandoned, Hyderabad cannot defy the forces of progress and democracy for all time. And India cannot nurse an enemy within her belly” (“Daily Press Summary – [date illegible] June 1948”). In this way, we see that the hysterical rhetoric built by official publications in India such as the *White Paper* about Hyderabad being in cahoots with the enemy (read Pakistan) and subverting India from within its borders also found its way into newspaper reports and editorial opinions. What is also significant in the *Indian Express*’s use of metaphor is that India is envisaged in the gendered terms of Hindu/Indian nationalist discourse, which worships the country as Mother. And the implication of the Mother containing an enemy within her is that the country is diseased. In fact, when seen in light of the abductions, rapes, and forced impregnations of several thousands of Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh women by men of the Other community during Partition, it appears as if the *Indian Express* is suggesting that (Hindu) India is carrying the illegitimate, malignant (Muslim) child of masculinized

(Muslim) Pakistan. This “sickness” or “pollution” within its body must be removed (aborted?) or made benign in some way for Mother India to be healthy and whole again.

By the end of July 1948, flights and trains to and from Hyderabad were suspended, and telephone connections were tapped (Ali, *Tragedy* 238). Border raids by Indians into Hyderabad continued unabated,⁸⁹ and alongside the larger raids, it was normal to have two or three small armed raids in which the lives and properties of Hyderabadi Muslims were attacked (269). Hyderabad approached the United Nations Security Council via cablegram on August 21 (Eagleton 64) and informed the President that it was being intimidated by India, that it was under serious threat of invasion, that it had already suffered the economic blockade imposed by India, and that its borders had been violated and border villages occupied by Indian troops (65). Hyderabad’s second complaint to the Security Council was made on September 12: it urgently requested the Security Council to put the dispute between Hyderabad and India on the agenda as early as Wednesday, September 15, 1948, since India had officially proclaimed its intention to invade Hyderabad (Eagleton 65).

On September 7, Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru announced to an enthusiastic Parliament that his government had sent its final ultimatum to Hyderabad, asking the Nizam for the last time to “disband the *Razakars* (volunteers) immediately and to facilitate the return of Indian troops to Secunderabad in such strength as is necessary to restore law and order in the State” (*Times*, “Indian Demands” 8 Sep. 1948). He claimed that seventy villages had been attacked by Razakars inside Hyderabad, about a hundred and fifty incursions made into Indian territory, a hundred people killed, a large number

⁸⁹ For details of the infamous raid at Nanej in July 1948, for which two different Hyderabadi and Indian versions exist, see Ali (*Tragedy* 238-42) and *White Paper* (35).

injured, many women raped or abducted, twelve trains attacked, and property worth £750,000 looted (*Bristol Evening Post*, 7 Sep. 1948). Prompted by Nehru's dark hints about the "grave consequences" of these events in Hyderabad, *The Times* correspondent speculated that there could be widespread communal violence in and migrations out of South India and maybe even across India ("Indian Demands" 8 Sep. 1948). When asked what the Indian Government would do if the Nizam refused to re-admit Indian troops into Secunderabad, Nehru said, "we march." (*Reuters*, "Indian Troops" 10 Sep. 1948).

By September 11, Indians were indeed marching to Hyderabad, and Nehru told *Reuters* that so far "the Government had been anxious to avoid doing anything which might lead to a communal conflict." He now appealed for the cooperation of the press and the people in treating the Hyderabad issue on a non-communal basis ("Indian Troops" 11 Sep. 1948). Nehru's concerns about taking action against Hyderabad that might cause communal violence in India were sincerely driven by the recent, unprecedented violence of Partition, which was often fanned by the knowledge that such violence was taking place in other areas of the subcontinent. For example, the atrocities on Hindus and Sikhs in Punjab were matched by atrocities on Muslims in Delhi, and vice-versa. On September 13, *Reuters* reported that the Indian government had announced that "for the restoration of law and order in the State – Indian troops crossed the State border at 0400 hours (local time) today." The communiqué gave specific instructions to Indian troops: "You will therefore march into Hyderabad territory and bring back peace and prosperity to the law-abiding population of the State. You will crush with all the weapons at your disposal any resistance met" (qtd in *Edinburgh Evening News*). General Rajendrasinhji, General Officer Commanding (GOC), Indian

Army (Southern Command), who was in command of the Indian troops, described the operation as a “police action undertaken for the purpose of maintaining law and order in Hyderabad,” and promised Hyderabadis that “as soon as the task is completed the people of Hyderabad will be given the opportunity to decide their future, both as regards their internal Government and their relationship with India” (*Edinburgh Evening News*, 13 Sep. 1948). The General also called upon his troops to “protect all law-abiding persons, irrespective of their religion, caste or creed” (*Reuters*, “ADD” 13 Sep. 1948), and emphasized that

[t]he tempo of murder, rape, arson and loot has been steadily mounting with the result that the honour, life and property of all citizens in Hyderabad State who do not obey the orders of the Razakars has become unsafe and this peril also threatens nationals of India in adjoining provinces.

He offered reassurance that no law-abiding Hyderabadis should fear the Indian forces and that the Indian forces “seek the cooperation of all from the highest to the humblest Hindu and Moslem in fulfilment of our mission, which is not one of hostility but of friendship.” He also warned that “[a]ll communal strife will be sternly dealt with.” On the same day, Hyderabad informed the UN Secretary General via cablegram that it had been invaded (Eagleton 65) from five different sectors.⁹⁰

Reddy writes that Hyderabadis welcomed the invasion and garlanded Indian soldiers (59). The news had also caused much excitement in Indian cities, and the newspapers published special editions to discuss the event (*Times*, “Armoured Columns” 14 Sep. 1948). The British-owned Indian newspaper the *Statesman* writes that

⁹⁰ *The Evening Standard* reports on September 13 that the Pakistani Government sent Nehru a telegram about the invasion, but that the latter had not responded to it. Meanwhile, the “Moslem National Guard” of Pakistan adopted the slogan “War over Hyderabad means war over Pakistan” (13 Sep. 1948).

“[a]lthough the objectives of Indian action are limited, they should be secured not only quickly but permanently” and stresses that Hyderabad’s obstinacy had compelled Indian forces to face the “disagreeable necessity of fighting other Indian troops – for Hyderabad is part of India and such of her troops as are not foreigners are Indians” (qtd in *Reuters*, “Reaction” 14 Sep. 1948). The argument that Hyderabad was essentially Indian was advanced again and again to legitimate India’s claim to it. This point was made in spite of the fact that many sections of Hyderabadis, both Muslims and Hindus, considered their own shared, syncretic culture to be a unique one, with a historical trajectory connected to but decidedly separate from that of India. It is also important to remember that while the communal and class-based violence in Hyderabad was indeed a significant motivation behind India’s actions against Hyderabad, India was not the good samaritan it claimed to be. As I have mentioned earlier, India’s drive to conquer Hyderabad came from the desire of its leaders to form a strongly centralized state with tremendous power vested in the central government based in New Delhi. No mean consideration in its determination to force Hyderabad to accede was the fact that Hyderabad was rich in surplus raw materials (cotton, oilseed, castorseed, cement) and natural resources (coal) that India needed; it was alleged that Hyderabad had so far not shared these items with India the way India had shared its own surplus with Hyderabad (*White Paper* 19).

On September 13, there was intense bombing of Hyderabad aerodromes at Bidar, Aurangabad, and Warangal (Ali, *Tragedy* 271), and Osmanabad was taken with no resistance (273). There are reports of tension on September 14 in Indian-occupied Sholapur, where a curfew was put in place, assemblies of more than five people were banned, and sixty people were already arrested in this connection (*Reuters*, “Reaction” 14

Sep. 1948). News reports of Indian advances into Hyderabad territory (*Reuters*, “Reaction”) stated that Indian troops claimed to be halfway to Secunderabad and that a large number of Hyderabad regular troops, including several officers and Razakars, had surrendered on the advance on the Sholapur-Hyderabad road. Arms, ammunition, and 25-pounder guns were taken from them (*Evening Argus*, 14 Sep. 1948). On the other hand, Hyderabad Radio claimed that “Indian troops were being held in the south and north-west and that 250 casualties had been inflicted on those advancing from Sholapur” (*Evening Argus*, 14 Sep. 1948). Radio Pakistan in Lahore reported that Hyderabad Radio constantly asserted heavy losses on the Indian side and maintained that Hyderabad troops were holding their own and pushing back the invaders (*Reuters*, “Reaction”) and that the situation was “satisfactory” (*Sussex Daily News*, “Hyderabad Claims” 14 Sep. 1948). Meanwhile, India’s permanent delegate to the UN, Dr. P. P. Pillai, defended India’s stance by saying that “private armies have been formed [in Hyderabad] to enable the continuance of feudal oppression of the vast majority by a small minority; and their border raids threaten the peace and security of India” (*Reuters*, “Reaction”). Aurangabad fell on September 14 (Ali, *Tragedy* 282). In spite of all the bravado Hyderabad expressed through its radio stations, it was clear that the Indians were advancing deeper everyday into Hyderabad territory; they were met with little resistance. Hyderabad was now desperate. So was Razvi, and four battalions of poorly armed Razakars, including two of Razvi’s sons, were sent into battle (283).

On September 15, Delhi Radio reported that the strategically important city of Bidar was within sight of Indian troops (284). That afternoon an appeal from Ali to Indian leaders that Hyderabad was willing to accept “whatever reasonable terms that

India might yet offer” (287) was broadcast on Hyderabad Radio. He also informed the Agent-General in Karachi to request the Pakistani Government to mediate and urge the Indian Government to stop the bloodshed (288). Ali’s appeal was broadcast several times on Hyderabad Radio, but was not referred to in any of the Delhi broadcasts until late that night (288). It appears that India was bent on taking the bloody invasion to its conclusion; it was determined to march undeterred to Hyderabad, where it would depose the Nizam, put him and his ministers under house arrest, and set up a military government. The next morning again, no reference was made to it in Delhi broadcasts (291). On the afternoon of September 16, the Nizam blamed Ali for Hyderabad’s easy capitulation and asked him to resign so that he would be free to sort out on his own some political settlement with India (292-3). Ali resigned on September 17 (297), and he and Razvi were arrested by the Indian military soon after⁹¹ (Munshi 244).

Meanwhile, the crisis was put on the UN Security Council agenda on September 16, 1948 (Eagleton 65). While Hyderabad’s representative Nawab Moin Nawaz Jung argued that India’s premeditated actions constituted a violation of independence and equality as laid down in the UN Charter (66-7), India’s Ramaswami Mudaliar presented the Indian government’s official position that Hyderabad was not competent to bring such a case before the Council, since it was not a state at all, and had never been an independent entity⁹² (67). Therefore, he argued, anything to do with Hyderabad was a

⁹¹ Ali notes that he, the Muslim ministers in the Nizam’s mixed Cabinet, as well as Razvi were certain that they would be executed. Ali went about destroying confidential political correspondences and advised everyone, including the Nizam, to do so (*Tragedy* 303-4). He would subsequently be put under house arrest; Razvi was jailed. Both eventually managed to escape to Pakistan.

⁹² When Ali had formally informed the Indian Prime Minister towards the middle of August that Hyderabad had decided to take its case to the UN, he had received a reply a week later that India regarded the Indo-Hyderabad dispute a purely domestic matter and that Hyderabad had no right to approach the UN at all (*Tragedy* 252-3). Munshi describes the Indo-Hyderabad dispute as “problems of internal law and order” (237). In 1949, India’s representative Benegal Rau asserted the same points again before the Council (Eagleton 67).

domestic issue for India to deal with on its own (73). Mudaliar requested a few days so that he could back up his case with documentary evidence, but Hyderabad had already surrendered by that time. The Security Council postponed action, and the case was never taken up again (67). In his investigation into the claims made by India about its legal rights over Hyderabad, legal scholar Clyde Eagleton points out that India had no claim over Hyderabad “for the simple reason that there was no India, as a state, before 1947” (68). Smith also points out that Hyderabad had the stronger case legally (24-5). Large sections of the British press also aired this opinion, with an editorial in the *Morning Advertiser* stressing that since the princely states were free to choose their allegiances, India did not have a “particle of legal ground to stand upon” (15 Sep. 1948). Eagleton writes that the UN Security Council did absolutely nothing to solve the problem. He clarifies that it was obvious that accession was the most likely and best option, but India’s military action was unpardonable, and the Security Council could have still intervened if they had paid heed to Pakistan’s intervention over this issue in the UN in May 1949 (64).

Pakistani Foreign Minister and UN representative Mohammed Zafarullah Khan questioned the value of peace in the Commonwealth if everything was to be solved by armed force (*Manchester Guardian*, “A Laughing Stock” 18 Sep. 1948). Khan called for the Security Council to not accept Hyderabad’s accession, but instead order an investigation “of the method whereby it was extorted,” thereby drawing attention to the fact that the Nizam had agreed to accede to India only after Hyderabad was invaded and occupied by it (*Observer*, 9 Sep. 1948). *Reuters* reported on September 18 that comments in the *Dawn* reflected the general feeling in the Karachi Press of “bitterness against the Hyderabad surrender.” Comparing India to earlier invaders, the *Dawn* wrote that

“Hyderabad had surrendered to Huns” (*Reuters*, “Karachi” 19 Sep. 1948). Fifty thousand people are said to have protested in front of Pakistani Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan’s residence on September 14, demanding that some action be taken to rescue Hyderabad from India’s “unwarranted aggression”⁹³ (*Liverpool Daily Post*, 14 Sep. 1948). Hence, the occupation and forced accession of Hyderabad to India escalated the tensions between India and Pakistan and contributed towards the generation of public opinion in Pakistan that viewed India negatively.

A large section of the British press was scathingly critical of India’s military action, especially of Congress leaders and the economic blockade (*Morning Advertiser*, 15 Sep. 1948; *Daily Telegraph*, “A Grave Step” 14 Sep. 1948). *The Times* (“Hyderabad Surrenders” 18 Sep. 1948) and the *Spectator* (17 Sep. 1948) wrote eloquently about the questionable ethics implicit in the overpowering of a weaker neighbour who had also, until that time, been regarded India’s negotiating equal. In addition to this, the *Spectator* points out that this fact made the invasion “a war, not a police raid, and it also made India unequivocally the aggressor, in spite of all the extenuating arguments which may be produced”⁹⁴. *The Daily Telegraph* (“A Grave Step” 14 Sep. 1948), the *Sussex Daily News* (“Hyderabad” 14 Sep. 1948), and the *Manchester Guardian* expressed what was

⁹³ That Pakistanis interpreted India’s action as nothing short of bullying can be seen in a remark made by the Pakistani Inspector General of Police, Khan Qurban Ali, to Indian social worker Kamla Patel: “It is risky for us to disregard your wishes. Since you have the stick in your hands, you can wield it whenever you so desire” (Patel 119). Patel, a staunch Indian nationalist working with the Central Recovery Operation in Lahore at the time of the invasion, interpreted this “ironic remark” (120) as directed against Vallabhbai Patel, with whom she shared not only political convictions but also a surname. She also noted a change in the attitude of ordinary Pakistanis who had normally been friendly and even welcoming towards her (120). She and the other social workers were put under virtual house arrest in the camp in which they worked, and no one was allowed to go in or out (121).

⁹⁴ Several scholars and writers have pointed out the inconsistency of the term “Police Action.” Sundarayya always puts it within quotations, as if to ironically question the discrepancy between a mere police action and a military action that in every way looks and feels like war. Theodore Paul Wright Jr. observes that the Indian invasion is “referred to euphemistically” as the “Police Action” (“National” 144) and writes that it bears an “embarrassing similarity ... to the Pakistani invasion of Kashmir against which India was protesting in the United Nations” (“Revival” 132). William Dalrymple observes that the invasion was downplayed by the Indians, as if “all that had been involved was a few parking tickets and the odd restraining order” (“In Conversation” 57).

becoming a common conviction in many international quarters, that while Hyderabad could not possibly have remained independent, India's action showed India in a terrible light ("Hyderabad"). On September 18, *The Daily Telegraph* noted the condemnation of India's action by the United States and warned that Pakistan would see Nehru's policies as communally motivated. Others shared this view, and *Daily Herald* correspondent Andrew Mellor, writing on September 14, condemned India's attitude, observing that the conflict was "essentially communal," and if the Nizam and the ruling government of Hyderabad had been Hindu, the ongoing war situation would never have arisen ("Background to India's March"). On September 15, *The Times* called the Indian action a "deplorable resort to force." *The Times* pointed out further that behind the "smoke screen of propaganda," the Nizam had a "clear case" that should have allowed him to declare independence or accede to either India or Pakistan. However, since the Standstill Agreement was signed, the Indian government had "brought itself to believe that the Nizam's insistence upon his legal rights is incompatible with the safety of the Indian Union" ("The Invasion" 15 Sep. 1948). These opinions make it clear that a large section of the international press saw right through India's concerns about Hyderabad, which were motivated by the fact that the majority of its population was Hindu. This is why a Hyderabad ruled by Muslims was discursively constructed as a threat to India so that military action against Hyderabad could be morally justified.

The *Times* correspondent also issued a word of warning, observing that India was determined to treat Hyderabad, like Kashmir, as a domestic issue, "in which it is entitled to use its own discretion." S/he was correct in anticipating that India would face tensions with Pakistan, "where sympathy with the Nizam's cause is lively" over this issue, and

that India had endangered not only communal harmony but also the peace of the subcontinent through its actions (“The Invasion” 15 Sep. 1948). Other editorials in British newspapers such as the *Spectator* also argued that, in fact, India had a “fundamentally poor legal case [which] has thus been abandoned in favour of the blunt assertion of superiority” and that the present-day nationalist rulers were comparable to the colonial rulers, so that “it is all very like an incident from the seedier days of the East India Company” (17 Sep. 1948). What India had done was even worse, according to the editorial, because British paramountcy in Hyderabad was never defined to anyone’s satisfaction⁹⁵ and the only thing that was certain was Britain’s right to intervene, which would never have been grounds enough to justify the kind of regime that India had set up in Hyderabad. While the conviction that Britain would have acted differently in similar circumstances is impossible to substantiate, what matters is that the newspaper compared India’s government to colonizers. In doing so, it critically disrupted India’s self-righteous public image as a secular nation based on democratic principles of freedom and equality.

The Spectator also pointed out that many princely rulers had found that their quick acquiescence to India’s demand to them to accede to it had brought a change for the worse; their people had no cause to celebrate. In this regard, what is most significant about the newspaper’s observation is that “such of them who have the misfortune to belong to Moslem minorities are lucky if they are still alive to regret the past” (17 Sep. 1948). On September 18, the *Economist* observed that the “oratory [that] has been coming from the mouths of Indian politicians [is] curiously reminiscent of the Fuehrer’s exhausted patience.” It paraphrased the declaration of N.V. Gadgil, the Indian Minister of

⁹⁵ Many commentators and scholars assert this point. See for instance, Ali’s *Tragedy of Hyderabad* and Margrit Pernau’s *The Passing of Patrimonialism* (2000).

Public Works, that it was time to complete the victory of Khadla won by the Marathas over Hyderabad in 1795, and cited Vallabhbhai Patel that “if Hyderabad did not behave properly, it would go the same way as Junagadh.”⁹⁶ Patel’s statement referred to the Indian invasion, occupation, and forcible integration of Junagadh state after it had acceded to Pakistan. This declaration not only reveals that there was a precedent to India’s invasion of Hyderabad that India maintained was the right course to follow in case of princely states that refused to accede to it, but also that the decision of the sovereign ruler of a princely state to remain independent or accede to Pakistan did not matter if the ruler was Muslim and his majority population Hindu. What mattered was that the majority population was Hindu and wanted to accede to India. This stance of India on minority ruled princely states becomes very questionable when we realize that the ongoing dispute over Kashmir between India and Pakistan stems from the fact that the Hindu Maharaja of Muslim majority Kashmir was bullied into rescinding his bid for independence and acceding to India in 1947. In fact, when the Hyderabad and Junagadh invasions are juxtaposed with the accession of Kashmir, we realize that Nehru and other Indian leaders such as Patel were less interested in delivering justice to the people of these princely states, as they claimed, and more interested in the political power and material assets these states would bring to a Hindu-dominated Indian government. The marked communalist hue of this politics is also unmistakable.

Another telling detail that exposes the blatant disregard for ethics that India had where the accession question was concerned is that, after his arrival in Hyderabad as

⁹⁶ Munshi also refers to this comment (181). Ali writes that Patel was firm that Hyderabad had to accede and that he was not willing to negotiate over this even if his colleagues were (*Tragedy* 151-2, 236). According to Ali, unlike Nehru, he was only concerned about how soon Hyderabad could be occupied and cared little about outside reactions to his forceful approach (191, 236).

India's Agent-General in January 1948, Munshi made a speech in which he reminded the Indian troops at Bolarum of the heroic deeds of the Indian forces in Junagadh and told them that India expected similar heroism from them "elsewhere" (Ali, *Tragedy* 106). *The Economist* concluded that whatever may be India's reasons, the fact remained that it had used force against an independent state in "circumstances which exclude the justification of self-defence" and emphasized that, while India called it an internal affair, Hyderabad was an independent state. In doing so, *The Economist* pointed out that, as an independent state, Hyderabad had sovereign rights and options for external legal recourse, which India sought to deny to Hyderabad by claiming that it was merely a part of India and, therefore, had no right to approach outside parties for help or support. In this way, India also implicitly rejected Hyderabad's claim that it was and wanted to remain independent. Additionally, *The Economist* editorial warned that, as a result of this invasion, the conflict between India and Pakistan would get worse, and communal violence would ensue.

However, there were supporters of the Indian government as well, and while British anti-war activist and labour politician Fenner Brockway condemned the military action as unworthy of Nehru, he emphasized the "accommodating spirit" of the Indian government in negotiating with the rulers of princely states and assuring them that they would remain the heads of their states if democracy were introduced (Brockway, "Hyderabad" 18 Sep. 1948). He explains how the Kashmiri ruler had made way for a democratic constitution with Sheikh Abdullah as Prime Minister. In doing so, he neglected to mention the role played in Kashmir by raiders allegedly supported or sponsored by Pakistan, and how India responded to the Maharaja's urgent appeal for help against them only after he had agreed to India's condition that Kashmir would accede to

India (Munshi 48). Other journalists observed some inconsistencies in the treatment of Kashmir and Hyderabad. For instance, the *Daily Express*, having opined that Indian politicians were taking a leaf out of Hitler's book, questioned their moves by examining their claims to Hyderabad and Kashmir. It wrote that if, as Indian politicians claim, Hyderabad, with its largely Hindu population, belongs to India, then "what are they doing trying to take on Kashmir, where the reverse situation exists?" ("Abandoned" undated). Many other British newspapers and journals such as the *Spectator* (17 Sep. 1948), the *Express and Star* (13 Sep. 1948), and the *Economist* (18 Sep. 1948) also made blunt comparisons between the Indian leaders and fascist Italian and German leaders, French imperialists, and medieval crusaders.

Furthermore, Brockway wondered if India would not have been wiser to accept UNO intervention and even asked Nehru, British Prime Minister Clement Attlee, and the Nizam an open question about whether the services of the British government might not help the situation.⁹⁷ On September 13, the *Grimsby Evening Telegraph* also criticized India for not approaching the UN to solve the problem, and on September 18, the *Manchester Guardian* suggested that India itself should invite the UN to organize and supervise a plebiscite. This would guarantee that there was no communal intimidation

⁹⁷ The heads of both the US and Britain had sympathized with the Nizam when he approached them for help, but also expressed their inability to intervene as long as Hyderabad remained bound by the Standstill Agreement, in which it had ceded foreign relations to India for a year from November 29, 1947 (Ali, *Tragedy* 235-6). Britain's failure or refusal to come to Hyderabad's aid met with both approval and disapproval in the British press and political opposition. Leader of the opposition Winston Churchill openly communicated his sympathies to the Hyderabad Prime Minister (238). *The Daily Express* scathingly criticized Britain's lack of response to the crisis suffered by one of the princely states, all of whom who had been "firm and steadfast friends of Britain" ("Abandoned" undated), the *Spectator* on September 17 pointed out that Britain had a "tremendous obligation" to prevent this "war" from spreading, and the *Sussex Daily News* went so far as to suggest on September 14 that "[t]he crisis has been precipitated by the feeling in both India and Hyderabad that the British Government would not support the Nizam in any appeal to the United Nations" ("Hyderabad" 14 Sep. 1948). The British opposition stated on September 13 that it wanted the government to make a statement on the Hyderabad issue. On the other hand, the *Yorkshire Evening Press*, which reported the opposition's demand, noted that because the Indo-Hyderabad dispute was a "matter which involves India and Hyderabad ... the British Government have no direct responsibility" (13 Sep. 1948). An editorial in the *Morning Advertiser*, while cautiously stating that Britain has no right to interfere, recommended that Britain should "use its good offices towards obtaining some sort of immediate settlement" (15 Sep. 1948).

from either side and also “take some of the sting out of the charge that India has acted too high-handedly” (*Manchester Guardian*, “Hyderabad Surrenders”). An editorial in the *Spectator* on September 17 also recommended a UN plebiscite, called India’s invasion an “unjust war,” and reminded Nehru of his own address to Indians in June 1947 after the British plan for the transfer of power was announced. On that occasion, Nehru had said, “The United India that we have laboured for ... is not one of compulsion and coercion, but a free and willing association of free India” (qtd in *Spectator*, 17 Sep. 1948).

Such criticism from the foreign press did not go unnoticed in official Indian quarters. Correspondents from foreign dailies such as *The London Times*, *The Telegraph*, *The New York Times*, and the *New York Herald Tribune* were sending such scathing reports back to their papers that the Indian government decided to censor them. Special censorship was also imposed on the dispatches sent to widely circulating publications such as *Life* and *Time* (Ali, *Tragedy* 141).

The response by Indian newspapers to the British press’s barrage of criticism over India’s military action is also worth noting. Sukeshi Kamra has observed the important role of the Indian Press in the twentieth century; she stresses that its birth was coterminous with the arrival of Indian nationalism and in “help[ing] formulate the rhetoric of nationalism by offering the means to spread information about the many individual struggles taking place all over India in the decades leading to independence” (8). In fact, she elaborates, in the 1920s and 1940s, “[t]he press, the telegraph system, and the railways were central to the developing nationalist movement, for all facilitated flow of information and hence the possibility of ‘national’ sentiments and solidarity” (35). Furthermore, the Press relentlessly built up the momentum towards independence (37-8).

It is this united nationalist rhetoric that emerges when we note the report made by the Delhi correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* on September 17 about the “Indian press, [which] without exception, expresses shocked surprise at Britain’s official and unofficial reaction to events in Hyderabad as expressed by Mr. Bevin in the House of Commons and by press comments published here” (“British Attitude”). *Reuters* reported from Madras on September 16 that British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin’s declaration in Parliament that week that a “warlike spirit” had developed in India had prompted *The Hindu* to write that he had “indicted a whole nation.” *The Hindu* asked what Britain would have done if it had remained in India and declared that “when ... the world is in possession of all the facts, India’s action will be acclaimed as a notable contribution to peace” (*Reuters*, “Nation Indicted”). *The Manchester Guardian* also noted that the “moderately nationalist” *Hindu* found Bevin’s attitude unexpected, bearing in mind Attlee’s previous declarations,⁹⁸ Hyderabad’s constitutional status, as well as the recent events in that state. *The Hindu* criticized the *Manchester Guardian*’s own condemnation of India’s action and angrily asked the following questions: “What was the alternative? Was India to sit still while the Razakars and international adventurers attracted by Nizam’s gold went on playing ducks and drakes with the peace and happiness of millions of people?” (*Manchester Guardian*, “British Attitude” 18 Sep. 1948) *The Manchester Guardian* quoted the *Statesman*, which pointed out that while outside opinion focused on how the Indian action might lead to clashes in Pakistan and communal violence in the rest of India, “we here see as more important in the long run the steadily deteriorating effect on the position of Moslems in India and Hindus in Pakistan of the continued

⁹⁸ *Reuters* reported on September 13 that Attlee had told the Nizam upon the latter’s request for support that Britain would not support Hyderabad in any appeal to the United Nations; he advised the Nizam to come to terms with India (“India Invades” 13 Sep. 1948).

uncertainty” (“British Attitude” 18 Sep. 1948). This remark implied that the lot of minorities in India and Pakistan would somehow improve if Hyderabad were invaded and made to accede to India. The fact that the invasion itself exposed the Hyderabad Muslim minority to violence and brutality was clearly not a concern.

Indeed, the newspaper also stressed that “[t]he ulcer of Kasim Razvi’s communalism must be removed” and that “[h]aving failed to persuade the Nizam to undertake it himself, India has decided on an operation quick and almost painless, it is hoped, rather than allow the spread of the malignant growth.” It exhorted British public opinion to take account of what previous administrations in India would have done;⁹⁹ it emphasized that such “dangerous truculence” would never be allowed (*Manchester Guardian*, “British Attitude” 18 Sep. 1948). *Reuters* reported from New York that the Indian Ambassador had told Americans in a broadcast on September 17 that Britain would have done the same and that India had held off till September 1948 only because it wanted to reach an amicable settlement with the Nizam (“Britain” 17 Sep. 1948). There were also protests against critical British responses to the invasion in Indian cities such as Nagpur, where on September 18, over ten thousand people “of all parties” held a four-hour long demonstration against what they called “anti-Indian Government propaganda broadcast by the British Broadcasting Corporation on developments in Hyderabad” (*Reuters (Indian and Pakistani Service)*, “Indians Demonstrate”). Demonstrators in a mile-long procession also demanded the immediate stoppage of “the pernicious diplomacy” of leading politicians (“Indians Demonstrate”). These acts of protest by

⁹⁹ An editorial in the *New Statesman and Nation* opined that the British would not have tolerated Hyderabad’s behaviour: “[a]n army would have been despatched, order restored, the Nizam deposed, a successor found and warned to be on his good behaviour, and the trouble would have been settled promptly” (17 Sep. 1948). By equating India’s action to what British action would likely have been, the newspaper questionably aligned the policies of a self-professedly secular, democratic state with that of an imperialist one. Was the newspaper then implying that India too was an imperialist country after all, or that it had the right to act like one?

Indian newspapers as well as Indian citizens in some parts of the country against the criticism launched by international news agencies suggests that many Indian citizens stood by their government's invasion of Hyderabad. While Razakar violence and the Nizam's misrule had a great role to play in garnering such support for the Congress government's actions, it is also probable that vengeful communalist sentiments against Muslims that were embedded in the memory of Partition violence were at work as well.

However, Indian newspapers also advocated caution, and on September 18, the *Bombay Free Press* pressed for the deposition of the Nizam, the Delhi *Hindustan Times* recommended leniency, and *The Times of India* urged the Government to tread carefully both in terms of the specific problems of Hyderabad and the "efficient maintenance of the new situation" (*Reuters*, "All" 19 Sep. 1948). It is possible that Nehru too had anxieties about Hyderabad because, while referring to the success of the operations on September 19, he said, "We have faced many adversities and overcome them. We have to face success also without getting intoxicated by it." Did Nehru anticipate violence and repression by his own forces in Hyderabad? Perhaps in order to reinforce India's argument that Hyderabadis were, in fact, Indian and that, therefore, India had a right to tell them to accede, Nehru added, "I would repeat that we do not consider as we have not considered in the past, Hyderabad as something different or alien from us. Her people, whether Hindu or Moslem, are our kith and kin and share with us in the great heritage of India" (*Reuters*, "Nehru Broadcasts" 19 Sep. 1948). In this statement, while it is clear that he was certainly reminding Indian administrators and soldiers in Indian-occupied Hyderabad to treat all Hyderabadis equally, just as he would expect them to treat all Indians equally, he was also perhaps implicitly emphasizing that Hyderabadis, Hindu or

Muslim, must not be harmed because that would now be tantamount to the Indian state perpetrating violence against Indians.

The Indian public was surprised at the swift defeat of Hyderabad on September 17, and this became an indicator for journalists that Hyderabad State forces lacked not only modern arms and equipment, but also fighting spirit. By now, it was known that fighting was never on a large scale, and the fact that the number of casualties was exponentially larger on the Hyderabadi side placed under scrutiny the rhetorical thrust of Indian press and radio pronouncements about “strong opposition” and “stern resistance” with regard to Hyderabad’s military response (qtd in *Times*, “Cease-Fire” 18 Sep. 1948; see also Ali, *Tragedy* 280). The Razakars, whose fanaticism, military organization, and equipment had been greatly exaggerated by Indian propagandists in previous months, had proved to be largely ineffective against the Union Army. *The Times* reports that “not more than 5 per cent of their total number (which was also wildly exaggerated) were armed with firearms, mostly old muzzle-loaders, while the remaining 95 per cent carried staves and spears” and concludes that, “[n]aturally, they could do little against Indian armoured columns” (“Cease-Fire” 18 Sep. 1948). These revelations from correspondents indicate that India’s step to invade Hyderabad was based on an exaggeration of the capabilities of the Razakars. This does not mean that the Razakars were not dangerous to the non-Muslim populace, or that they did not commit tremendous atrocities against them, but that the extent of their supposed military preparedness or organization which the *White Paper*, for example, so hysterically reports, was exaggerated. The Razakars could not have prevailed upon India, as the invasion proved, in organized battles. Yet, again, the ethical and moral stance behind India’s decision to invade Hyderabad was

largely undermined in such contemporary news reports as the one mentioned above from *The Times*.

On September 18, the *Star* reported that India's Deputy Prime Minister Vallabhbhai Patel had congratulated the police for preventing Hindu-Muslim riots in India during the campaign and that All-India Radio (AIR) denied that there had been any Hindu-Muslim conflict in occupied Hyderabad territory. On September 20, *The Times* quoted Nehru as saying, "What has pleased me most during these past six days is the splendid response of our people, both Muslim and non-Muslim, to the call for restraint and discipline" (untitled report). *Reuters* also reported that he had said that the absence of communal violence throughout India "is full of good augury for the future" and for this he was deeply grateful. He further congratulated Hyderabadis who "during these days of trial, kept calm and helped the cause of peace" ("Nehru Broadcasts" 19 Sep. 1948). In addition to this, Chakravarti Rajgopalachari, the Governor General of India (GG), had issued an appeal from Delhi on September 19 calling for the observance of a national thanksgiving day on the coming Sunday to honour the absence of communal bloodshed during the invasion (*Reuters*, "National" 20 Sep. 1948). The GG also wrote to the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army, Sir Roy Bucher, commending the "exemplary discipline and restraint and the regard for honourable traditions which the Indian troops displayed" (*Reuters*, "Indian Governor-General"). On September 19, *Reuters* stated that General Rajendrasinhji had said that the Razakars would be treated as ordinary prisoners and not prisoners of war because they were not members of the Hyderabad State Forces ("All"). Munshi writes, "The behaviour of the troops towards the civil population,

whether Hindu or Muslim, was at all times correct and impartial and this in itself did much to restore confidence” (241).

However, India’s self-congratulatory nationalist tone in the historical archive is somewhat shaken by the interrupting voice of the British communist newspaper the *Daily Worker*, which highlighted the role of the Indian forces in undermining and destroying the Telangana movement in Hyderabad through an account written by “Muslim Student” on September 20 (“The Threat”). “Muslim Student” writes that “[o]ur people in Hyderabad, particularly in the south, in the Telengana area, have written a glorious chapter in the history of Hyderabad by liberating a large area ... where neither the Nizam’s autocratic rule nor the terrors of his Razakars have been able to penetrate.” S/he wrote that this was the only area where Hindus and Muslims live in amity, “jointly liquidating the feudal system and establishing for the first time a democratic regime.” “Muslim student” specifically attacked the strategy of the Indian Army in sending its main forces in from the areas around Telangana and Nalgonda, “which have been liberated by the people,” and wrote that this move as well as the Indian Government’s stand so far on the Telangana struggle showed that India wanted to crush the Telangana movement. “Muslim student” referred to the GG’s September 12 statement that India invaded Hyderabad because the Nizam had been unable to control the Razakars and communists. The writer claimed that a truly democratic Indian government would have supported the communists, not persecuted them. To this end, the writer quoted *The Daily Telegraph* on the Government’s intention to bring the Nizam’s grandson to power. The column ended with an appeal “to workers everywhere to lend their full support to the struggles of the Telengana people and protest against the attempts of the Indian

Government to suppress this movement in the name of fighting the Razakars” (*Daily Worker*, “The Threat” 20 Sep. 1948). This account by “Muslim Student” suggests that not only did sections of the international press as well as groups of British and Pakistani citizens see through the false pretext behind India’s invasion of Hyderabad, but so did the communists. In fact, it was clear to these people that the Indian state viewed both Razakars and communists as a joint nuisance because both threatened in some measure the authority of the centralized Indian state.

On September 18, a special correspondent of the *Daily Worker* provided details of a Communist Party statement, which expressed alarm at the way the Indian Government was dealing with the Hyderabad problem. The Party protested that the aim of the invasion was to only disband the Razakars while maintaining the symbolic continuity of the Nizamate and that dismantling the Razakar organization alone, without ending feudalism, would not liberate the people (“Indian Communists”). The statement also pointed out that although Rajagopalachari’s comments on September 12 took the Nizam to task for not dealing with either the Razakars or the communists, he had also assured the Nizam of his position and regarded “the Telengana peasants’ resistance as anarchy, deserving to be crushed.” The Party stressed that the peasants resisting the Nizam must not be treated as enemies, but should be armed so that they could overthrow the Nizam and “mop up the Razakars” (“Indian Communists”). In this way, the Party rendered transparent India’s blatantly bourgeois leadership that had, in spite of their differences, found common ground with the Nizam. Furthermore, alignment with a ruler its leaders had previously denounced as a despot with ironically little or no power over the rabid Razakars, indicated the hollowness of India’s righteous outrage over the way Hyderabadis were

being treated during the Nizam's misrule. This point was only reinforced when the Indian military government in occupied Hyderabad decided to persecute the small and big players of the Telangana struggle, the political movement that had provided a large population of Hyderabadis with a platform from which to resist the Nizam's misrule and the Razakars' brutality.

Communist cadres and their leaders already knew by mid-1948 that the arrival of the Indian army did not augur good news and that the Congress government would not sympathize with their cause (Stree 53; Sundarayya 177). Even before the invasion happened, communist cadres had composed songs about the Congress government, how it would persecute them, and how they were not prepared to live under its rule (Stree 53). As the *Daily Worker* had pointed out, the struggle had already made significant gains in terms of chasing away the Nizam's officials and replacing them with local, village administrations; doing away with *vetti*, illegal exactions, land evictions, usurious loans, torture, humiliation, and oppression; seizing and redistributing waste lands (for cattle grazing) and surplus lands along with agricultural implements and cattle; and enforcing fair wages and grain distribution for agricultural labourers (Sundarayya 113). The peasants had destroyed landlords' houses and sowed the ruins with much-needed food crops (183). The movement was spreading fast, not only across Telangana but also in Madras Andhra (114). For Sundarayya, the real reason that the Indian government intervened at this point was to actually act on their "main declared purpose of suppressing 'Communist violence'" (114). Patel and Rajagopalachari had repeatedly declared that the

communists' influence was likely to spread across the state and must be ended with the use of military intervention¹⁰⁰ (Sundarayya 191).

So, the Telangana Armed Struggle continued after the Indian Army came in because the land that had been seized from landlords and redistributed during the struggle against the Nizam had to be protected not only from the exiled landlords but also from the bourgeois Indian state (177-8). During this period, there were labour and agricultural strikes in many parts of the state against the Indian military government set up after the "Police Action" (215). These marked the people's anger against continuing or new repressions slapped upon them by the new administration. Immediately after the "Police Action", the people of Bellampalli (Adilabad district) raided the properties of Hindu and Muslim big merchants and other oppressors (Sundarayya 303; Reddy 59). In response, the Indian army imposed curfew, banned red flags, and molested Hindu and Muslim women. Workers staged demonstrations demanding withdrawal of forces and punishment for the perpetrators. Kothagudem and Bellampalli mine workers went on strike several times during the second (post-invasion) phase of the Telangana Armed Struggle. Sundarayya takes pains to point out that the Communist Party did not have the resources or the influence to mobilize them in these regions and that their initiative was entirely their own (303). This fact reveals that, even though the movement had been developed and guided by the leadership of the Party, it continued on the people's steam during the

¹⁰⁰ It appears that both the Indian and the Hyderabad states and élites were united in their assessment of communists. For example, Munshi treats communists and Razakars on par and even indicates that both organizations were working together (91)! Furthermore, among many other similar instances, it was reported that the Indian police was searching on February 15, 1948 for Telangana communist leaders in Indian villages bordering the Hyderabad *talukas* of Khammam and Madhira (Gour, "Hyderabad" 115-6). *The Times of India* also urged New Delhi to render assistance to Hyderabad in dealing with its "serious trouble with communist agitators" (editorial, 29 Jan. 1948, qtd in Gour, "Hyderabad" 118). In Hyderabad, Ali considered the communists "armed raiders" (65). Élite supporters of the Nizam such as Akbar Ali Khan publicly appealed to the Majlis and the Congress to resolve their differences and come to a point where they could deal with the "communist menace squarely" (*Rahber-e-Deccan*, 31 Jan. 1948, qtd in Gour, "Hyderabad" 117).

times when the Party was weakened by constant repression. It also shows how relevant the struggle against oppression continued to be at a time when Hyderabadis were already supposed to have been liberated from tyranny by the Indian invasion and the subsequent accession of Hyderabad to India.

Road transport workers, municipal workers, PWD workers, and textile workers under socialist and communist influence struck (303, 307). Mill workers in Warangal staged synchronized strikes starting in 1949 (304). A week after the “Police Action,” the Indian Army had begun to specifically strike at the roots of the movement, attacking guerilla squads and Party and Sangham organization (Sundarayya 181). The recently achieved gains were taken away by *deshmukhs* and landlords with the support of the Congress government and its armed forces¹⁰¹ (Sundarayya 1, 116, 189; Stree 236). Raids increased and many communists were arrested under the Prakasam Ordinance¹⁰² by the Indian Army, often with the help of the local Congress workers (Stree 48-9, 69, 81; Sundarayya 195-6), who (along with the rich landlords who had supported the struggle against the Nizam) withdrew their support to the movement after the “Police Action” (Stree 110, 203). People were tortured so that the locations of well-known communists could be extracted from them (Stree 119-20, 138; Sundarayya 197). Especially elaborate forms of torture were developed by the Indian Army and police against communists (Reddy 60; Sundarayya 96, 123). Families of known communists and communist leaders

¹⁰¹ However, there were some villages that managed to keep their lands permanently. For example, Telladarupalli, a Muslim *jagir* village and a strong AMS centre, was raided in August 1947 by the *jagirdar*'s men from Khammam. The attack was repulsed by the villagers who not only fought off the men but also managed to seize their weapons and retained possession of the land. Even after the “Police Action,” the peasants did not give up their land and were ultimately able to get *patta* (ownership rights) under the Hyderabad Tenancy Act of 1950 (Sundarayya 92). The Hyderabad Tenancy Act, “the most radical piece of land legislation till then,” came about in 1950 as a result of the people’s struggle against the Indian army’s constant attempts to seize the peasants’ lands (120).

¹⁰² The Prakasam Ordinance was an emergency measure passed by the Congress Ministry in January 1947. It allowed the arrest and retention of many Communist Party cadres and leaders without trial (Stree 193).

were particularly harassed and publicly tortured (Sundarayya 197, 311). Young mothers who were involved in the struggle were arrested and then psychologically tortured with hints from policemen that they had also managed to capture their children (Stree 133). Separated from their infants, lactating mothers contracted milk fever (194).

Thus, the self-proclaimed saviours of the people had turned into their oppressors. This repression accounts for the persistent vagueness in almost all the testimonies in *We Were Making History* about who exactly the enemy was. It is clear in the testimonies that it is the arms of the state, the army and the police, who are the guilty parties, but it is difficult to understand which state is meant, and both Hyderabad and India are implicated. The women marvel at how their enemies had metamorphosed overnight from the Razakars and the Nizam's police into the Indian Army and the Indian Police¹⁰³ (Stree 53). Pesara Sattemma expresses anger at the fact that India told them that "the Muslims would just butcher us," but that the Sikh military that arrived from India after the "Police Action" was no better, beating and killing people (226). She stresses, "[T]he Razakars and the [Indian] Union Army all did the same thing. The [Indian] Union got its work done through the Razakars" (223). In this way, she equates the ultimate purpose of the Razakars and the Indian Army, which was to suppress resistance against existing forms of feudal exploitation and violent communalism. She clearly considers both the Hyderabad and Indian governments two sides of but one coin. Another example of the conviction that there was no difference between the Razakar/Nizam's repression and India's conduct in the eyes of those who participated in the Telangana struggle comes from Sundarayya, who repeatedly calls the volunteers who were active in promoting the

¹⁰³ Even Munshi writes that both the communists as well as the Razakars considered the Nehru government their enemy (128).

Congress' policies in Hyderabad after the "Police Action" "Congress Razakars"¹⁰⁴ (197, 281).

For Sundarayya, the approach of the Indian government was not only aimed at the class struggle, but it was also misogynistic as well as communalist, and it dangerously undermined the people's unity. He reports many instances when members of the Indian armed forces (220) and police (238) raped women, and that many women died "[b]ecause of raping" (238). Rape was especially common in areas where there were police or military camps (245, 252). Sundarayya writes that although there had been rapes by state apparatuses during the Nizam's misrule, they were nothing compared to the actions of the arms of the Indian state, which were

nothing less than what we read of what a foreign army of occupation does in an occupied country. But the whole Indian press controlled by the Congress Government and all those 'great' defenders of women's honour did not raise even a feeble word against this monstrous crime that had become the pastime of the Congress police and army during all those three years. (341)

It is probable that Sundarayya is referring here to the considerable pains taken by the Indian government to retrieve "dishonoured" women during Partition. He writes that using the information gathered from the movement's underground centres at the time, it is possible to estimate that more than a hundred women died of rape during the occupation by Indian forces. In the very first year of the occupation, more than a

¹⁰⁴ Sundarayya not only considers the actions of the Hyderabad and Indian states comparable, but he also compares both states to the Nazi fascists. For example, not only does he call the Nizam the "Nazi Nizam" (317), but he openly equates the Indian government's approach with fascism when he refers to the torture of young men in "hitlerite jails" after the invasion (311). He also inextricably connects the Indian leadership with fascism when he points out how people were herded into "concentration camps" named Gandhinagar, Asokanagar, Jawaharnagar, Kakatiyanagar and Bapunagar (253), and tens of thousands were beaten, tortured, starved, and made to dig their own graves (252). References to concentration camps are also made in "A Report on the Post-Operation Polo Massacres, Rape and Destruction or Seizure of Property in Hyderabad State," which informs us that Muslims were dragged out of trains and sent to them to be tortured and killed (100).

thousand women were reported to have been raped (341). Scholars such as Peter Custers have also noted that the Indian army's repression was "far more overwhelming than that by the Nizam's forces had ever been" (158). As thousands of soldiers converged upon Telangana villages in what were called "draining operations," atrocities were unleashed upon the people, with soldiers "dancing with military boots on the bodies of suspects, gang-rapes, etc., 'unheard of even in the Razzakar period'" (158). Sundarayya writes that in one instance of a mass raid by six to seven thousand Indian Army and police personnel on striking villages in Warangal district, six thousand five hundred persons were tortured, three hundred women were raped, and forty of them were "done to death" (Sundarayya 256-7). Some women were raped by four to five men, and many women were pregnant when they were raped (257). In many places, this gendered brutality extended to attacks on maternity, and women were not allowed to breastfeed their children. Often children were brutally killed in front of their mothers (245).

Custers points out that rape was an even more widespread weapon amongst the Indian Army than it had been during the time of the Razakars. Rape was used to subdue the Telangana peasantry. In Magaram, a communist who had been pointed out to the army by Congress agents was carried away in a lorry, raped to death, and then thrown out on the road (187). Custers's research suggests that there were innumerable mass-rapes between 1948 and 1951. In fact, mass-rape was a common feature in every centre or village where police and military camps were established (187). Custers also states that the women of Telangana did not put up with this passively; they courageously tried to resist rape by the Indian Army. In some cases, rapists were beaten to death, while police attackers were chased with grain winnowing pans or rice-pounding rods (187-8).

Furthermore, initially, the coming of the Indian forces was welcomed as a release from Razakars' terror, and "Hindu-Muslim tension maintained at the point of Razakar bayonets, disappeared" (Sundarayya 307). But soon after this, Congress representatives went from village to village pointing out to the people that, like them, they too were Hindus and would, therefore, not harm them. They tried to persuade the people to pay land revenue, grain levy, and excise taxes, and reassured them that the Congress government would soon introduce land reforms (195). Sundarayya points out while none of the Nizam's officials were brought to justice (191), "ordinary Muslim people, who stood against the atrocities of the Nizam, were pounced upon and untold miseries were inflicted on them" (188-9).

Omar Khalidi points out that while the Indian government has "adequately" documented the atrocities perpetrated against Hindus by the Razakars, and there has even been some work on Telangana, very little has been written on the confrontation between India and Hyderabad in 1948 ("Military" 199). Khalidi writes that, unlike Hyderabad city, the districts of Hyderabad "witnessed large-scale massacres, rape and destruction or seizure of Muslim property" in the wake of the Indian invasion. And while there were some vague reports that trickled in during and after the take-over, he notes that the full magnitude of this violence was only understood when Muslims fled from the villages to the "relative safety of Hyderabad" and related their experiences (95).

A significant contribution that Khalidi has made to address this lacuna in publicly available information about the "Police Action" is that he has translated and published a part of a hushed up report¹⁰⁵ compiled by representatives of the Indian government that lists in great detail the atrocities that were perpetrated against Hyderabad Muslims

¹⁰⁵ Khalidi writes that he obtained fragments of the report from people who wish to remain anonymous (99).

during and after the “Police Action.” The chain of events and persons that led to the drafting and subsequent ban on even acknowledging that the report existed is significant. State attorney Muhammad Yunus Salim, having heard of cases of brutality, approached the progressive Hyderabad newspaper *Payam*’s editor, Qazi Muhammad Abdulghaffar. Abdulghaffar approached Abul Kalam Azad, the Indian Minister for Education, and Azad approached Nehru. Salim later told Khalidi in an interview that Nehru was persuaded to appoint a team to investigate the deeds of the invading forces in Hyderabad, and “in his personal capacity” (95), appointed Pandit Sundarlal, Abdulghaffar, and Salim to head a team and tour the affected areas. In his introduction to the report, Khalidi writes that Patel is said to have been reluctant about Nehru’s decision and was incensed by the report when it was completed (Khalidi 95, 97). He refused to acknowledge that any part of it could be true.

Based on their investigations in November and December 1948, Sundarlal and Abdulghaffar’s team compiled a report in English and Urdu. According to Sundarlal’s secretary, Mujib Rizawi, parts of the report were smuggled out to Karachi in 1949 where they were broadcast over Radio Pakistan, causing India great embarrassment (98). Both Abdulghaffar and Salim suffered professional setbacks as a result of their involvement with the report (98). Khalidi informs us that, because of intimidation from official quarters, many people who were in possession of the report got rid of it. There is also supposed to be a complete copy of the report in India’s Home Ministry. Srinivas Lahoti, a communist leader from Hyderabad, was instructed by the Party to deposit his copy in the National Archives in Delhi, which he claims to have done.¹⁰⁶ The treatment of this report

¹⁰⁶ When I tried to locate it in the National Archives in May 2011, I was clearly told by the staff that there were documents connected to the Indo-Hyderabad dispute that I would not be able to view unless I could procure permission

as extremely sensitive has led to it being rigorously guarded and not allowed to be viewed by the public. Furthermore, the importance of the report is underscored when we realize that there is no other record of the actions of Indian forces in Hyderabad in 1948 that has been published or is available in archives (98).

The translation and reproduction of a part of the report in the volume of essays edited by Khalidi and called *Hyderabad: After the Fall* (1988) claims that not a single district of Hyderabad escaped from the violence and that the villages fared far worse than the district headquarters (Sundarlal and Abdulghaffar 100). Muslim homes and shops were destroyed or plundered in Marathwada and Telangana (100, 103, 110). In Gulbarga, where wealthy Muslim homes and shops were plundered by soldiers, an application for compensation was denied and the police accused one Sayyid Abdulbari of lying and threatened him with libel (106). Many people withdrew their complaints after this threat. There was no discrimination between rich or poor Muslims when it came to violence. Both the report (100) as well as Smith's account (21) point out that a very large percentage of the Muslim population of the district fled in destitution to Hyderabad city or other cities in the state. They could never return to their homes. Those who did were "harmful or killed" (100). These claims seriously undermine those made by Nehru, Rajagopalachari, Patel, Munshi, as well as General Rajendrasinhji that there was no violence perpetrated by Indian forces and that they had acted in exemplary fashion, treating Hindus and Muslims equally well.

In most of the testimonies collected by the investigators, it was either the (mostly local) goondas or the army, or a combination of both, that was responsible for the

to do so from the Prime Minister's office. Narsing Rao emphasizes that such a report was indeed unofficially commissioned by the Indian government but was never released (DVD 9, 1:54:25-1:55:33).

violence. The investigators observe that hundreds of innocent Muslims were being arrested by the Indian police under the charge of being Razakars. For fear of being arrested like this, many were afraid to come forth and put forward their legitimate claims of persecution (115). In places such as Jalna, for example, people were rounded up, beaten, and shot based on accusations that they were Razakars (102). Smith's account corroborates these events, and he points out that in some places, all the men were placed in a line and shot. His estimate suggests that "somewhere between one in ten and one in five of the adult males may have lost their lives in those few days" (21). Sundarlal and Abdulghaffar's report says that in Moram (Osmanabad district), a Congress leader maintained that four to five hundred Muslims had been killed in that area (103). In Bidar, local Hindus who had left the village returned and seized arms from Muslims (103). Mosques, tombs, and *ashurkhanas* (Shia congregation halls) were demolished (103, 106, 110, 111), and there are allegations of forced conversions having occurred (104). Young women were abducted (102) and raped (101, 106) during the invasion. Smith's account also attests to this (21). Cases emerged of Muslim women in Bidar district and Shahpur *taluka* committing suicide (often along with their children) by jumping into wells at the threat of being "dishonoured" by rape or after being raped (Sundarlal and Abdulghaffar 105, 113). In Ganjoti Paygah (Osmanabad), Pasha Bi told the investigators,

The trouble in Ganjoti began after the army's arrival. All the young Muslim women here were raped. Five daughters of Osman Sahib were raped and six daughters of the Qazi were raped. Three unmarried daughters of Muhammad Sultan were raped by the goondas. Ismail Sahib Sawdagar's daughter was raped in Saiba Chamar's home for a week. Soldiers from Umarga came every week and

after all-night rape, young Muslim women were sent back to their homes in the morning. This was repeated for weeks at Gujar Chand's house. Mahtab Tamboli's daughters were divided among Hindus, one is in Burga Julaha's home ...

(Sundarlal and Abdulghaffar 103-4)

In Shahpur, the report claims that two thousand people were killed, a thousand women committed suicide by jumping into wells after they had been raped, and five hundred children were killed and thrown into wells (114).

Smith writes that while “[t]he behavior of invading troops is seldom pretty ... in this instance the army personnel were emotionally involved in the communalism” (20). He is convinced, therefore, that the emotional investment of the Indian forces in the violence stemmed from communalist feelings, which were certainly embedded in the recent and gripping spectre of Partition. In addition to the violence perpetrated by Indian forces, there is also evidence of violence against Muslims by local non-Muslims. Thus, even Sundarayya and Reddy, who maintain throughout that the people were undivided by the Razakars as a result of the unifying influence of the Telangana struggle, concede that there were terrible reprisals in Marathwada (Sundarayya 9; Reddy 59), where “the populace widely rose against the local Muslim petty officials, against individual Muslims who had been browbeating them, or just against Muslims as Muslims; and wreaked agonizing vengeance”¹⁰⁷ (Smith 21). However, Sundarayya also writes that it was Hindus who rescued and sheltered hundreds of Muslim families from the “campaign of rape and murder indulged in by the [Indian] Union armies” (189). There is some evidence of this in Sundarlal and Abdulghaffar's report, which names a Pandit Rao Patvari who came to

¹⁰⁷ Narsing Rao says that these extensive attacks by local Hindus against Muslims in Marathwada (and, according to him, Bidar as well, which was situated in the Kannada-speaking regions) took place with (and in spite of) the Indian army's knowledge (DVD 9, 1:51:25).

assist the Muslims (101). Another Hindu from Jivargi, Patvari Baba Rao, told the team led by Sundarlal and Abdulghaffar that “[t]he Indian army and police were aware of the impending massacre, but they made no attempt to stop it” (105).

By May Day 1949, people were calling for the end of the military regime and the establishment of a democratic government of workers, peasants, and members of the middle-class (Sundarayya 309). By 1950, civil liberties had been completely crushed in the state. Sundarayya writes about a “Congress autocracy” and explains that things were so bad that the police could pounce upon any locality, institution, or factory and indiscriminately arrest, terrorise, and torture people and detain them without warrant or trial. There was no individual liberty or privacy, sanctity of educational institutions, or respect for women (305). In a revealing move, the printing machinery of the Communist Party, trade unions, student, and youth organizations was confiscated (305-6). This act reveals the apprehensions of the Indian military government because the publications associated with the political groups mentioned above had been responsible for keeping the anti-Nizam struggle alive and kicking in the minds of the reading public and served as well as a morale booster for the resistance in Telangana. Between February and August 1949, there were fifty-two people in Hyderabad city alone who were languishing in jails. Amongst these were communist leaders, organisers, and active workers, trade unionists, militant workers, students, professors, progressive writers, newspaper editors, government employees, and organisers and activists of the League of Democratic Youth (LDY) as well as the AHSU.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ Among the student leaders arrested were Narsing Rao, Vithal Kulkarni, Gangadhar Chitnis, Hanumant Rao, and Iqbal Ahmad. Sulaiman Arab, the popular Hyderabad Progressive poet, Ghouse Mohiuddin, the editor of the progressive weekly *Savera*, Akhtar Hussain, editor of the popular daily *Payam* (which was now banned), and Razia Begum, lecturer at the Osmania University College for Women, were also arrested (Sundarayya 306-7). Sundarayya remarks, “Culture was being threatened by the Government of that ‘defender’ of culture – Nehru” (307). Elsewhere,

The extreme repression of the Telangana Armed Struggle by Indian forces,¹⁰⁹ which had set up military camps across the state (Sundarayya 195), resulted in the retreat of the movement to the forests by the end of February 1949 (246). With the concentration of larger forces, heavy bombing, frequent raids (299), unfair trials¹¹⁰ under oppressive conditions (defence lawyers for Telangana fighters and leaders were threatened, their witnesses beaten up, and comrades shot in forests while supposedly being taken to courts to stand trial) (321-2, 324), the Party leadership emphasized to its cadres that the Indian army was a bigger enemy than the Nizam's forces and that it would not let them survive (Stree 53). Although the military regime had been replaced by a civilian administration with M.K. Vellodi, Secretary of States department, as its head in 1950 (Sundarayya 305), the Telangana Armed Struggle was finally called off on October 21, 1951 after considerable pressure from the high command and prominent leaders from Kerala and Bengal¹¹¹ (Stree 15, 53; Sundarayya 1). In spite of this, the Congress government and the

Sundarayya points out the magnitude of the arrest of Akhtar Hussain, his brothers, his dying brother-in-law Aziz Ahmed, and his sister Razia Begum by quoting the "bourgeoisie's own *Orient Press*," which reported it as the "biggest haul of intellectuals" in the city (qtd in Sundarayya 310). Urdu writer and professor and communist activist Zeenath Sajida was also amongst the arrested (Sajida, DVD 2.2, 2:41). For an extensive list of names of arrested people, see Sundarayya (306-7).

¹⁰⁹ For numbers and other extensive area-wise details of this repression (torture, rape, and murder), see Chapter 11 (195-205) of Sundarayya's book.

¹¹⁰ People had refused to recognize the Indian government's courts and ignored the *patels* and *patwaris* who had returned to the villages. They turned to the village committees to resolve their interpersonal disputes (Sundarayya 221). Furthermore, in early 1950, the government had sentenced to death twelve Telangana leaders. The outrage against this move was great, and renowned London-based British barrister, Labour politician, and Soviet sympathizer D.N Pritt immediately came to the assistance of the condemned, enlisting the help and support of prominent lawyers such as Danial Latifi, who had communist sympathies and belonged to the Punjab Muslim League. Pritt appeared before the Hyderabad High Court to defend many such cases. Overwhelmed by not only the reaction in Hyderabad but also telegrams of protest from the Czechoslovakian Youth League, Hungarian Freedom Fighters' Federation, World Federation of Lawyers, World Federation of Trade Unions etc., the Indian Government decided to commute the sentences to life imprisonment (322-4).

¹¹¹ Many people felt a major sense of disappointment when the movement was called off because they had believed that true independence was in sight (Stree 136). For women, this was a particularly bitter end, since they were told to return to their husbands (or find husbands, if they were single) after having gloriously challenged various socially constructed glass ceilings in the struggle (93-4, 136, 170, 253-5). Sundarayya attributes the eventual split in the Communist Party in 1962-3 to the calling off of the struggle in 1951 (5). For arguments that the conditions for revolution no longer existed after the Police Action, see Reddy's *Heroic Telengana: Reminiscences and Experiences* (1973). For an unrelenting

Indian Army continued to shoot communists and former guerilla fighters¹¹² (Stree 53; Chakravartty 130).

The saving grace of the Indian invasion was that there were some land reforms. Sundarayya admits that *jagirdari* lands, which had belonged to individual landlords, and *sarf-e-khas* lands, which had belonged to the Nizam, were abolished after the “Police Action” and incorporated into *khalsa* or *diwani* lands, which were owned and administered by the state (9). And although Reddy is critical of how the Indian Government behaved in Telangana after the “Police Action,” he also notes that the Razakar organization was dismantled, the *jagirdari* system abolished, and tenancy legislation enacted by the military regime after the “Police Action” (59, 65). Narsing Rao points out that the years 1952 to 1956 saw “positive action” by the Indian government, which established many new and much-needed polytechnics and colleges in Hyderabad (DVD 7, 29:22). And in spite of Urdu being removed as the medium of instruction in Osmania University, Urdu theatre flourished alongside a Telugu renaissance (28:50-31:33).

However, Usama Khalidi’s as well as Karen Leonard’s research has shown that after the “Police Action” and throughout the 1950s, entire Hyderabad Muslim families left for Pakistan for better prospects. Omar Khalidi has also pointed out that there were

critique of Sundarayya’s and other communist leaders’ and writers’ justifications of the Party’s decision to call off the struggle, see Devulapalli Venkateswara Rao’s *Telangana Struggle and the Path of Indian Revolution* (1974) and *Refutation of Wrong Trends Advocating Withdrawal of Telangana Armed Struggle* (1982).

¹¹² The lack of acknowledgement of the contribution of communists in overthrowing the Nizam continues to this day. Mallu Swarajyam is disenchanted as she talks about discrimination in favour of Congress freedom fighters who are honoured today with pensions, while communist fighters are turned away. She cites the case of Chaityala Ailamma (Stree 238-9), whose struggle against the landlords sparked off the Telangana movement, but who received no pension from the government, was dependent on her granddaughter until the day she died, and sang songs of poverty and despair (40-1). Chaudhary points out that programmes in Indian state capitals on the occasion of the silver jubilee of the country’s independence to honour freedom fighters and give them pensions and access to facilities specifically excluded those who participated in the struggles in the princely states, and only considered struggles on the “mainland” (126). He adds that “[a] query brought the official reply that struggle in Hyderabad was for ‘accession to Indian union’ and not for freedom!” (126-7)

many Razakars amongst these immigrants, who fled because they knew that they would be prosecuted for their crimes during the last Nizam's rule ("From Torrents" 36). Those Muslim families that remained but had some members who had moved to Pakistan found that their homes were confiscated by the new government, in spite of the fact that the law held that property could be seized only if the title-holder had emigrated. Soon, there was not a single upper middle-class family that did not have some or most of its members in Pakistan (Khalidi, "From Osmania" 191, 193). Not only did they migrate to Pakistan, but many Hyderabadis (Muslims, Hindus, Anglo-Indians) also left for international locations such as the US, UK, Canada, Australia, and parts of the Middle East, as Leonard has shown in the extensive research she has undertaken in her book *Locating Home: India's Hyderabadis Abroad* (2007). Papiya Ghosh points out that "the largest and most homogeneous group of Indian Muslims [in the USA] belong to Hyderabad" (134). The largest concentration of Hyderabadis in the US is found in Chicago (Mohammad 295), and in Canada in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Some of these diasporic Hyderabadis still contest the accession of Hyderabad to India; they prefer to create their own associations to differentiate themselves from Indian, Pakistani, Muslim, or Hindu associations.

In fact, Syed Ali stresses that it is not only economic incentives or work, study, and travel opportunities abroad, but also a now established culture of migration that is responsible for the high rate of migration out of present-day Hyderabad. The dismantling of social stratification for Muslims in Hyderabad after 1948 has contributed to this culture of migration. Hyderabad's pre-1948 social stratification "was a strict status system, based on one's social distance from the Nizam. Social life in the city revolved

around his person” (42). When the Nizam was deposed and the landholdings of the *nawabs* confiscated, the upper-class lost their mutually reinforced support system. Furthermore, the lack of economic mobility and educational opportunities during the Nizam’s rule was replaced with greater opportunities and choices for people in the 1950s and 1960s, and the middle-class expanded. Individual achievement began to be prized as much or even more than caste or class affiliations (42). However, these developments were unequal, and Muslims and non-élite Hindus believe that they are discriminated against by upper-caste Hindus (43). This differentiation has fuelled migration, and Ali writes that Muslim men do not even apply for jobs in HITEC city, the ever expanding technological and software hub of the city, because they are certain that Hindus will not hire them. All these factors have contributed to the view that migration is the desired path for Hyderabadis, and “[m]igrants have come to be seen as something of heroes, people to be emulated” (43).

In this chapter, I have outlined the material, social, and political realities of Hyderabad in the late 1940s, and explained how the context of Partition was undeniably embedded in the trajectory that Hyderabad state took. The communalist violence of the Razakars, the communal mobilization of the Arya Samaj and the Anjuman-e-Tabligh-ul-Islam, and the repression and reprisals inflicted by the Indian state’s forces upon communists and Hyderabad Muslims after the invasion of 1948 all find space in this chapter. The resistance to such divisive trends through the Telangana Armed Struggle have also been described. In addition to this, I have cited from and elaborated on how the Hyderabad, Indian, Pakistani, and British press responded prolifically to the twists and turns taken by the Indo-Hyderabad dispute, as well as how the thrusts and parries

between the Nizam and his government and the Congress big players and their representatives became increasingly hostile and urgent as the invasion of Hyderabad became imminent. It emerges from my research and analysis that while concerns about communal violence were certainly uppermost in both the Nizam's and Nehru's minds in different ways, both were guilty (as were their governments, officials, and allies) of undermining the interests of many sections of Hyderabadis through their actions, which were motivated by the lure of political power. In this way was Hyderabad absorbed into India through rape, rupture, death, and dislocation. The purpose of the next three chapters is to examine how the experiences of Hyderabadis during this time are remembered in the fictions of three writers: Anita Desai, a secular and internationally canonized Indian writer; Samina Ali, a debut Indian-American novelist of Hyderabadi Muslim descent; and Kishorilal Vyas "Neelkanth," an Indian writer of Hyderabadi background and Hindutva leanings.

**Reading Between the Lines: The Representation of Hyderabadis and
Hyderabad in Anita Desai's *Clear Light of Day***

In Anita Desai's novel *Clear Light of Day* (1980), the character named Raja befriends a Hyderabad Muslim family that later flees to Hyderabad from its house in Old Delhi during the turmoil of Partition. After their departure from Old Delhi, Raja is thrilled to receive a letter from the Hyder Alis informing him that they are

[i]n Hyderabad – quite safe. In Hyder Ali Sahib's home – his mother lives there, and his sister. They're all safe. He says there is no trouble in Hyderabad. They are in hiding, but they are safe and well, and they even found a friend to post this letter to me ... He even says Benazir sends her best wishes. (115)

The first contradiction in Raja's synopsis of Hyder Ali's letter is the fact that the family is in hiding in spite of there being "no trouble in Hyderabad." No explanation is given for this dissonance anywhere in the novel. Second, and far more important, is the mistaken idea that there is no trouble in Hyderabad during Partition. Indeed, Raja uses the word "safe" thrice, and very emphatically. As I have already shown in the last chapter, Hyderabad was far from being safe in the late 1940s. Amidst conditions of tremendous feudal exploitation as well as brutal repression by communalist Muslim Razakars, the Telangana peasantry had risen in 1946 to fight the Razakars and the arms of the feudal state ruled by Nizam VII Mir Osman Ali Khan, the hereditary ruler of Hyderabad. Razakar atrocities were terrible not only in the rural districts but in the capital city of Hyderabad as well. Although they found easy targets in poor as well as working-class people, they also persecuted elite Muslims who challenged their attempts to create divisions between Hindus and Muslims. For example, when retired Muslim officials

published a protest against the Razakars, they were harassed not only by the Razakars but also by the Nizam's government (*White Paper* 16; Munshi 188; Smith 16). Even those Muslims in British India who thought Hyderabad would be a safe haven and made their way to the state (Kidwai 27; Ali, *Tragedy* 127) faced great dangers on their way to Hyderabad. In fact, former Delhi University professor and Partition survivor Ishtiaq Husain Qureshi (1903-1981) writes that “[t]he most ghastly killing took place when the Grand Trunk Express going to Hyderabad and Madras was stopped and every Muslim man, woman and child was slaughtered” (69). The massacre that took place aboard the Grand Trunk Express is represented with hair-raising psychological and material detail in an Urdu short story called “Kaali Raat” (“The Black Night”) by Aziz Ahmad (1914-1978), in which a Hyderabad Muslim man named Tahawwar shoots his wife Batool to prevent her from being raped and, consequently, “dishonoured” by the attackers before being killed himself by a Sikh man.

In addition to this horrifying violence, élite Hyderabad Muslims like the fictional Hyder Ali family were worried about their political, social, and economic futures amidst all the political upheaval around them. Organizations such as the Arya Samaj and the Hyderabad State Congress were calling for a merger of Hyderabad with India, while the Nizam stubbornly wanted Hyderabad to remain independent in spite of all the problems that years of misrule had created. Moreover, the medievalist feudal system from which the élite in Hyderabad cities often derived its primary or secondary income was showing signs of crumbling under the strain of the Telangana Armed Struggle. Following the forced accession of Hyderabad to India after India invaded Hyderabad in 1948, not only was the Telangana struggle brutally suppressed; the Indian Army also carried out

reprisals against Muslims to punish them for Razakar cruelty as well as the violence perpetrated by Muslims against Hindu and Sikhs elsewhere during Partition. Although Hyderabad Muslim élites were not in danger of losing their lives after the military government clamped down on Muslims, those in government positions were concerned about their career possibilities in India (Ali, *Tragedy* 122). The tables were about to turn in terms of industry and commerce as well, as Wilfred Cantwell Smith points out: after the “Police Action,” “the same device of government control which had previously discriminated to help Muslims now operated on the whole against them” (22).

The almost simultaneous explosion of many political currents in Hyderabad around 1946 and the violent clashes that these movements invariably consisted of hardly qualify Hyderabad as a peaceful place as Hyder Ali’s letter to Raja seems to suggest. Furthermore, as 1947 drew closer and questions of accession and non-accession became fraught with tension, the news that was being circulated about Hyderabad from Hyderabad and India was wildly conflicting, as testified by the bewildering number of contradictory and opposing details emerging in contemporary newspaper reports and editorials, as well as official government reports. For example, an extract from the Daily Press Summary of the British Information Services, dated May 13, 1948, pointed out that Indian newspapers such as *Hindustan Times*, *The Pioneer*, and *The Indian Express* all prominently and “conspicuously” featured Razakar violence in and around Hyderabad (“Extract from Daily Press Summary, British Information Services dated 13th May, 1948”); in its summary for June 3-14, 1948, the British Information Services reported that “[t]otal economic sanctions or military action or both” had been advocated by some newspapers to deal with the Razakar threat (“Daily Press Summary – June 3-14, 1948.

(Weekly)'). However, after the invasion of Hyderabad in September 1948, British newspapers reported from New Delhi that "Indian propagandists" had "wildly exaggerated" the numbers and military prowess of the paramilitary Razakars, who turned out to be "broken reeds" during the invasion (*Times*, "Cease-Fire" 18 Sep. 1948), and how "there is a strong suspicion that the magnitude of [the Razakars'] aggressive acts [before the invasion] has been grossly exaggerated in order to provide some kind of excuse for an Indian invasion" (*Morning Advertiser*, "Aggression" 15 Sep. 1948). In yet another case of absolutely opposing reports, during the invasion, the *Evening Argus* stated that the Indian troops, "pushing deeper into Hyderabad, claimed to-day to be halfway to Secunderabad" and that several Hyderabad troops as well as Razakars had surrendered, and their arms and ammunition had been taken, while "Hyderabad Radio claimed that the Indian troops were being held in the south and north-west and that 250 casualties had been inflicted on those advancing from Sholapur" (14 Sep. 1948). Thus, the news coming from Hyderabad and the news coming from India was completely confusing and contradictory to anyone reading or listening to it in Hyderabad, India, or England.

There was also gross ignorance and/or misrepresentation on the part of state officials and state apparatuses. For instance, immediately after the invasion, several Indian statesmen including the Prime Minister (Jawaharlal Nehru), the Deputy Prime Minister (Vallabhbhai Patel), and the Governor General (Chakravarti Rajgopalachari), military men, and All-India Radio were quoted as congratulating the Indian army on its restraint and morally correct attitude towards the Hyderabadis. These claims are directly refuted in Hyderabad Prime Minister Mir Laik Ali's memoirs (*Tragedy* 43, 55). But Ali

himself is also guilty of misrepresentation because he notes that he had pointed out to India's Agent-General K.M. Munshi that, unlike the atrocities unleashed by the Indian army during the invasion and "despite all the propaganda against Hyderabad of Hindu-Muslim discord, there had not been a single communal clash anywhere throughout the State" (59). This is a direct denial of not only the terrible repression of non-Muslims by the Razakars in the state between 1946 and 1948 but also the role of Qasim Razvi, with whom Ali was more than familiar, in spewing venomous communalist propaganda against non-Muslims and India. Bearing this context of contradictory journalistic and media reports, as well as the assertions and denials amongst politicians and élites of both states, it is possible to speculate that what Raja knows about Hyderabad is what the average Delhiite knew and believed about Hyderabad at the time. However, Desai too is culpable, in terms of her careless construction of a "safe" Hyderabad for the Hyder Ali family to flee to, a representation that (as I argue in this chapter) becomes part of the erasure by mainstream Indian literature and history of Hyderabad's Partition history.

Furthermore, Raja's myopia about the material conditions in Hyderabad, a place he thinks has "no trouble" at all, cannot be overlooked when it is seen in light of his passionate political ideals based in secularism and syncretism. Out of all the characters in *Clear Light of Day*, such as Raja's siblings Bim, Tara, and Baba, who live in Old Delhi during Partition,¹¹³ Raja is the one through whom we receive the loudest and most vocal criticism of communalist politics. An aspiring Urdu poet who refuses to join a group of

¹¹³ Bim and Baba continue to live in Old Delhi after Partition, while Tara marries a diplomat and goes away and Raja departs for Hyderabad to be with Hyder Ali and his family. The fact that Raja leaves his own family in Old Delhi is resented by Bim, who feels that the responsibility for caring and providing for her raving, hallucinating Aunt Mira and the gentle, dependent Baba has fallen squarely on her shoulders, limiting her own opportunities and, to some extent, dismissing her dreams. A large part of the novel consists of Bim's, Tara's, and Baba's individual and shared recollections of their experiences before and during Partition. The central concern of the plot appears to be Bim's bitterness at being abandoned by Raja to grow old in a decaying Old Delhi; the narration moves from her anger (which she expresses in front of Tara, who is visiting Bim and intends to attend Raja's daughter's wedding in Hyderabad) to her forgiveness and acceptance of Raja, his wife, and his children.

communalist students in Hindu College that targets Muslims in Delhi during Partition, Raja marries a Muslim woman, Hyder Ali's daughter Benazir. His marriage is arguably a radical act of secularism at a time when there had been unprecedented violence between Hindus and Muslims. Yet, I contend that this secularism masks the silence imposed by the text on Benazir, who does not speak in the novel. What serves to make this silencing of Benazir even more acute is that Raja's ignorance is mirrored in the short-sightedness that marks the self-preoccupation of other characters in the novel. This trend is best exemplified by Bim, whose perspective is important because it is through her eyes that we see Benazir. A profound example of Bim's self-absorption emerges when Tara complains that nothing ever changes in the Das house in Old Delhi and everything goes on unperturbed just the way it always has; Tara hints that this is because Bim wants to live in the past. Bim is offended because she sees herself as being trapped in the house and tells Tara in a "hard voice" that

Old Delhi does not change. It only decays. My students tell me it is a great cemetery, every house a tomb. Nothing but sleeping graves ... Here we are left rocking on the backwaters, getting duller and grayer, I suppose. Anyone who isn't dull and grey goes away – to New Delhi, to England, to Canada, the Middle East. They don't come back. (13-4)

This quotation marks a prominent theme in the novel: the pervasive self-pity of its Hindu middle-class characters who feel that they have been wronged by history. That Bim envisages departure from Old Delhi only in terms of greater opportunities that have been denied to her is significant because it shows that she fails to recognize that the greatest departure from Old Delhi in recent years had been the panic-stricken exodus of its

middle-class as well as working-class Muslim inhabitants to Pakistan and other sub-continental “safe havens” such as Hyderabad during Partition. This gap is made especially strange by the fact that the novel’s narrative time and its construction of memory are firmly rooted in Partition, and because the Das family’s lives are intimately intertwined with the Hyder Ali family which escapes to Hyderabad during Partition. The Das family is not only a tenant and neighbour of Hyder Ali; Raja goes on to marry Hyder Ali’s daughter Benazir.

In this chapter, I will focus on Benazir, the historically present but silenced Hyderabadi Muslim woman. I will argue that the “absent presence” (Didur, “At a Loss” 67, *Unsettling* 156) of Benazir in the text encodes Desai’s patriarchal silencing of the experiences of Hyderabadi Muslim women during the upheaval of Partition. In doing so, I will go against the grain of scholarly assertions which maintain that literary texts enable the recovery of Partition experiences. Instead, I will argue that literary texts, in fact, can also be crucial to sustaining the silence in public culture and official narratives about entire histories of women and communities.

This chapter does a Saidian contrapuntal reading of *Clear Light of Day* in terms of the “codified, if only marginally visible, presence” (Said 63, 66-7) of Benazir. The mediation of distance, which my location within the diaspora has enabled, demands a rereading of the text in light of the tensions produced by the mainstreaming of a normative Indian culture as Hindu in recent years, tensions that enable a more complicated reading of Benazir and the position she occupies as a middle-class Muslim woman in a family forced to flee from Delhi to Hyderabad with the outbreak of communal riots. In this regard, it becomes important to “open [the text] out both to what

went into it and to what its author excluded” (67). In light of the particular fact that Hyderabadi Muslim women have acquired a thrice marginalized status in India since 1948 through their gender, religion, as well as regional affiliation, it becomes even more relevant to apply to this analysis Said’s assertion that “the ‘what’ and ‘how’ in the representation of ‘things,’ while allowing for considerable individual freedom, are circumscribed and socially regulated” (80). With this in mind, as a middle-class Muslim woman from India, where Muslims are a marginalized minority and Muslim women are sidelined and often persecuted not only on account of their gender but also on account of their religious affiliations, I place emphasis on reading *Clear Light of Day* with “an effort to draw out, extend, give emphasis and voice to what is silent or marginally present or ideologically represented”¹¹⁴ (Said 66). In the absence of any self-representation of Benazir in the text, her voice and subjectivity are appropriated and represented by the other characters in the novel, and it is through their words and attitudes alone that we are resigned to knowing her. To this end, the narrative’s focus on Raja’s irresponsible departure from Old Delhi, which leaves Bim alone to take care of Aunt Mira and Baba on a small income, and, consequently, on Bim’s terrible anger towards Benazir as the imagined cause of her abandonment by Raja ensures that Benazir’s flight from Old Delhi during the violent upheavals of Partition is overshadowed in history.

In fact, there are few direct references to Partition violence in *Clear Light of Day*. The period between March and August 1947, when communal violence was at its worst, is called only “that summer” (9, 70, 71). Elaine Ho observes that most of Desai’s works

¹¹⁴ While I generally endorse these aims of Said to give voice to silences of the marginalized in terms of how postcolonialists should re-read canonical texts, in this chapter, I will also temper carefully the idea of extracting voice from silent quarters. As I have suggested in my introduction, this is a strategy especially supported and practiced by recent studies in Partition testimonies and literature that aim to look at questions of silence and voice more sensitively and contextually.

do not address historic time and events directly, and historical transitions are embedded in character histories or “glanced at obliquely” as the background to the plot (4).

However, on a couple of occasions in *Clear Light of Day*, the characters do consciously appreciate and discuss the life-changing impact Partition had on their lives. For instance, Bim muses about how life stagnates for long periods of time when nothing happens, and then “suddenly there is a crash – mighty deeds take place – momentous events – even if one doesn’t know it at the time – and then life subsides again into the backwaters till the next push, the next flood? That summer was certainly one of them – the summer of ’47” (71). In response, Tara reminds Bim, “For everyone in India ... For every Hindu and Muslim. In India and in Pakistan.” Bim acknowledges that it was so for everyone, and remembers seeing fires burning in the city every night (71).

Partition is thus remembered as a private history of the Das family, embedded in the lived and remembered experiences of the characters’ lives as well as in the background to those lives. Following Urvashi Butalia’s concept of private Partition history, Ho reads Raja’s story in the novel as Partition privately remembered, “an elegiac conjuration of lost realities, and also a remembrance, through a narrative of ambivalent family loyalty and disaffiliation, of the public memory of convulsion and catastrophic rupture” (38). Partition recalled as an

intimate portrait of familial history allows Desai to counter the panoptic view of Indian history filled with generalizations and often inaccuracies. She centers on a woman who stays in Old Delhi, a woman who is the most connected physically and psychologically to a family’s past. It is within the geography of Bim’s private

space, her own house, that time is recorded and her own memories, or history, relived. (Thaggert 93)

Private histories are, therefore, valuable because they show the local, human impact of Partition and do not attempt to singularly represent a “universal” face of Partition. Desai successfully constructs the concept of a private history of Partition by positing recollection as implicit and indirect, “work[ing] through her characters’ interaction, especially through dialogue and reminiscence” (Reimenschneider 197). She uses narratives modes like flashback, perspective, stream-of-consciousness, point of view, and associative thought processes that connect memories with meaningful symbols (205). Additionally, not only do we see this private history as the Das family’s story and Bim’s story, but also as Desai’s own story in light of her statement that *Clear Light of Day* is the “most autobiographical of all my books because it’s the house and the garden and the neighborhood that I grew up in” (Desai, “Against” 525). She has said too that she connects “a little bit with each of the different characters” (525). The danger, however, with such an intensely private text about an absolutely life-changing political event such as Partition is that it ends up becoming a preoccupied narrative with characters that are completely absorbed in themselves. For example, we see that in spite of the tremendous upheavals that are taking place right under their noses in Old Delhi, Bim does not “know it at the time” that Partition would be remembered as a momentous event, and Tara has to shake her out of her self-musings and remind her that it was a critical time for everyone in India and Pakistan (71). In this self-absorption, the harsh realities of Partition are completely elided, and Desai’s text only becomes part of the greater, official, mainstream silencing of Partition.

This neglect is vividly manifested in the fact that *Clear Light of Day* largely fails to represent the magnitude of Partition violence in Delhi, a city that was tense for almost a year until Gandhi's assassination in January 1948, when the utter shock about the manner of his death somewhat calmed things down. As a result of Partition, Delhi underwent a complete demographic and cultural transformation within a span of a few years. It had a population of 950,000 in 1947, out of which 330,000 people, who were Muslims, left during Partition (Pandey, *Remembering* 122). 500,000 non-Muslim refugees arrived in Delhi during Partition. By 1951, the population of Delhi was 1,740,000, and Partition refugees accounted for more than twenty-eight per cent of the population (122). More vivid and revealing than numbers, however, is social worker Anis Kidwai's reaction to the mass exoduses of Hindu and Sikh refugees from West Punjab. There were suddenly so many desperate, dispossessed Hindus and Sikhs in Delhi that she wondered whether there were any Hindus and Sikhs left in Pakistan at all (163). Delhi's resources were strained to breaking point as traumatized Hindus and Sikhs and persecuted internally displaced (Indian) Muslims flooded its huge refugee camps (Dalrymple, *City* 44; Pandey, *Remembering* 128).

First, Muslims sought refuge in September 1947 at Palam airport, in the Pak Transfer Office, the Jama Masjid area, Nizamuddin, Okhla, graveyards, abandoned Muslim monuments, the Pakistan High Commission, and the houses of Cabinet ministers Abul Kalam Azad and Rafi Ahmed Kidwai as well as other prominent Muslims in Delhi. When these places became unsafe, they went to the camps that were set up in the Purana Qila and Humayun's Tomb (Pandey, *Remembering* 123). Within a few months, there were 164,000 internally displaced Muslims in Delhi, many of whom were waiting for a

chance to leave for Pakistan (123). It was estimated in mid-September that approximately sixty per cent of the Muslim population of Old Delhi and ninety per cent of those in New Delhi had fled their homes. Twenty to twenty-five thousand Muslims were said to have been killed. Furthermore, by October 1947, it was estimated that there were a hundred and fifty thousand non-Muslim refugees from outside Delhi. By January 1948, there were reported to be four hundred thousand refugees from Punjab alone (124).

Violence was provoked in Delhi by many factors: uncertainty and calculations about the future which were contributed by the large number of government officials in Delhi; extremist propaganda and activities of different parties; news of riots and killings elsewhere; arrival of trains full of bodies of Hindu and Sikh refugees from West Punjab, North West Frontier Province, and Sindh; and news from survivors about how Hindu and Sikh girls and women had been raped and abducted by Muslim mobs (Pandey, *Remembering* 130-1; Kidwai 28). Pandey points out that although looting, stabbing, and clashes had started between Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs in Delhi before 1947 (*Remembering* 130), it was the violence in Qarol Bagh in September 1947 that marked a new stage in Partition violence against Muslims in Delhi. Individual acts such as stabbings and lootings were replaced by systematic attempts by organizations such as the RSS of locating “enemy” houses and driving them out from all over Delhi (Pandey, *Remembering* 130, 136-7; Qureshi 69-70). There were large scale killings in neighbouring towns and villages (Qureshi 69). Qureshi writes that whichever village Delhi’s Deputy Commissioner M.S. Randhawa visited with RSS leaders in tow, the very next day its Muslim population would be exterminated (69). Pandey has also noted that Randhawa was extensively involved in the violence (144). In fact, Kidwai writes that

Randhawa colluded actively with Muslim League officials to ensure that life was made so difficult for Muslims that they would leave Delhi and its surrounding areas and go to Pakistan, thereby making room for Hindu and Sikh refugees¹¹⁵ (181-90).

The impact of the torn social fabric of Delhi that is barely acknowledged in Desai's text is seen in the eloquent words of Kidwai, who worked in camps and other locations in Delhi to provide help and support to both internally displaced Muslims as well Hindu and Sikh refugees from West Punjab. To her disappointment, Kidwai found that "[n]o place was safe, no heart secure" (23). Kidwai also worked as a social worker for the state's Central Recovery Program. She tells her readers that fifteen hundred women were abducted in Delhi during Partition (146). Two hundred were later "recovered" (146), and by March 1948, camps and homes for recovered women were established in Delhi, such as one in Daryaganj (160). The riots had also caused losses of several lakhs to Jamia School, Publication House, and Library, all in Qarol Bagh (22). Dead bodies lay rotting on the streets and hospitals were in imminent danger of being attacked because they had Muslim staff and servants (Pandey, *Remembering* 128). Armed Sikhs tried to prevent Muslim officials who had opted for Pakistan to leave for Pakistan (129). Muslim students writing the Matriculation examination in a school in Qarol Bagh were segregated from their non-Muslim classmates and butchered (129). Muslim businesses including tailoring establishments and boutiques in affluent areas such as Connaught Place were looted. Shopkeepers were murdered, and passers-by helped themselves to the stocks (Tuker 493; Dalrymple, *City* 43). Civil servants living in Lodhi Colony were murdered by Sikh mobs (Dalrymple, *City* 43-4). Trains arrived in Delhi with dead bodies of Hindus and Sikhs, and left with Muslims who also met the same fate

¹¹⁵ In many villages around Delhi, Muslims were converted and allowed to stay on as Hindus (Kidwai 219-20, 233-46).

somewhere along their difficult journey to Pakistan (Tucker 495). Lieutenant General Francis Tucker (GOC-in-C, Eastern Command, 1947-1948) writes in his Partition memoirs that Muslims were chased and killed by armed Sikhs, one of whom was a military officer, in broad daylight on Delhi railway station (493-5).

Many Muslims who survived managed to do so by barricading themselves in areas of the Old City, such as Turkman Gate and the Jama Masjid (Dalrymple, *City* 44, 190). They fortified the gates, armed themselves with mortars and heavy machine guns, and not only held off the rioters, but also the Indian Army (Dalrymple, *City* 44; Qureshi 67). In the words of Qureshi, “[o]ne could see that an undeclared and unofficial civil war was in the offing” (67). Even academic communities could not escape “the poisoned atmosphere of the city of Delhi or for that matter of the subcontinent as a whole” (67). Furthermore, not only were communal sentiments inflamed in the minds of the university staff and students, but the university itself became a target because it had many Muslim professors and students. As persecuted people poured into Delhi College (present-day Zakir Hussain College affiliated to Delhi University) from orchards around the university campus, the campus itself was attacked, and although there were no killings, Muslim homes, including Qureshi’s, were ransacked and looted (70). Students and teachers were evacuated with difficulty; women put on caste-marks on their foreheads to pass as Hindus. Qureshi took everyone to the Pakistan High Commission. He particularly rued the loss of his academic manuscripts, as well as his personal library, which consisted of rare manuscripts and miniature paintings and was destroyed in the attack (70).

Socio-economic relations between Hindus and Muslims were disrupted because of the demographic and cultural reshuffle Delhi experienced. Metal workers, artisans,

cattle-grazers, salaried workers, silversmiths, and jewelers thronged the camps in Purana Qila and Humayun's Tomb, waiting for a chance to leave for Pakistan (Kidwai 54). The arts, crafts, and skills that thrived amidst and were patronized by Old Delhi society all but faded or even died out (Qureshi 69; Dalrymple, *City* 50). Interviewing calligrapher Shamim Khan in the late 1980s in Old Delhi, William Dalrymple discovered that a sophisticated tradition of Urdu calligraphy used to write out title deeds, wills, and marriage documents, and which not only called for artistic talent but also knowledge of Islamic law and Old Delhi customs, was disappearing because Urdu had consistently lost ground to Hindi after Partition. But the fatal blow to this art came from the loss of clientele because most of Khan's customers either died or fled to Karachi during Partition (*City* 53). The long tradition of Muslim crafts such as *gota* (lace made of gold and silver thread) also suffered during Partition because dealers stopped supplying raw materials or purchasing goods from the Muslim craftsmen. In addition to this, *varq* (gold or silver foil) makers, brass and copper craftsmen, brocade makers, and ivory craftsmen experienced serious loss of business (Qureshi 68). Delhi's *zardozi* and *kamdani* embroidery industries came virtually to a standstill after the mass exodus of embroiderers (Kidwai 103). Chefs, drivers, and mechanics also left, throwing these businesses into crisis¹¹⁶ (104).

Gandhi was assassinated at the end of January, 1948, and the fact that it was a right-wing Hindu nationalist who had killed the Mahatma, angered by his "concessions"

¹¹⁶ Delhi was also a city where Muslim architecture had flourished. Partition saw the loss and destruction of some of that heritage. During the violence of September 1947, the shrine of the Sufi saint Qutubuddin Bakhtiar Kaki had been desecrated (Pandey, *Remembering* 144). In Paharganj, Qarol Bagh, Muttani Dhanda, Sabzi Mandi, Chandni Chowk, and Chuna Mandi, houses were burnt, graves battered, and idols were installed in mosques (165). Other mosques, *dargahs*, and *mazars* were occupied by refugees who had nowhere else to live. Many of these places had been vandalized by RSS youth before the refugees moved in; examples of such places include the fourteenth century Chiragh Delhi shrine in Mehrauli, and the Dargah-e-Shah-e-Mardaa in South Delhi (Kidwai 248, 254, 256). Graveyards were dug up by people with the active assistance of the CRC and PWD (250).

to Muslims and Pakistan, largely silenced the demand to throw out all Muslims from Delhi. Many Muslims were able to return to their homes and localities, and for the first time in almost two years, people were able to turn their attention to “the business of living and rebuilding their lives, their uprooted city and their future” (Pandey 143). The Indian (Congress) government moved swiftly to ban the RSS after this event; Hindi newspapers, which had been conspicuously silent about violence against Muslims during Partition, began to report these incidents more fully (144-5). For Muslims, the world changed after Gandhi’s assassination, as communal violence in Delhi came to a halt; they could walk around freely again, and the administration and atmosphere of Delhi was totally transformed (145). However, the ghettoization of Muslims continued in Delhi, and Hindus and Sikhs expressed resentment for the fact that the Indian government was encouraging Muslims to return to their homes in India, while the Pakistani government had expressed no such concern for the lives and properties of Hindus and Sikhs who belonged to Pakistan (146). In addition to this, Muslims who remained in Delhi were reduced to being an impoverished minority (Dalrymple, *City* 37). And for less privileged Hindu and Sikh refugees, who struggled and tried to rebuild their lives with enterprise and determination, there was great resentment on the part of Delhiites, who looked down their noses at their small roadside businesses (Kidwai 104). Homeless refugee women were treated with disdain because they had to live and perform their daily ablutions in the open (272-3). The refugees also included newspaper editors, businessmen, and politicians (Dalrymple, *City* 41-2). Many refugees left houses and property in West Punjab and then took over Muslim property, in many cases similarly abandoned, in Delhi (42).

Clear Light of Day has one reference to refugees “swarm[ing] and crawl[ing] with a kind of crippled, subterranean life that made Bim feel that the city would never recover from this horror, that it would be changed irremediably, that it was already changed, no longer the city she had been born in” (137). This image, however, becomes yet another reminder to Bim of her own wretchedness, which, basically, amounts to her being left alone after her parents’ deaths to care for an ailing Raja and a delirious Aunt Mira (137). There is one more reference to Partition refugees, which does not focus on the refugees themselves, but serves to show how Bim does manage to live her life on her own terms. She returns to college to finish her degree in history, and volunteers at a clinic for women in the Kingsway camp that was set up to house Hindu and Sikh refugees from West Punjab. All we are told is that “[i]t was close to the University and she could go there after the lectures and help hand out vitamin drops to pregnant women and mix powdered milk for the babies” (139-40). It is only the individual Bim who matters in these references to the consequences of Partition violence, and the development of her character is outlined; the magnitude of Partition for the refugees is completely elided. The momentous events taking place in the city of Delhi, both Old and New, are not acknowledged in any way other than in their relevance in the life of a middle-class Hindu woman, whose experience of that life-altering communalist violence is minimal and who, therefore, cannot be understood as representative of women in Delhi generally.

Thus, while scholars have celebrated the contribution *Clear Light of Day* has made in terms of highlighting the role played by private histories in destabilizing universalizing narratives of Partition, as well as showing by example how historical memory operates, we must remember that this achievement is accomplished at the cost of

valuing the individual over the collective. In fact, Ho's as well as Rajeswari Mohan's celebration of the novel's parallel reading of the birth of India as a nation and the position of women in the nation through its engagement with personal memory and collective memory, family history and national history, is compromised when we realize that the personal memory or history of people like Bim and Raja does not at all correspond to the majority of the collective memories or histories of Partition respectively. Bim and Raja belong to a middle-class Hindu family safely based in Old Delhi and have the luxury to be self-preoccupied even during an event like Partition, when many working-class as well as middle- and upper-class Muslims in Old Delhi were struggling to just physically survive. As Pandey's and Dalrymple's research and Kidwai's, Qureshi's, and Toker's accounts have shown, most Delhiites were either at the delivering or receiving end of violence or relief. Furthermore, this lacuna in the text does not end with Delhi. As I have already hinted at the beginning of this chapter, Hyderabad is an even greater victim of this narrative silencing than Delhi in *Clear Light of Day*.

Hyderabad is first mentioned by Tara in connection with the approaching wedding of Raja and Benazir's daughter Moyna in Hyderabad. Having married Benazir, Raja has inherited the wealth and cultural capital of her father, Hyder Ali. The prominent and recurrent image of Hyder Ali in the novel is based on a childhood incident which is remembered differently by the four Das siblings. The children remember encountering the majestic Hyder Ali riding his beautiful white horse on the banks of the Jamna river; he, however, does not even notice their presence. Raja, on the other hand, is and remains enthralled with him: "It is Hyder Ali Sahib on the horse. He looks like a general! Like a

king!”¹¹⁷ (193) Hyder Ali’s inaccessible sense of power is conveyed best by the image of the anthropomorphized pampas grass, which bends and parts for him on the riverbank as if it has subjective agency and willingly bows in deference before his regal figure (192). He is also connected to Partition in the children’s minds not only because he is Muslim and is forced to leave Delhi during Partition, but also because of this episode on the banks of the Jumna, which remains the only “event” to have occurred in their lives, until Partition happens (193). The episode comes to form a distinct temporal entity in their lives, separated by and distinguished from the long hours and days of nothingness before and after it takes place. It is the first scene in the narrative that cleanly disrupts the tedium of their daily lives, lives in which time seems to crawl and nothing ever happens to claim their attention or interest.

The next such event is Partition, and its significance and impact on their lives is best expressed in Bim’s opinion, albeit completely suffused with her own narrow fraternal concerns, that it was the “great event of our lives – of our youth. What would our youth have been without it to round it off in such a definite and dramatic way?” (71). Once again, it is Hyder Ali and his family who dominate their thoughts and concerns during Partition, on account of Raja’s attachment to and involvement with them. Thus, the Hyder Ali family has a central presence in the novel. Yet there is no acknowledgement of the political complications and social strain that Hyderabad went through during Partition, from which, arguably, it has never quite recovered. In the

¹¹⁷ Raja’s infatuation with the “strong masculine figure and presence of Hyder Ali” (Ray 143) has been interpreted as his need to replace his largely inaccessible father, who is rarely present, calls his son a “dunce” when he tells him he wants to specialize in Islamic Studies at Jamia Millia Islamia, and dismisses his wishes as “rubbish” and “bunkum,” believing that it would be dangerous for Raja in the immediate context of Partition to go to a “college for Muslim boys” (Desai, *Clear* 83-4). On the other hand, even when some of Hyder Ali’s Muslim guests express hostility towards Raja’s adolescent eagerness to learn more about Urdu literature, Hyder Ali himself is kind to Raja (92). In fact, Hyder Ali becomes “the apotheosis of masculinity in relation to which [Raja’s] Hindu family (including his father) appears emasculated . . . The alliance between Raja and Hyder Ali assumes a homoerotic cast that is not negated by Raja’s marriage to Ali’s daughter” (Ray 143).

absence of such recognition, the novel only perpetuates the continuing mainstream as well as official silence about the traumatic experiences of many Hyderabadis during the violent upheavals that took place in that state during Partition.

Instead, the text is soaked with Raja's fascination with Urdu romantic poetry. As critics have pointed out, Raja's fascination with Hyder Ali's household is founded "on the bounty of its cultural capital" (Ho 37). Poetry, sophisticated company, and the easy flourish and mesmerizing grandeur of upper-class patronage bewitch Raja, as he whispers to Bim at night about *mushairas* at Hyder Ali's place: "'There was a poet there tonight,' he whispered, too tense with excitement to sleep. 'A real poet, from Hyderabad, who is visiting them. He read out his poetry to us – it was wonderful – and Hyder Ali Sahib gave him a ring with a ruby in it'" (Desai, *Clear* 81-2). Boosted by Hyder Ali's encouragement and his own fertile imagination, Raja "cultivates a self-identity in Urdu" and decides to become an Urdu scholar (Ho 37). Desai's representation of Raja as an eager Urdu student around the time of Partition marks her concern about the fact that Urdu language, literature, and culture were also casualties of Partition politics and violence.¹¹⁸ It is because of the inextricable connection between Urdu and Muslims, and Hindi and Hindus, the result of a process of communalization of culture and lifestyle that began in the nineteenth century and saw its zenith during Partition (when even drinking water sold

¹¹⁸ In fact, Desai went on to devote her next novel, *In Custody* (1984), to the decline of Urdu poetry in India after Partition. For a complete overview of the birth and development of the Hindi-Urdu language debates in the nineteenth century, see Christopher King's *One Language, Two Scripts: The Hindi Movement in Nineteenth Century North India* (1994) and Amrit Rai's *A House Divided: The Origin and Development of Hindi/Hindavi* (1984). For a critique of the Indian nationalist perspective on Hindi and Urdu embedded in Rai's work, as well as the failed attempts by sections of the Congress to bridge the rift between Hindi and Urdu through Hindustani, see David Lelyveld's "The Fate of Hindustani: Colonial Knowledge and the Project of a National Language" (1993) (199-202). For a detailed analysis of the social, institutional, and parliamentary debates about the position of Urdu vis-à-vis Hindi before, during, and since Partition, see Jyotirindra Das Gupta's *Language Conflict and National Development: Group Politics and National Language Policy in India* (1970) and Selma K. Sonntag's "Minority Language Politics in India" (2002). For more on the marginalization of Urdu on account of its connection to India's Muslims, and the active participation of state governments as well as political parties in this form of communalism, see Mushirul Hasan's *Legacy of a Divided Nation: India's Muslims since Independence* (1997) (115, 156-160, 191).

on railway stations came to be called “Hindu water” and “Muslim water”), that Raja is prevented by his father from pursuing Urdu at Delhi’s Jamia Millia Islamia. It is also for these same reasons that Raja’s sisters cannot read Urdu because Hindi has replaced Urdu in North Indian schools.

However, Raja is a Romantic and approaches Urdu literature and life in general as a Romantic. In fact, his loyalty is more to the Romantic aesthetic that he connects with Hyder Ali and his luxuriant lifestyle than to a political ideal of secularism or religious tolerance (Mohan 54). This Romantic sensibility is represented through his approach to Urdu poetry.¹¹⁹ And Raja’s decision to go to Hyderabad in pursuit of poetry and patronage stems from the position Urdu has historically enjoyed in Hyderabad.¹²⁰ Furthermore, when he marries Benazir, Raja “discards one cocoonlike existence for another” (Ray 143) because he leaves the protective isolation of the family house in Old Delhi, where he had lived on his father’s money until his father died, to enter the privileged world of the wealthy Hyder Ali and his family. After his marriage, his neglect of practical realities in Hyderabad and Delhi continue. Years later, Raja inherits Hyder Ali’s tasteful wealth after the latter’s death and indulges in the artistic pleasures it enables him to have. For example, he organizes his daughter’s wedding as an elaborate, lavish, and showy affair (229). What is most significant, however, is that Raja is later able to project his cherished image of the regal Hyder Ali on his white horse (79) onto Riyaz, his

¹¹⁹ Even Iqbal (1877-1938), whose early twentieth century nationalist poetry put him at the centre of the ongoing debates around independence and Partition, is read by Raja as a Romantic poet. There is no mention of Raja ever reading any of Iqbal’s political poetry; he reads Iqbal’s verses superficially for their “impassioned, sensuous, mystic” content, and not for their inevitable political, nationalist, and anti-colonial bent (Mohan 57).

¹²⁰ For more on the extensive political and institutionalized patronage of Urdu language and literature in the Deccani sultanates and the Asaf Jahi Nizamate (often at the cost of other local languages such as Telugu, as I have already explained in the last chapter), see Annemarie Schimmel’s *Classical Urdu Literature: From the Beginning to Iqbal* (1975) (127-155), Muhammad Sadiq’s *A History of Urdu Literature* (1984) (50-86), and Ram Babu Saksena’s *A History of Urdu Literature* (1927) (32-44, 172-204).

only son, whom he dresses likewise in fine clothes and to whom he gives a horse as a present. It is again Bim who shrewdly makes the connection between the deeply embossed image in Raja's mind of Hyder Ali on his white horse and the subsequent superimposition of this image upon Riyaz. In doing so, she suggests, Raja bequeathes this image to his son as a legacy of memory, turning him into a little version of Hyder Ali, "a prince in a Persian miniature" (227), as the proud father himself says.

In this way, Bim is represented as a foil for Raja; through her perspective, Raja's empty grandiloquence is thrown into relief. Yet, the implications of this representation are not pursued any further by Desai. Although it is implicitly as well as explicitly conveyed at different points in the text that Bim sees right through the superficiality of Raja's poetic and political ideals associated with the Hyder Ali family, there is no attempt to remedy the absence of the Hyderabad perspective on Partition in the text. There is instead a focus on mocking and parodying Raja. His refuge in the aesthetic of Romanticism during Partition is certainly criticized as the way certain sections of the middle-class and the cultural élites, who were part of majority communities in different parts of the subcontinent, sanitized themselves from the lived realities of the world (56). But it is the prolonged attention given to this ironic representation of his Romantic tendencies that ends up deflecting attention away from the way Partition politics were played out in Hyderabad.

This silence on Hyderabad and silencing of Hyderabadis becomes most starkly visible when we recognize Desai's complicity in this mainstream project through her representation of Benazir as a shadowy, barely-there figure. While Desai devotes extensive time to outlining Bim's gendered struggles and her thoughts about her brother's

extravagant professions of his beliefs, Benazir remains silent. The text dwells repeatedly on the predicament Bim's family puts her in by forcing her to assume the role of Baba's caregiver, a role which results in her having to stay in Old Delhi and look after the family business. Bim rejects Dr. Biswas' unsaid offer of marriage and prefers to hold on to her independence as a single working woman. In this regard, Arun Mukherjee concludes, "[b]y creating a heroine who wants autonomy rather than domestic bliss, and having her turn down the Bengali doctor, Desai creates a new script for Indian women at the same time that she mocks the earlier ones" (200). Mukherjee is right about the representation of Bim; however, whatever happens to Benazir? While Desai has certainly fashioned a new script for a certain section of Indian women, it is clear that women like Benazir remain silenced. As a young Muslim girl fleeing from a Delhi surrounded by the raging fires of Partition, Benazir exemplifies women who were at the receiving end of Partition violence. In spite of this, there is no insight or reflection in the text about how she feels about, thinks about, or experiences Partition as she escapes to her father's house in Hyderabad.

Furthermore, if, as Miriam Thaggert writes, the act of recollection on Bim's and Tara's part represents how they interpret and produce history (Thaggert 91) and, if indeed, women provide in this novel "the frames of reference in which to relate history, for the power in recording history lies in the ability to choose from which perspective it will be told" (92), then Benazir is situated outside history with no possibility of interpreting or producing history within the discursive platform of the narrative. And not only is Benazir located at a point beyond history, so is Hyderabad, as I have already explained through Raja's portrayal of it as a place which is fixed in his static vision as a

safe haven where there is no political tension during an event as far-reaching and turbulent as Partition.

Since Benazir has no words in the novel, a situation which in itself is an indicator of her erasure from history, we can only resort to knowing her through Raja's and Bim's perspectives. From Raja's point of view, what emerges is a befittingly aestheticized, finished, and poetic image of the life Benazir leads. For example, the extent and quality of her father's wealth is minutely constructed through elaborate imagery that points to carefully collected and cultivated affluence. We are told about the envied roses that grow in Hyder Ali's garden in geometrically precise flower beds; the rare flowers such as jasmine and oleander that bloom in his garden, which also has a fountain; his tall house with its coloured fanlight above the front door; the china tiles and coloured glass chandeliers along the veranda walls; and the rich sweets that are sent around on Eid, covered with fine silver foil and placed on a tray along with embroidered napkins (117, 92, 48). It is amidst such sweet and comfortable abundance that Benazir lives. During Partition, when Raja is ill and faced with the possibility that the Hyder Alis may be targeted by communalist groups such as his classmates at Hindu College, who repeatedly try to convert him to their divisive politics, he thinks of

Hyder Ali, of Hyder Ali's library, of Hyder Ali's Begum and daughter quietly humming and chattering as they embroidered their veils together, and all those cool, calm evenings in their garden that had made his spirit rejoice by offering it all he craved, he felt giddy with rage at these boys and what they stood for. (95)

While Raja's righteous anger is justified by the violence his colleagues want to commit, his thoughts about Begum Hyder Ali and Benazir and his memories of enlightened

pleasure and domestic harmony in the Hyder Ali household reveal the idealized image of the life Raja covets; in the upper-class, Muslim, patriarchal world imagined by Raja, he would be free to pursue his aesthetic, intellectual, and philosophical preoccupations, and the women would contribute only by adding harmony and beauty to the surroundings. This kind of life would be unlike the one Raja has to suffer with his own scrawny, alcoholic, nervous Aunt Mira; silly, baby Tara; and Bim, with her fierce and earnest intellectual convictions. In other words, this representation of Benazir tells us more about Raja than Benazir. This, then, is the naïve impression of the lives of Muslims in Old Delhi in Raja's mind in the late 1940s; this is also the impression Desai eventually leaves her readers with because she does not attempt to redress it by situating the experiences of Muslims in the political context of the happenings in Delhi and Hyderabad, as well as the fraught relations between India and Hyderabad, both of which came to be absolutely vital in determining the trajectory of the lives of Hyderabadi Muslims.

In fact, the sole reason why Benazir exists in the margins of the plot is to conveniently and neatly tie up the loose ends of Hyder Ali and Raja's filial bond by cementing it permanently through matrimony. Raja's personal feelings for Benazir are never explored in detail in the narrative. We are privy to Raja's attitude towards Benazir only thrice: first, when he receives a letter from Hyder Ali, in which, as he delightfully informs Bim, Benazir sends her best wishes to him (115); second, when he refuses to be party to any criminal design his communalist colleagues at university have towards the Hyder Ali family (95); and, third, when Baba brings Benazir's gramophone home and Raja is reminded of how he had once seen Benazir playing records and dancing with her friends in her room on his way to Hyder Ali's library (122). Thus, much of what we

know about Raja's interactions with Benazir comes from mere glimpses of her from a distance.

Bim too hardly knows Benazir because she "was a good deal younger, still at school, a pretty child with a round porcelain face, always clinging close to her mother like a young pigeon that still needs to be nourished" (96). On the other hand, Bim is the only character who is represented with distinctive emotions towards Benazir. She has a prejudiced image of Benazir's married lifestyle in Hyderabad, which is based on three things. Bim relies on what little she knows about Benazir as the pretty porcelain-faced child who used to cling to her mother. Next, she imaginatively fills in the gaps and thinks of her as a "spoilt only child," whom she imagines with a "pouting voice" (118), and for whom she feels contempt. Finally, she allows her vehement dislike of Benazir's affluent and over-protected life to be fed and sustained by her memories of the single trip Raja makes to Old Delhi with his wife and daughter; it is on this trip that Bim finds all her resentment against Benazir for many years. Based on this single interaction with Benazir under one roof, Bim thinks about Raja's only son, and wonders

[w]hat a dumpling he must be, what a rice-ball – with all the feeding that goes on in that house, Benazir cooking and tasting and eating all day, and in between meals little snacks arriving to help them on their way. Imagine what he must look like, and Raja! Imagine eating so much! (225)

Throughout this conversation with Tara about Raja and his family, Bim disgustedly makes negative remarks while Tara objects and asks her if she really knows anything about Benazir and her children or is just assuming what they are like.

Tara, who clings to her siblings and her family home “out of the habit of affection and her own insecurity” (Desai, *Clear* 256), pines to see the whole family together again (243) and, therefore, takes the trouble to cultivate and maintain a vague friendship and sisterhood with Benazir. Tara’s relationship with Benazir appears to be built on their shared experiences as wives and mothers across the borders of communal difference and geographical distance (228). Bim assures Tara that she does know what she is talking about since she has witnessed their way of life when Raja and Benazir visited her after Moyna’s birth. While talking about Moyna, who is about to get married and whose wedding Tara, her husband Bakul, and their daughters plan to attend, Bim says,

I wonder if she’s as plump as Benazir used to be? Benazir must be huge. She never liked to get up or move if she could get someone to fetch and carry for her. And she fed that baby all day long. Little silver dishes of milk puddings would arrive – she’d brought along a woman to cook for them, she didn’t trust Janaki or me – and she would spoon it into her mouth, fattening her up. And Raja – how he’d grown to *enjoy* Benazir’s food – (226)

At this point, Tara interrupts Bim and emphasizes that Benazir’s food is really very good. But Bim brushes her off, saying,

Yes, I know, but it’s disgusting to enjoy it so much, and eat so much of it. Such rich foods. They must be bad for him, I kept telling him that, but of course he wouldn’t listen ... It’s unhappy people who eat like that ... I read that somewhere. They compensate themselves with the food they eat for the things they missed. (226)

This image of mindless gluttony that Bim creates of Benazir, Raja, and their children seems to be premised almost on a puritanical abhorrence of any form of excess. It is clear that Bim considers the way they cook and eat sinful. Her endorsement of a sense of economy in lifestyle and material existence seems to be predicated on some prim notion of middle-class Victorian morality (that aligns well with Bim's interest in nineteenth and early twentieth century English poetry) that rejects transgression of all sorts; she certainly considers Benazir and Raja's way of life decadent and, therefore, transgressive. For Bim, fact trumps imagination, and practicality trumps luxury. Bim's viciousness towards Benazir is also ultimately connected to her anger towards her brother for abandoning her and Baba in Old Delhi. However, such a representation of Benazir by Desai only perpetuates a lack of understanding where Muslims and Hyderabadis are concerned. What makes Desai's representation even more open to question is the fact that such a representation of Benazir and her Muslim household is meant to be read as a representation of Muslim homes in general. This point is implicit in the static, stereotypical symbols that I have already listed and which are connected to the material existence of the Hyder Ali family. The memorable, aestheticized, opulent references to chandeliers, fountains, roses, and poetry suggest an Orientalist approach to constructing the essential "Muslimness" of these characters, which is predicated on their upper-class excesses.

What makes this approach deeply problematic is that Desai's text constructs the elite Hyder Alis as representatives of all Muslims in spite of the great diversity along class, caste, sect, language, customs, and region amongst Muslims in the subcontinent. Hyderabadi Muslims are also very different within themselves in terms of socio-

economic class and linguistic affiliations as well as political ideology. Desai's text, therefore, does little to critique mainstream North Indian prejudice and ignorance about Hyderabadi Muslims, especially in the context of Hyderabad's forced accession to India. Journalistic reports from the late 1940s show that the domination of Muslims in the Nizam's Government and in the Hyderabadi ruling class became a synecdoche for the entire Muslim community of Hyderabad, which was believed to be rich and powerful without exception. For example, the *Manchester Guardian* noted on September 14, 1948 that the main problems of Hyderabad lay

in the social and racial structure of Hyderabad, in the indefensible claim of the small Moslem minority to preserve their privileges, and above all in the readiness of the extremists among the Moslems to enforce the point of view by ruthless intimidation, directed as much against the more conciliatory Moslems as against the Hindus, who form about 90 per cent of the population. ("Hyderabad")

The fact that more than half of Hyderabad's Muslim population was desperately poor and lived in both towns and villages (Smith 4; Copland 368-9) is completely ignored in the *Manchester Guardian's* generalization of the ruling class in Hyderabad.

The newspaper's implicit assumptions about the Muslim ruling class are undermined by the fact that besides working-class and poor Muslims, there were also many progressive Muslims from various socio-economic backgrounds who opposed the Nizam's misrule and participated actively in resisting it. I have already explained in the previous chapter the contributions made to democratic struggles in Hyderabad by Muslim students, journalists, peasants, and workers who participated actively in resisting the Nizam. There were also middle-class Muslim women such as Jamalunnisa Baji and Razia

Begum, who supported and wore only indigenous *swadeshi* cotton textiles in support of the Gandhian anti-colonial struggle (Stree 172); joined the Communist Party; stored arms and sheltered comrades who had gone underground (174), in spite of being threatened by the Razakars (Chakravartty 134); attended and hosted clandestine meetings of the Progressive Writers' Association after communist poets such as Makhdoom Mohiuddin (1908-1969) were forced to go into hiding¹²¹ (Stree 173, 175; Chakravartty 134-5); and hosted all-India communist leaders such as A.K. Gopalan, who had come to Hyderabad to visit leaders of the struggles in Hyderabad city and Telangana (135). Razia Begum, who was also a lecturer at Osmania University College for Women, was arrested in 1949 by the Congress government when it cracked down on communist intellectuals who challenged its repressive military regime in Hyderabad (Sundarayya 306-7, 310).

Another example of damaging generalizations in newspaper articles in the 1940s about Hyderabad Muslims that completely erase people such as Jamalunnisa Baji and Razia Begum is seen in an editorial in the *Spectator*, which toes the line of the *Manchester Guardian* and its narrow view of the interests of "the Muslim community."

¹²¹ The Hyderabad chapter of the Progressive Writers' Association was established by Makhdoom along with Akhtar Hussain Raipuri and Sibte-Hasan in 1936 (Gour, "Struggle" 170). Other mid-twentieth century Hyderabad writers of the left persuasion who were active in Hyderabad politics were Zeenath Sajida (d. 2008), a noted communist, Urdu poet, and professor of Urdu; and Wajeda Tabassum (d. 2010), known for her frank portrayals that questioned the norms associated with female sexuality and inter-class relations in Hyderabad. Jeelani Bano (b. 1938) is another writer associated with the Progressive Writers' Association in Hyderabad, who has written novels, novellas, and short stories about themes such as bonded labour and patriarchal oppression. At the time when Raja leaves for Hyderabad, the ongoing Telangana Armed Struggle against the Nizam was glorified in the revolutionary verses of Makhdoom, who was Hyderabad's most well-known communist and poet. Confronted by the realities of communal violence perpetrated by Razakars against Hindus, Makhdoom wrote his poem "Midnight" (Gour, "Makhdoom" 2-3). His critique of the oppressive feudal structure of Hyderabad and his hope that it would soon be replaced by a new people's government is represented in "The Rebel," "Haveli," "Song of Death," and "The New World" ("Makhdoom" 3; "Struggle" 171). He was arrested and put in jail repeatedly for his anti-colonial and anti-Nizam speeches ("Makhdoom" 5); he helped to form various working-class unions to organize workers against the Nizam's government ("Struggle" 181); and after the Communist Party was banned in Hyderabad in 1946, Makhdoom went underground with other communist comrades and continued to write and circulate his dynamic poetry ("Makhdoom" 6). In early 1948, when the Party was banned again after Gandhi's assassination, he wrote his famous poem "Telangana" in Bombay to boost the morale of the fighting peasant and worker cadres in Telangana ("Makhdoom" 7-8). In addition to this, Makhdoom was also known for his romantic verses and *ghazals*. For a screen representation of Makhdoom and the revolutionary literary and socio-political climate in which he lived and to which he contributed through his poetry and communist activism, see Ali Sardar Jafri and Jalal Agha's *Kahkashan: A Galaxy of Modern Urdu Poets* (1991-1992), an Indian television series that represented the lives and oeuvres of six prominent Urdu poets, one of whom is Makhdoom.

The editorial recommends that a UN plebiscite would be the perfect solution to the dispute between Hyderabad and India because it would ensure that while India feels assured that there is no hostile area within its territory, Hyderabad would also have the “continuity of its dynasty and the security of her Moslem minority” (“India’s Aggression” 17 Sep. 1948). Yet again, none of this suggests that any thought was given to where those Hyderabadi Muslims who did not belong to the ruling class or who protested against the hegemonic power of the ruling class were situated in these problems; there is not even any acknowledgement that such Muslims existed. The Nizam’s legendary wealth, which he jealously and eccentrically guarded (Copland 365), came to be understood as representing the general condition of all Hyderabadi Muslims. In addition to this, there is no indication that any of the Indian newspapers reported or theorized the constitution of this demographic differently. In fact, my archival research suggests that Indian newspapers actually went a step further than British newspapers and, while maintaining caution about directly naming and singling out religious communities by avoiding the use of the words “Hindu” or “Muslim,” clearly equated the Nizam, his policies, and his person, unequivocally and incontrovertibly with the entire “Hyderabadi Muslim community.” This considerable leap in ideology in the national and international outlook towards Hyderabadi Muslims, which represents all Hyderabadi Muslims as if they were socially and economically privileged, is represented in *Clear Light of Day* in the highly generalized yet elaborate éliteneess of Hyder Ali and his family and their singularly stereotyped, homogeneous, and unconflicting subjectivities.

I am not trying to suggest that there were no veiled Muslim women like Begum Hyder Ali and Benazir in Hyderabad in the 1940s, who embroidered veils and cooked

elaborately rich delicacies, but that there were other kinds of Hyderabadis too, who were politically active and/or belonged to working-class and poor communities and who seem to have dropped out of collective and narrative memories entirely. Furthermore, even within élite Hyderabadi spheres, unlike the stereotypical Hyder Ali family women, there were conflicts and complexities within women's subjective views of their religion, class, community, and society. A depiction of this fraught, multidimensional, élite Hyderabadi subjectivity is found in the mid-twentieth century novelist Zeenath Futehally's autobiographical English novel *Zohra* (1951). Like Benazir in Desai's novel, Futehally's protagonist Zohra belongs to a conservative, upper-class Hyderabadi Muslim family with a history of poets and poetic patronage, but she is complexly represented in terms of her personal struggles as a gifted and aspiring poet and artist against social, patriarchal norms of propriety that prevent her from writing poetry or joining the freedom struggle under Gandhi's leadership. Similarly, Hyderabadi upper-class Urdu writers Wajeda Tabassum and Zeenath Sajida have represented Hyderabadi women from different religious communities and social strata as radical and opinionated individuals who confront patriarchy, communalism, and casteism and deal with them complexly and creatively. Sajida herself was not only an Urdu professor and writer of prose and poetry; she also played an active part in the communist struggle against the Nizam and, later, the Indian military government. In addition to this, I have already outlined the crucial role played by peasant and working-class women from Hyderabad in the Telangana Armed Struggle that rocked the Asaf Jahi Nizamate and fought against the Indian occupation. In the struggle, besides traditionally gendered role such as caregivers, nurses, and teachers, Hyderabadi women also carved out new political roles for themselves as guerilla fighters, protestors,

couriers, orators, and propagandists. This role is memorialized by the women themselves in Telugu revolutionary literature such as songs, lullabies, and plays.

These fraught and often diverse strands of politics amongst Hyderabad Muslims and Hyderabad women remain unexplored in Desai's novel. Thus, the limited perspective on Hyderabadis, who are seen through the eyes of the Delhi and Hindu Self that is constructed in opposition to the Hyderabad and Muslim Other,¹²² undermines the crucial role of women in Hyderabad in the 1940s. It erases not only the radical struggles by the peasantry and the working-class against the Nizam's and, later, the Indian government's oppression, but also the political action of female activists and intellectuals from Hyderabad. Depictions such as Desai's ensure that the violence that was unleashed against Hyderabad Muslims by the Indian forces when they invaded Hyderabad in 1948 will remain unrecognized in mainstream Indian culture because these stereotypical portrayals of Hyderabad Muslims who are wealthy and privileged Others stand in the place of more historically nuanced portraits. This problem in Desai's work becomes more acute when we realize that Desai's representation, in light of her canonical status not only in India but also in the global North, overshadows lesser known but potentially more powerful and poignant creative representations of Hyderabad women, such as Futehally's *Zohra* or the performative arts of the women participants of the Telangana struggle.¹²³

¹²² This is particularly true in case of Bim, who clearly marks herself out as different from Benazir, whom she blindly reconstructs as decadent, spoilt, and even unscrupulous.

¹²³ The intense international visibility of Desai's writings in English markedly differs from the obscurity to which revolutionary Telugu performative genres and literature are relegated, on account of the fact that much of this oeuvre is oral and also remains untranslated from the vernacular. And *Zohra*, which is written in English and received positive national and international reviews upon its publication in 1951, simply disappeared until it was republished in 2004 at the initiative of the author's daughter. In spite of this, however, *Zohra* has received little scholarly attention.

The impressions that the text leaves readers with are reinforced by the fact that protest against Bim's negative perceptions and assumptions about Benazir comes only from Tara, whose cautious objections in the face of Bim's fierce prejudice and stubborn ignorance emerge as weak and feeble. Furthermore, it is finally Bim's representation of Benazir, flawed though the narrative acknowledges it to be (through Tara's protestations), that has the most authority in the novel because a large chunk of the novel is narrated from Bim's perspective. Bim does not listen when Tara argues with her, reminding her that Raja has everything that most people want to be happy – a wife, children, a house, a business, and a hobby. Bim angrily replies that Raja has ignored his “vocation,” his true calling to be a poet, and made it into a “silly, laughable little hobby.” She tells Tara, “That is why he needs to console himself with food and more food. Don't you *see*?” (227) Bim is disappointed that Raja's high calling and ideals have been transformed into a mere hobby to be casually indulged in on special occasions. She sees no depth in Raja's aesthetic or political ideals and mocks the fact that he is invited to weddings, engagement parties, and anniversaries to recite poetry, imagining a scene where

they spread out carpets and cushions for him to recline on, like a pasha – and he recites his poems.' She made a clownish face, ridiculing such pomp, such show, such empty vanity. 'I can imagine the scene – all those perfumed verses about wine, the empty goblet, the flame, and ash ...' she laughed derisively” (224-5).

These impressions of Hyderabad social life stem from the imagination of a hurt, angry woman, who draws from the widely circulated courtly images of poetry, grandeur, and decadence that were available at the time and which came to be lodged in the popular

imagination. Bim, a history professor schooled in an Orientalist and colonialist history, uses such images to construct her bias against Benazir. And while the novel undermines these impressions of Hyderabad social life by showing that they stem from the imagination of Raja's bitterly hurt younger sister, it does not replace them with anything that is more historically detailed or accurate. Consequently, it is only these simplistic impressions with which readers are left. Hence, while *Clear Light of Day* seems to scrutinize this vision of Muslimness, by allowing Bim's view to be questioned, it also ultimately affirms this vision because it does not show an alternative to it.

These images of Urdu poetry also show that while Raja believes that English poetry masks its "absence of meaning with an excess of words," Bim, as a middle-class reader of English poetry who is educated in principles of post-Enlightenment originality and Victorian restraint, feels that it is Urdu poetry that is empty because of its profuse effluences and its trite, exhausted imagery (Mohan 57). And yet, even as she critiques these tired images of Urdu poetry through Bim's disdain, Desai herself does not refrain from using the same in her representation of Hyderabad Muslims.

Bim's vicious tone as she talks about Benazir is represented in such a manner that as readers we are able to locate it in its proper context of anger at Raja's betrayal. The hurt that she feels at the way her brother has treated her is behind her obsessive and cruel remarks on how overweight Benazir is, and how much she cooks, eats, and feeds her family. Because she finds a scapegoat in Benazir to displace her resentment against her brother, Bim does not even notice little gestures of kindness or concern by Benazir. We see an example of this in a part of Raja's infamously patronizing letter to Bim, in which he writes that "Benazir herself spoke to ... [Hyder Ali] about the house and asked him to

allow you to keep it at the same rent we used to pay him when father and mother were alive” (47). Bim sees this gesture simply as an indicator of Raja’s condescension, and her own long-simmering resentment against Benazir only grows. There is also another act, only tangentially referred to in the compromised text of the novel, when Bim narrates to Tara how Baba had been afraid that Benazir would ask him for her gramophone when she and Raja visited them after Moyna’s birth. Bim completely neglects to mention the fact that Benazir, in fact, does not ask for the gramophone again. If anything, she is thoughtful and kind because she and Raja bring Baba a hi-fi set, believing that maybe he would prefer the latest technological innovation in music players (225-6). Once again, a possible extension of an olive branch that might have been read as an attempt to mend the breach between the two families and create new understandings is only interpreted as flaunting of wealth.

In this way, in the different layered silences that the text imposes upon Benazir, we see that Desai’s endorsement of egalitarian social and hybrid aesthetic ideals is undermined by her strategies and choices as a writer. She makes a powerful case in *Clear Light of Day* for Urdu and highlights its systematic erasure from the mainstream of Indian culture and public life. However, Desai’s underscoring of the weeding out of culture connected to Muslims is rendered less effective when Raja performs the ultimate betrayal of kin by abandoning his sister and brother in order to join Hyder Ali in Hyderabad. Because a large part of the narration is devoted to Bim’s recollection of her experiences, particularly during the time when Raja ignores the family business and leaves Bim alone to care for Baba, readers are led to sympathize with Bim and see Raja and his actions and attitudes in a negative light. In this way, Raja’s enthusiasm for Urdu and his marriage to a

Muslim woman at a time when memories of horrific Hindu-Muslim violence were still alive fade away in the face of his alleged injustice towards his sister. And the fact that Hyder Ali and Benazir are configured in Raja's imagination as synecdoche for the Muslim community¹²⁴ means that the prejudice that the narrative sanctions against them extends the novel's attitudes against the larger Muslim community as well. It is Desai's pronounced and relentless focus on micropolitics at the domestic level in *Clear Light of Day* that obscures macropolitics at the public level. In the subcontinental political context, where debates on Partition have been snatched by staunch right-wing politicians and ideologues out of the hands of liberals, secularists, and to some extent, even the left-wing, the magnitude of this silencing by a committed secularist such as Desai cannot be understated.

Furthermore, the scholarly reception of Desai's novel has largely overlooked this crucial lacuna about Partition in the text. In fact, scholars have incautiously and unquestioningly celebrated its turning away from larger, crucial questions associated with the public and collective face of Partition by commending its almost stubborn focus on the domestic and the private. For example, Mohan writes that through its engagement with "personal memory and the collective memory recorded in history, the novel encourages a parallel, even allegorical, reading of the story of the nation and the status of its women" (48). Sangeeta Ray takes this idea further, when she writes that the macropolitical is reflected in the micropolitical; Desai holds up for critique the "hegemonic discourse of Indian nationalism [which] presents itself as an equalizing,

¹²⁴ This is clearly illustrated in Raja's desperate worry for Hyder Ali and his family when Gandhi is assassinated. He sobs, "they'll slaughter every Muslim they can find," but is later relieved when he finds out that the assassin was not Muslim and so assumes there will be no reprisals against Muslims. In his relief, he exposes his real reason for concern by telling Bim, "I thought of the Hyder Alis – what they would have to go through –" (149). Thus, Raja's concern for Muslims is actually limited to only Hyder Ali and his family.

progressive force wresting authority from colonial government by obfuscating its own complicity in the replication of the paternal signifier in the name of national survival” (138). This is all very well where Bim, Aunt Mira, Jaya, Sarla, and even Tara are concerned; but what about Benazir? I contend that, while the novel might, as Mohan and Ray have argued, critique the way in which patriarchal, nationalist discourse silences some women, it does not encourage a parallel or allegorical reading of the way the nation treated Muslim women at the time of its birth.

On the other hand, Ho’s analysis does recognize that it through the friendship between Hyder Ali and Raja that “memory reconnects the family’s history – both its affiliation and separation in time – to the larger history of the Partition, and the dislocation of family to the separatist dynamic that orients, or disorients, the early history of the Indian nation” (37). In other words, because of the relationship between Raja and Hyder Ali, the relations between the Das family and the Hyder Ali family represent pre-Partition friendships between Hindus and Muslims; Hyder Ali’s migration to Hyderabad (and, subsequently, Raja’s as well) symbolizes the ruptures caused by Partition between communities that had coexisted relatively peacefully.

However, except for a few instances that reveal a deeper and more complex understanding of the novel, there is much that is questionable about scholarly analyses of *Clear Light of Day*, particularly with regard to celebrations of its intense privateness: Ho’s delight at the “elegiac conjuration of lost realities” and her overstated connection between the family’s falling apart and the rupture of communities at Partition (38); Thaggert’s glorification of the intimate portrayal of family history, which “allows Desai to counter the panoptic view of Indian history filled with generalizations and often

inaccuracies” (93); and Dieter Reimenschneider’s claim that Desai posits recollection as implicit and indirect, “work[ing] through her characters’ interaction, especially through dialogue and reminiscence, thus building up a concept of history in an indirect and implicit manner” (197). These commendations are guilty of overlooking how the connection between the family’s history and Partition history in the text does not account for the experiences of marginalized and silenced groups, who faced the worst of Partition violence and displacement. Scholars have also gone to the extent of suggesting that the central thematic of *Clear Light of Day* is “the point at which the individual life and the collective life of all intersect and the uniqueness of personal experience begins to exemplify a whole cultural pattern, one validating the other” (Hashmi 56; cf. also, Thaggert 91, Reimenschneider 200). The sheer naïveté of this claim that the individual lives of the Das family “exemplifies a whole cultural pattern” causes enormous damage to any attempt to highlight how Muslims came to acquire second-class citizenship in the Indian nation, and how, therefore, their experience is very different from the larger cultural pattern (if there is even such a thing as one cultural pattern for India).

What is more, no scholar has seriously addressed the role of history in terms of the representation of the Hyder Ali family’s house. The scanty references in scholarly articles generally comment on its stateliness (Thaggert 95; Prasad 369), or speak about its threatening presence throughout the novel, which is

characterized by an explosive silence and a recurrent image of Baba grinding the old gramophone and listening to the cracked, scratchy records of the forties. It is this static image of the house that looms large in the mind of the reader, suggesting Bim’s suppressed anger and bitterness. (Prasad 369)

While one way of looking at the abandoned house is, as suggested above, to see it in the context of Bim's abandonment, anger, and isolation, such a reading fails to note the most plausible and pertinent point in connection with the house. Surely, the empty, silent house is particularly significant because it is both a literal indicator as well as a metaphor for the dispossessions and dislocations of millions of people from their homes during Partition; surely, we must read it as an example of the losses of Partition, the emptying out of minority communities in both India and Pakistan, and the silent, poignant absence of often entire minority communities in the newly born nations.

Even the text acknowledges this connection that scholars have failed to make, albeit (and yet again) only through the self-preoccupied concerns of Bim about herself and her siblings. Bim senses the effects of the Hyder Ali family's abandoned house in conjunction with the sinister, suppressed tension of Partition that she experiences in her isolated world. For instance, in spite of knowing that Tara is perfectly safe socializing at the club with the Misra sisters, Bim feels uneasy, "for unease was in the air like a swarm of germs, an incipient disease. The empty house across the road breathed it at them. Its emptiness and darkness was a warning, a threat perhaps" (101). The house reminds Bim that danger is still around and that Tara might be affected by it.¹²⁵ Later, when Bim and Baba go to check on the empty house upon Hyder Ali's request to Raja to do the same, "[a] mirror on the wall flashed a blank, empty glare at them – the heathen, unwanted" (118). It is as if the house has taken upon itself the anger and pain of the refugees who

¹²⁵ The menacing emptiness of the house also gestures towards the fear with which Bhakta, Hyder Ali's groom, continues to live in the premises after his master's departure. Bhakta worries that he will be punished by Hindu communalists for letting the Muslim Hyder Alis escape. Although Desai represents Bhakta as a despicable, cringing man who regrets the fact that he did not do anything to prevent Muslims from running away from Old Delhi to safer places, through the depiction of his fear, she certainly throws light on the experiences of working-class people who were left behind (by their employers), bereft of the measure of political protection they enjoyed while they were connected to powerful elite homes.

were forced to leave Delhi. While the experience of the Hyder Ali family, who were assisted by their Hindu friends to escape and find refuge in their house in Hyderabad, does not even approach the bodily, mental, emotional, fraternal, and financial crises experienced by millions of people during Partition, nevertheless, the house with its almost tangible, textural silence and emptiness becomes a stage for the enactment of Partition in the novel. It becomes a metaphor for the absence of more than half of the Muslim population that had lived in Delhi till 1947, and perhaps also for the elaborately codified Old City way of life that all but died with their departure. In this sense, Hyderabad is seen as the new site of Indian Muslimness in the novel; Muslims are displaced to another city outside North India where they have a better chance of living in peace. Perhaps this problematic representation of late 1940s Hyderabad as a refuge for Muslims has to do also with the way Hyderabadi élites represented themselves around this time. For example, the last Prime Minister of Hyderabad state wrote in his memoir in 1962: “Hyderabad acquired more and more importance as the seat of Muslim culture and political power and after the so-called Mutiny of 1857, became the main sanctuary of the Muslim culture for the whole of the sub-continent” (Ali, *Tragedy* 17). Such problematic, overarching, retrospective self-representations certainly seem to have played a role in Desai’s representation of Hyderabad, where life was actually very uncertain for everyone in the 1940s, including élite Muslims.

Critical scholarship on *Clear Light of Day* fails to note in Desai’s text an example of the public politics in which Muslims are stereotyped in an attempt to imaginatively, narratively, and practically deny them the right to be a part of the Indian nation. Such interpretations only serve to textually recreate the Partition of India at a time when it is

being emphasized by Hindutva adherents (through the use of narratives about violence committed by Muslims during Partition) in both India and amongst diasporic Indians that Indian Muslims are not and cannot be Indians; they do not merit this membership because they are believed to not subscribe to the mainstream idea of nationness, which is ironic, since the conditions for nationality that were being touted in the India Desai writes about were designed from the very start to keep Muslims out (see Savarkar 113, 139; Golwalkar 127, 321). Even though Bim may have lofty secular ideals and, arguably, may not be self-conscious in her prejudice or suspicion of Benazir, her designated Other, Bim's ideals are not followed through in thought and deed beyond token grand gestures. In fact, Bim's attitude towards Benazir only contributes further to the mainstream refusal to accept Muslims as members of the secular Indian family.¹²⁶ By representing Bim's great anger towards and almost complete rejection of Benazir, by embodying in Raja the ultimate betrayal of kinship, and finally, by denying Benazir the compliment of psychological, textural, and textual complexity that she bestows on her other characters, Desai renders her own secular efforts largely futile.

Scholars have failed for the most part to remark upon these points. Indeed, they have gone to the extent of elaborating that Benazir, who is "coded as the upper-class consumer who surrounds herself with ribbons and lace, with glossy magazines and American records," becomes the lens through which we see Raja's ultimately consumerist and dilettantish approach to culture come full-circle (Mohan 54). It is through this connection to Benazir that Raja becomes defined. Yet Mohan does not

¹²⁶ This sense of an irreparable breach is especially driven home in the text when Tara compares a history book on India and Pakistan to the recent history of her family after Raja leaves for Hyderabad on straitened terms with Bim and marries Benazir. The narrator informs us that "[s]he turned the pages of Sir Mortimer Wheeler's *Early India and Pakistan* and thought how relevant such a title was to the situation in their family, their brother's marriage to Hyder Ali's daughter" (49).

question how Benazir is only a means for the novelist to achieve her end of delineating Raja's character. How such a representation of Benazir as an upper-class consumer as well as the elaborate depiction of her father's "Muslim" wealth constructed along Orientalist lines mark a continuation of the silencing of the Hyderabad Muslim woman and a pointed neglect of the Partition experiences of Hyderabad Muslims eludes Mohan in her analysis. In this way, because Desai subtly and smoothly encodes the inferiority of Muslims to Hindus in terms of the former's excessiveness and consumerism, and because scholars have not remarked upon this persistent thread in the novel, both *Clear Light of Day* and the scholarly response it has elicited can be read as only apparently and superficially egalitarian and secular.¹²⁷

The function of the last scene in the text, where the Das family's musician neighbour Mulk holds a concert, seems to be to soothe old wounds like a balm. It is meant to console the reader that even if political events rend asunder the interwoven

¹²⁷ Desai's failure in *Clear Light of Day* to represent the experiences of Indian Muslims whose lives were upturned by Partition becomes a glaring exclusion when we take into account how convincingly she manages to weave together the atmosphere of a decaying Urdu literary climate and the position of Muslim women in the post-Partition socio-political and historical milieu represented in *In Custody*. Thankfully, however, we do not have to rely on Desai to learn about the experiences of Muslim women during Partition. These experiences have been dealt with in some detail by writers such as Attia Hosain (English), Ismat Chughtai (Urdu), and Jamila Hashmi (Urdu). For example, Hosain's anthology *Phoenix Fleed* (1953) contains two short stories, "Phoenix Fleed" and "After the Storm," that engage with this subject. "Phoenix Fleed" represents the refusal of many people to succumb to the demands of Partition-related upheavals in the 1940s. This resistance is achieved through the characterization of the protagonist, an old woman who stubbornly refuses to leave her home in the face of imminent death at the hands of communal rioters. Chughtai's Urdu short story "Roots" (1983) also narrates Partition through the experiences of an older female protagonist who refuses to leave the house that has been her home since she was brought there as a bride. Hosain's "After the Storm" examines the impact of Partition violence on a little girl, who appears to remember nothing specific about the violence in which she loses her family. An otherwise loquacious girl, Bibi's traumatized mind takes refuge in the silence of strategic, subconscious forgetting. In doing so, "After the Storm" deals with common themes in Partition literature, such as silence and trauma. Such themes are also represented in Hashmi's short story "Banished," which is a first-person account of the thoughts, memories, and experiences of an abducted woman who decides not to be "recovered" because she does not wish to be separated from the children she has had from her abductor; yet she suffers from a great sense of loss as she pines for her natal family. Hosain's novel *Sunlight on a Broken Column* (1961) also deals extensively with the politics of Partition as well as the anti-colonial struggle from the point of view of elite Muslims from the United Provinces. Not only does it depict the anger of the protagonist Laila who is threatened with rape and death during communal riots (but is saved along with her daughter by her Hindu friends Sita and Ranjit), the novel also represents the fear that families experience when their members go missing during riots. In contrast to Desai's novel, Hosain's text constructs Laila's family home, which later belongs to a Hindu family, as a place populated with the private memories of Laila and her past experiences with her family members. It also furnishes the house with Laila's intricately woven memories of the high politics of the upper-class, upper-caste landlords (*taluqdars*) of the United Provinces and their engagements with the Muslim League, the Congress, and the departing British Raj (275-319).

fabric of Indian society, the work of art, memory, and creative memorializations of a shared Hindu-Muslim past will persist and help stitch together the separated fabric. They will help continue hybrid traditions where coexistence, albeit “conflictual coexistence” (Spivak, *Nationalism* 7), between communities is possible. Critics have celebrated the last scene as an example of how “the very divisions which split the country, the family, and the individuals within it may eventually contribute to a greater sense of mutual understanding,” and that this is why they are not “irremediable losses” (Huggan 15).

Graham Huggan writes that

a new allegiance is ... formed between silence and music in which the ‘consenting’ silence of Baba and Bim, as they sit enraptured by the songs of their neighbour, Mulk, and his venerable guru, contributes to the expression of a collective culture framed by the figure of the extended Hindu family. (Huggan 15)

A harmoniously shared mood of silence through the action of music certainly emerges in the last scene. However, what is disturbing is that the mutual silence of Bim and Baba and their acceptance of their lot amidst this aura of understanding, as well as Huggan’s assertion that understanding can persist in spite of divisions, completely lets slide the point that the scene smoothes over the sudden absence of Muslims in Delhi as a result of violence. Huggan’s exultation over the outline of a “collective culture” framed by the “figure of the extended Hindu family” is problematic because, in line with Desai’s representation, it allows the Hindu family to stand in for the syncretic, collective culture in Old Delhi that in pre-Partition India used to include Muslims.

Huggan also writes that unlike the awkward interplay of profound silence and raspy, canned gramophone music that Baba represents, Mulk’s concert ensures that

[m]usic no longer entails the morbid recollection of, or fruitless escape from, an unwanted history, and silence no longer seeks to repress what cannot, or should not, be told. Instead, both cooperate . . . in the imaginative conversion of a story of violence and despair into a tentative call for hope. (15-6)

Perhaps the tentative call for hope can be read as Bim's belated but nonetheless significant attempts to bridge the gap between Raja and Benazir and herself in the end. In the same vein can be read the music that Mulk and his guru perform, which is infused with Iqbal's poetry and syncretic Indo-Islamic musical techniques that draw from a shared, hybrid Hindu-Muslim artistic heritage. However, this does not make up for the fact that in the physical absence of Muslims from a city in which they had lived for many centuries, Mulk's concert appears to enact the appropriation of a common heritage; his concert then becomes a weak attempt to claim a harmonious coexistence with non-existent Muslims and has no tangible consequence as far as mending damaged relations is concerned.

It is only Ho who interprets the concert as a reminder of Hyder Ali's cultural gatherings, and she reads a sense of experienced loss in it: "The setting, scene, and action recall the lost culture of Hyder Ali's household and, in the pleasure of the present community, this memory runs as the subterranean current of another community's displacement and exile, and the nation's fractured legacy" (42). Ho's point that the last scene is infused with a bitter-sweet entanglement of pacifying music and painful memories is also suggested in the fact that Mulk's guru sings a couplet by Iqbal; amidst the atmosphere of the concert and the retrospective bent of the plot that builds up to this point, when some form of reconciliation finally becomes possible, Raja's Iqbal finally

becomes meaningful for Bim. It is here that Iqbal does not resound with the empty echo of Raja's impassioned, idle recitation, a symptom of his "heroism without a cause" (Mohan 55), but is imbued with trauma and history.

In this chapter, I have examined how Raja's largely myopic vision of Muslims, Hyderabad, as well as Urdu poetry is parodied through the critical gaze of his sister Bim, who is also, however, guilty of prejudice against Raja's Hyderabadi wife Benazir. I have explained how we only know Benazir through the jaundiced hostility with which Bim views her, holding her responsible for her brother's departure from his home and responsibilities. Benazir's silence throughout the text, and Bim's negative views of her, which receive only a feeble protest from her sister Tara, ensure that Benazir's experiences as a Muslim woman fleeing from Delhi to Hyderabad remain outside the purview of the text. In this way, even though Partition literature has been generally credited with bringing to light the forgotten private and collective trauma of partitioned communities and violated, dispossessed people, Desai's novel actually encourages the mainstream Indian silence on the question of Partition, Hyderabad, and Hyderabadis.

However, it is important to remember that Desai published *Clear Light of Day* at a time when historiography was, for the most part, silent about Partition violence. Her contribution, therefore, lies in bringing to literature the context of Partition in terms of Delhi and Hyderabad. Inadequate and highly problematic though they are, the shadowy representations of Partition in Delhi and Hyderabad in this novel at least create a discursive platform that allows for discussions about the experiences of Partition violence in these regions. Even though Benazir is barely present in the text, her existence is acknowledged and enables us to think about the experiences of Hyderabadi women

within the context of Partition. Similarly, not only Benazir but also Hyderabad is introduced into the equation through Desai's concern about the fate of Urdu. It was in the background of the fierce three-language formula debates and official language disputes of the 1970s and 80s that Desai wrote *Clear Light of Day*. Although Urdu was included in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, which consists of the fourteen major languages used in India, in 1950 (Das Gupta 33), it remained on the margins in Uttar Pradesh, widely considered to be the heartland of both Hindi and Urdu. After being wilfully neglected since Partition by the proponents of Hindi (Sonntag, "Minority" 175-6; Das Gupta 142-9; Hasan, *Legacy* 158, 160, 191), who associated it exclusively with Muslims, Urdu stood to benefit from the three-language formula, which was introduced nationally in 1961, because one of the languages students could choose in school could be their mother tongue (Hasan, *Legacy* 244). But the third language that was taught in most schools, in addition to English and Hindi, was Sanskrit. In the 1970s, when the state government made attempts to cautiously promote Urdu in education by appointing Urdu teachers and opening up options in the third language category to include all the languages in Schedule VIII as possible choices, Hindi supporters went to the extent of accusing Urdu of partitioning the country and threatening the national unity of the country (Sonntag, "Minority" 175). The state government was forced to back down,¹²⁸ and the case against Urdu has only strengthened since the alarming growth of communalism and communalist political parties such as the Hindutva-adhering Bharatiya Janata Party ("Indian People's Party"; BJP) in the 1980s (175). It is this consistent

¹²⁸ At a symbolic level, the Bihari (Congress) government proved to be more successful than the UP (Congress) government was towards the end of the decade; Urdu was granted second official language status in Bihar in 1980. The UP government had to struggle and back down several times and, finally, in spite of anti-Urdu riots in which at least twenty-six were left dead in Badaun, UP was able to grant Urdu second official language status in 1989 (Sonntag, "Political" 234). For more on these debates and disputes in the 1980s, see Selma Sonntag's "The Political Saliency of Language in Bihar" (1996) (224-34).

decline in the fortunes of Urdu that Desai represents in *Clear Light of Day*. And it is because of her preoccupation with Urdu that we get to hear about Hyderabad, Hyderabadi Muslims, Delhi, and Delhi's Muslims in the context of Partition at all, however restricted and distanced those depictions may be from the perspectives of those whom they represent. In the next chapter, I will move from studying the representation of Hyderabadis during Partition by non-Hyderabadis to examining a text by an American Muslim woman of Hyderabadi origin; the next chapter will explain the nature of the contribution her voice makes towards redressing the relative absence of the Hyderabadi perspective in Partition Studies and Partition literature such as Desai's *Clear Light of Day*.

**Staying Within the Lines: The Representation of Rape and Silence in Samina Ali's
*Madras on Rainy Days***

A first-person narrative, Samina Ali's *Madras on Rainy Days* (2004) is situated in late 1980s and early 1990s Hyderabad. The protagonist is nineteen-year-old Layla, a naturalized American citizen who was born in Hyderabad city and has been brought to India from the US to marry Sameer. The novel explores not only Layla's thoughts about her impending marriage, but also represents an insight into the post-Partition lives of her extended family, who live in Hyderabad city after having been driven away from their ancestral property during Partition. Layla's maternal grandfather, a Nawab, loses his feudal estate in Miryalguda in the Nalgonda district of the erstwhile princely Hyderabad state during the late 1940s; it was seized by his own workers during the Telangana Armed Struggle and, subsequently, appropriated by the Congress government. Layla's family lives in exile, haunted by displacement and loss. This sense of injury persists for decades, and is sharply highlighted and its expression violently and suddenly silenced with the gangrape of Layla's cousin Henna during a communal "riot" in the late 1980s.¹²⁹

Ali's position as a diasporic author is seen in two significant interventions made by her novel. First, as I argue in this chapter, it participates in the "aesthetics of postmemory" of Partition (Hirsch, *Family* 245), where postmemory is a term coined by Marianne Hirsch, and refers to a kind of memory which is acquired as inheritance. It alludes to the memory that is compiled by children of individuals who are part of a larger group that experiences an event of great suffering, because these children live in the

¹²⁹ Gyanendra Pandey points out the incongruity of the euphemism "riot" to situations that are increasingly and alarmingly beginning to look more like pogroms ("In Defence" 569) or even a form of communal genocide. Sudhir Kakar writes that "an outbreak of violence in Hindu-Muslim conflict should no longer be called a riot, with the anarchical connotations of the word. Less planned than a battle yet more organized than a riot, communal violence lies somewhere between the two" (70). In the absence of a more specific word, I will stick to "riot" and put it in quotation marks as an ironic reminder of how inadequate it is to describe communal violence in India.

permanent shadow of their parents' narrations of trauma (127). Ali's construction of Partition, its losses in terms of Layla's family's ancestral home, as well as the death of Henna as a result of present-day communalism, falls within the ambit of Hirsch's envisioning of location in exile as a characteristic condition of postmemory. It serves to illustrate Hirsch's theorization that the aesthetics of postmemory are actually "a diasporic aesthetics of temporal and spatial exile that needs simultaneously to (re)build and to mourn" (245). Therefore, because literature can serve as "a site of postmemory and mourning" (257), *Madras on Rainy Days* becomes the means to creatively memorialize the deaths of people during Partition as well as the deaths of people today from communal violence (Hirsch, *Family* 247; Gera Roy and Bhatia xiv). Furthermore, Hirsch argues in the context of visual texts of the Holocaust (*Family* 254-5; "Surviving" 9-10) that postmemory is not necessarily restricted to families¹³⁰ and, therefore, may actually help build broader networks of people who can share, mourn, and memorialize the trauma caused by Partition. Thus, Partition literature such as Ali's novel also allows readers who have their own postmemories of Partition, or those who do not have any connection to Partition whatsoever, such as some of the American readers Ali hopes to attract (Ali, *Rediff*), to value the memories of Layla's Uncle Taqi and mother-in-law Zeba and the postmemories of Layla, thereby broadening awareness and advancing the understanding of Partition and the traumas it generated for so many. Such reading practices would then contribute to what Veena Das hopes for: the creation of "therapeutic spaces" of socially shared expressions of the trauma of Partition (*Critical* 192-3, 196).

¹³⁰ It is an "intersubjective transgenerational space of remembrance, linked specifically to cultural or collective trauma" (Hirsch, "Surviving" 10). In other words, postmemory involves interactions with people of different generations, but this may not necessarily mean that only people related by blood to people who have experienced trauma can have postmemory.

Besides this, novels like *Madras on Rainy Days* not only undo the official silences on Partition, but they also help to rebuild through the medium of creative writing South Asian communities that were dislocated during Partition and whose members can personally relate to the book for that reason (Hirsch, *Family* 255).

Indeed, another significant contribution of Ali's novel to new as well as existing Partition discourses is that it narratively mediates in Partition-related politics in the subcontinent as well as the South Asian diaspora based in North America. Papiya Ghosh has shown that the context in which nations are narrated and acted out in South Asia is becoming "increasingly transnational" (xix). She writes that diasporic Indians are extremely attentive to the trajectory taken by the idea of the nation in the subcontinent and, in fact, intervene and influence the path the nation takes (xxx). Her research reveals that Partition is a major reference point in diaspora, "both in installing and resisting Hindutva" (xxi). She writes about the extension of the subcontinent into the diaspora, particularly after the 1970s, and calls attention to the role played by the "exclusionary everyday experiences of nation-building" (xxix) in this trend. Hence, communalist hate ideologies that were born in the subcontinent are "increasingly being found mirrored amongst the substantial communities of Indians and Pakistanis living abroad" (Bates 2).

This happens in two ways: first, in terms of "the post-eighties subcontinental majoritarianisms" (Ghosh 175), such as the rise of right-wing Hindutva ideology amongst some sections of Hindu society and, second, "the oppositional efforts at recontouring the subcontinent structured by partition" (175), such as the contribution of South Asians in the diaspora towards repairing the social bridges that collapsed during Partition and that

Hindutva now seeks to wipe out permanently. So, while diasporic Sangh Parivar¹³¹ networks fund Sangh organizations and activities in India, other groups focus on foiling these attempts and contribute to democratic processes. Such efforts have become more and more urgent because Hindutva organizations are expanding the field of their influence not only across India, but also amongst Hindus in the diaspora. Thus, the RSS has branches in forty-seven countries (126) and the VHP in eighty. These organizations are particularly active in the US, Canada, and the UK, and they propagate the message of Hindutva through widespread networks run by middle-class Hindus on the web and on university and college campuses (through Hindu students' associations and councils) (128-30). For example, the American chapter of the VHP works closely with the Hindu Students' Council, which in turn, has set up the Global Hindu Electronic Network (GHEN). The rhetoric of GHEN is found to circulate the idea of a monolithic, dangerous, and violent Islam, and its followers have called for the annihilation of Indian Muslims and Pakistanis (130). Citizens' organizations such as the Campaign to Stop Funding Hate (CSFH), which was launched in the US after the horrific attacks on Muslims during the 2002 Gujarat riots, and the Forum for Indian Leftists (FOIL), which was formed in 1995 specifically in response to "Yankee Hindutva" (Mathew and Prashad), have reported that large funds are collected and sent to India by the seemingly innocuous India Development and Relief Fund (IDRF) for the benefit of Sangh networks and organizations. These funds are then used in the service of a violent, divisive cause for educating communities such as the *adivasis* in hatred of communism and Islam and by

¹³¹ The Sangh Parivar ("Family Organization") consists of several right-wing Hindutva organizations affiliated to the "mother" organization, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh ("National Self-Volunteers Organization"; RSS). Amongst many others, these prominently include the Rashtriya Sevika Samiti ("National Women Volunteer's Committee"; Samiti), Vishwa Hindu Parishad ("World Hindu Council"; VHP), the Bajrang Dal, the Durga Vahini, and the Shiv Sena.

promoting communal pogroms (Ghosh 200-1; Campaign, “Project”; Mathew and Prashad).

However, there are also Muslim organizations in the diaspora, such as the Indian Muslim Federation (IMF) in the UK, the Indian Muslim Relief Committee (IMRC) of the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA)¹³² in the US, and the Consultative Committee of Indian Muslims in North America and Canada (CCIM) in Canada, that are focused on preventing “the idea of India from being claimed for Hindutva” (xxx). The activities of these organizations include financially helping the victims of communal riots in India (136), mobilizing opinion on issues concerning the treatment of Muslims in India (such as the indiscriminate detention of Muslim youth under the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act (TADA)), and registering their protest with Indian politicians who frequently visit North America (144). There are also alliances between organizations representing Muslims and those representing left-wing professionals and thinkers, women, gay communities, students as well as Dalits. Examples of such organizations include FOIL, Manavi, Sakhi for South Asian Women, South Asian Lesbian and Gay Association (SALGA), the International Dalit Sena, and the South Asia Solidarity Group (SASG).¹³³ In the aftermath of the 2002 Gujarat riots, the SASG and Asian Women Unite! protested the growing influence of organizations such as the VHP in front of the head offices of the British Charity Commission in London and called for the removal of

¹³² For insights into the kind of issues brought up by ISNA members and the steps taken to implement measures to protect the interests of Indian Muslims in India, see the dated but still relevant proceedings of the IMRC’s conference “North Americans in Support of Indian Muslims” (March 25-26, 1989) in *Indian Muslims in North America* (1991), edited by Omar Khalidi.

¹³³ For an analysis of how second-generation Indians, Pakistanis, and Bangladeshis have rallied around the idea of a South Asian identity, “implying in a diasporic context the erasure of the boundaries resulting from Partition” (306), see Aminah T. Mohammad’s “Relationships between Muslims and Hindus in the United States: *Mlecchas* versus *Kafirs*?” (2001) (301-4). For a range of writings that show the resonances and dissonances associated with this solidarity, see *Our Feet Walk the Sky: Women of the South Asian Diaspora* (1993) by Women of South Asian Descent Collective.

the charity status of the VHP. FOIL is also part of the Coalition Against Genocide (CAG), formed in February 2005 to protest the proposed business visit of Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi to the US in March 2005. Modi's complicity in the communal violence in Gujarat in 2002 is established. Yet he has to date got off scot-free on all charges and has not been brought to book. In addition to this, what drives home how strong the grip of Hindutva is on the subcontinent and why it is even more urgent for diasporic interventions to continue in subcontinental politics is that Modi will most likely be the BJP's prime ministerial candidate for India's central elections in 2014. As a result of a fierce mass media campaign that enlisted support from diasporic South Asian women's groups and Amnesty International, Modi was finally denied a US visa in 2005 (220-1). This policy has remained unchanged despite attempts, such as the recent ones by Republican Congressman Joe Walsh in April 2012 and September 2012 (*NDTV*, "New," "US Congressman"), to get the decision revoked.¹³⁴

As I will show in this chapter, in representing the impact of Partition on Hyderabadi Muslims today, who suffer loss and displacement in each wave of communal violence that sweeps their city, Ali's novel becomes part of these greater diasporic interventions into the politics of the subcontinent. Through mediations like *Madras on Rainy Days*, diasporic subjects have not only engaged with the politics of post-Partition

¹³⁴ Other diasporic interventionist initiatives include an exchange of goodwill and cooperation, such as when Dalit politician Ram Vilas Paswan was invited to speak at the fourth annual convention of the American Federation of Muslims from India (AFMI) in 1994. In 1994, the AFMI was invited on Paswan's initiative to the first International Dalit and Minorities Conference in New Delhi (Ghosh 145). There are other strong networks of solidarity such as the Lease Drivers Coalition (LDC) in the US, which has organized South Asians, who constitute fifty per cent of New York's thirty thousand yellow cab drivers (190-1). Indian and Pakistani cab drivers, who negotiate the mean streets of New York and face racism on a daily basis, have united in a way that middle-class Indians and Pakistanis have not; disregarding subcontinental cartographies, they are trying to rebuild social networks that existed before nationalisms set in and Partition happened (190-1). Organizations such as the Pakistan-India Peoples Forum for Peace and Democracy (PIPPFD) have also focused on working-class members of the Indian and Pakistani diaspora, who "display little or none of the jingoism evident within the region ... [and] retain their pre-partition social links, thrive on reflexivity and remain in a mentality of exile" (Samaddar, "Plural" 162).

South Asia as a whole, but also with specific localities such as Hyderabad, which were transformed during Partition. It is here that Ali's novel makes its valuable contribution.¹³⁵

I argue in this chapter that by focusing on Partition and, of course, on communal politics and the significant physical, emotional, and financial injury caused by it to Indian and Hyderabad Muslims, Ali, an American of Indian and Hyderabad descent, disrupts the confident stride of Hindutva. She also creates a literary framework, a socio-political milieu, within which the related issues of compensation for internally displaced Hyderabad Muslim refugees, citizenship of Muslims, and communalist discrimination against Muslims in Indian job markets can be discussed. In doing so, she aligns herself with similar initiatives made by other groups in the diaspora to redress wrongs perpetrated against local and regional communities in India. In the process, she also becomes part of a politically active community of diasporic Hyderabadis,¹³⁶ such as Omar Khalidi, who used his relatively safe and empowering diasporic location in the US

¹³⁵ To date, there is no scholarly analysis of this aspect of *Madras on Rainy Days*. In fact, the novel has received hardly any sustained critical attention. Jaspal Kaur Singh has examined Ali's binary representation of the "East" and "West" in this novel in the last section of her book *Representation and Resistance: South Asian and African Women's Texts at Home and in the Diaspora* (2008) and Roksana Badrudajja has done the same on the lines of the tradition and modernity dichotomy in her dissertation (unpublished) *The ABCD Conundrum: What Does It Mean to be a South Asian-American Woman?* (2008). Ali's novel has also been named (but not studied as): a "Re-Orientalist" text by Lisa Lau in her essay "Re-Orientalism: The Perpetration and Development of Orientalism by Orientals" (2009); an example of "Muslim literature" by Karine Ancellin in her "Hybrid Identities of Characters in Muslim Women Fiction post-9/11" (2009) and Mohja Kahf in her "Teaching Diaspora Literature: Muslim American Literature as an Emerging Field" (2010); and an instance of fiction that engages fleetingly with female same-sex sexuality in Megan Sinnott's essay "Public Sex: The Geography of Female Homoeroticism and the (In)Visibility of Female Sexualities" (2009).

¹³⁶ As opposed to pre-1948 trends, when Hyderabad was a preferred destination for professionals, current rates of migration from Hyderabad remain high. Many Hyderabad Muslims left Hyderabad for Pakistan after 1948, citing or fearing discrimination at the hands of the new Indian administration as their reasons for leaving. For more on this migration to Pakistan, see Karen Leonard's "Hyderabadis in Pakistan: Changing Nations" (2001). Many of these Pakistani Hyderabadis as well as other Hyderabadis (both Muslim and non-Muslim) who had stayed back in Hyderabad later moved to other locations such as the USA, UK, Canada, Australia, and the Middle East. See Leonard's *Locating Home: India's Hyderabadis Abroad* (2007) and "Construction of Identity in Diaspora: Emigrants from Hyderabad, India" (1999) for more on this subject. Many diasporic Hyderabad Muslims prefer their Hyderabad identity over other kinds of identity such as religious or national ones and like to have their own associations in the US (Mohammad 295; Leonard). For an analysis of the culture of migration in Hyderabad city (particularly about but not exclusively limited to Muslims) and how migration is associated with raised status and greater desirability in terms of marriage, irrespective of gender (Layla represents this prestige in Ali's novel, and the fact that she is the source through which Sameer gets his American citizenship is important), see Syed Ali's "'Go West, Young Man: The Culture of Migration among Muslims in Hyderabad, India'" (2007).

to locate, translate, and publish parts of the “Report on the Post-Operation Polo Massacres, Rape and Destruction or Seizure of Property in Hyderabad State,” compiled by Pandit Sundarlal and Qazi Muhammad Abdulghaffar a few months after the invasion of Hyderabad by India (September 13-18, 1948). Khalidi’s achievement is made even more significant in light of the fact that the Indian government does not acknowledge that the report was ever commissioned or even exists. Additionally, there is Mir Laik Ali, the last Prime Minister of Hyderabad, who published his memoir *Tragedy of Hyderabad* (1962), a damning critique of India’s actions in 1948, from his safe haven in Karachi.

Finally, Ali’s novel also points out the uncanny ability of communalism to swiftly instill firm notions of “us” and “them” in even the minds of those unfamiliar (at an experiential level) with Hindu-Muslim violence, such as the protagonist Layla, who catches herself thinking of Hindus and Muslims as two polarized, irreconcilable communities after her cousin Henna’s death. This is an important contribution in light of the urgent need to halt the advance of communalism across diasporic South Asian communities, particularly amongst first-generation or second-generation immigrants who are most vulnerable to the rhetorical power of this self-proclaimed “authentic” Indian voice. It is in these socio-political contexts that Ali’s *Madras on Rainy Days* makes its most valuable intervention.

In light of the urgency with which we must confront the advance of communalism in India, I focus in this chapter on the scene of Henna’s gangrape and murder and its subsequent impact on those around her. As part of this process, I examine where the contemporary Hyderabad Muslim woman’s body stands in connection with the patriarchal, nationalist discourses that define the rhetoric of communalism in India as

well as abroad and that are ultimately and incontrovertibly enmeshed with Partition. In doing so, I show how even a novel published in 2004, whose plot is situated approximately four decades after Partition, is part of the Partition genre and how it represents the ongoing significance and centrality of Partition in patriarchal state and community discourses; these discourses not only closely affect people living in India, but also chase transnational subjects like Layla,¹³⁷ who are too young and distanced from the socio-historical milieu of Partition to understand its full magnitude. My argument is that the rape and death of Henna not only sharply, dramatically, and irrevocably imprints upon the face of the present a link to its partitioned past, but also determines the way Partition-related property disputes and troubling memories are resolved in the novel. I describe how this resolution of Partition trauma and injustice takes place in the novel in the form of silence and/or silencing, specifically with regard to Henna, Layla's nanny Nafiza, and Layla and Henna's Uncle Taqi (or Taqi Mamu). And in my discussion on Nafiza, I argue that the implicit silencing of the Partition testimony of this working-class character in the text duplicates in terms of class the official and mainstream silencing of the experiences of Hyderabadis during Partition.

In June 1948, three months before the "Police Action," a euphemism for the invasion of Hyderabad by India that year, an arresting metaphor appeared in an *Indian Express* editorial on the dispute over Hyderabad's reluctance to accede to the Indian Union. Although I have quoted this passage in a previous chapter, I believe it bears repeating here because of its special relevance to my analysis of Henna's rape:

Doubtful 'friends' abroad are already indulging in evil counsel. There are no doubt leaders among Muslims who resent much evil counsel, but others still emit

¹³⁷ Layla's parents ensure that she splits her time between India and the US every year.

more heat than light. Whether negotiations are resumed or abandoned, Hyderabad cannot defy the forces of progress and democracy for all time. *And India cannot nurse an enemy within her belly.* (British Information Services, “Daily Press Summary – [date illegible] June 1948”; emphasis added)

This sinister image of Hyderabad, ruled by a hegemonic Muslim minority, an enemy within India’s belly who is perceived to be loyal to predominantly Muslim Pakistan, runs parallel to the language expressed by some state workers, journalists, and columnists on the problem of “recovering” women who had been abducted and impregnated by men of the Other community during Partition. The hysteria in political and governmental discourses over the potentially dangerous consequences of such mixed sexual encounters is also reflected in the metaphors of reproduction and birth that crop up again and again in comments by prominent statesmen of the day.¹³⁸ The official rhetoric suggested that children born to Hindu or Sikh women, but of Muslim paternity, were unacceptable in India¹³⁹ (Butalia, *Other* 128, 213-9; Menon and Bhasin 119-22). Shail Mayaram observes that during Partition there was “no room for liminal categories” where communal identity was concerned. This liminality is exactly what a child born of a mixed union would represent in the state’s view, its existence “blurring ... the margins” and “def[y]ing knowledge (as intelligence) and corrod[ing] control” (161). Therefore, the state’s solution

¹³⁸ Vallabhbhai Patel is known to have said that Hyderabad was “a cancer in the belly of India” (Munshi 1, 172). In an extension of the metaphor of reproductivity and maternity, the Nizam impatiently informed India on March 9, 1948 after protracted negotiations that “Hyderabad is not a nest of Pakistan in India nor a possible source of danger to your Dominion” (*Hyderabad’s Relations* 29).

¹³⁹ Veena Das argues that the state’s position on “mixed” children was derived more from its own nationalist ideology against Muslims and Pakistanis, for communities themselves often included the possibility of mixed children being accepted and absorbed within established norms of kinship (*Critical Events* 76). She clarifies that this does not mean that the role of the community in constructing rigid norms of sexual and reproductive purity is in anyway undermined (81), but emphasizes that while communities could stretch their codes to receive and accommodate mixed children, “there is evidence of state intervention aimed at maintaining norms of honour and purity *in violation of* the practical exigencies of kinship in the community” (77-8).

for pregnant women presented them with the option of either delivering their children at a discreet location and putting them up for adoption, or aborting them and (thereby) getting “cleansed” completely¹⁴⁰ (Butalia, *Other* 128). This purification process was called *safaya* (Hindustani, “cleaning up,” “clearing up”) and, significantly, was also used to refer bluntly to the physical and/or ritual removal or elimination of Muslims and Muslimness in the Mewat region of present-day Rajasthan. A former Alwar army captain who was deputed for “operations” to the Tijara sector in June 1947 tells Mayaram that he worked with the RSS and received orders from Vallabhbbhai Patel. He says, “The killings of Hindus at Noakhali and Punjab had to be avenged. We called it the ‘Clearing Up campaign’ (*safāyā*). All the Meos from Firozpur Jhirka down were to be cleared and sent to Pakistan, their land taken over” (Mayaram 139). Mayaram’s research reveals that ten thousand Meos, who professed a hybrid faith dominated by Hindu and Muslim rituals and practices, were killed in this particular army operation in Alwar (140). Thirty thousand Meos were also killed in Bharatpur (129), and thirteen thousand were converted ritually to Hinduism. Thus, the metaphor of *safaya*, indicating a systematic ridding of not only sexual and reproductive contamination by Muslims but also Muslims themselves, was a commonly known concept at the time. Significantly, the taboo of being born of a Muslim’s womb still thrives, as the BJP and Sangh Parivar’s mobilization of backward classes in Gujarat in 1990 shows. In tribal areas such as Bharuch, people were pushed to contribute token amounts of money to the Ramjanmabhoomi cause and were told, “If you do not contribute that would prove you are from a Muslim womb!” (qtd in Shah 232).

¹⁴⁰ How important this cleansing was to the state can be seen in the fact that abortions were covertly organized by state workers and performed by doctors in state hospitals (Singh, “Lady” 190-1; Menon and Bhasin 177-78, 83; Butalia, *Other* 128).

When the state's solution to purify sexually and reproductively contaminated women is extended to accommodate the *Indian Express* quotation, Hyderabad becomes figuratively constructed as the malignant child of the enemy residing inside a previously pure, now violated Hindu body. The imagery is striking. Embedded in its landlocked position within India, Hyderabad is seen as an illegitimate, dangerous child growing in the belly of Mother India, with clearly visible genetic characteristics of its father, a masculinized, menacing, Muslim Pakistan who has violated India and deposited its bad seed in her womb. When the state's solution (enabling the retrieval of national honour and the restoration of Mother India to its legitimate Hindu fold) is applied to Hyderabad, there emerge two options. India-as-mother and the Indian men protecting, or more precisely, controlling her maternal body, should allow Hyderabad to come into its own (or be "birthed" into its own?) in terms of its primary Muslimness and also grant it the option to accede to Pakistan or be an ally of Pakistan. The other option is that Hyderabad must be "aborted" and its allegedly pro-Pakistan (because Muslim) identity must be eliminated in some way. It was the metaphor of abortion that was used against Hyderabad, through the assimilation and subsequent official erasure of its Muslim culture from public domains. Instead of the term "Partition," which is applied to the socio-historical milieu represented by the partition of Punjab and Bengal in 1947, or "Accession" or "Integration," which are used for Hyderabad and other princely states in general, the terms that work best to describe Hyderabad's special case are "Absorption" or "Assimilation."¹⁴¹ The Muslim identity of Hyderabad, an important part of Hyderabadi

¹⁴¹ However, the characters of *Madras on Rainy Days* are unanimous in calling this defining phase in their lives "Partition" (149, 76, 125-6). This strange nomenclature is an indicator of, first, the overwhelming resonance that the word "Partition" has in South Asian historical narratives; second, the verbal aspect of the conformity to Indianness expected from Hyderabadi since 1948; and third, the extension of the Partition of 1947 to the subsequent break-up of Hyderabad state in 1956 into three linguistically determined states – Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Maharashtra.

and Deccani culture, was uprooted from its bearings, affecting a kind of figurative abortion. After Hyderabad's "Absorption" into the Indian Union in such a way that it lost all semblance of its independent Deccani cultural identity, the *safaya* of India-as-mother was complete, and her body became whole and inviolate again.

Furthermore, just as debates in the Indian Parliament over the recovery of women became an opportunity to slander the moral character of Pakistan and visualize India as a benevolent, protective, moral state (Butalia, *Other* 140) – the opposite of its malevolent, dangerous, immoral Other – the Indian invasion of Hyderabad in September 1948 sought to do the same for India in relation to Hyderabad, owing to Hyderabad's friendship with Pakistan and the Muslim religious affiliation of its minority ruling class. In other words, to speak in the rhetoric of sexual reproductivity current at the time, on account of its Pakistani, Muslim "paternity," Hyderabad became Othered too.¹⁴² What this meant in everyday terms was that Hyderabad Muslims became doubly Othered because, first, they were Muslim and, second, they were Hyderabad. This had serious implications for the way they were treated by the Indian government, as Ali's novel shows.

Another reason for this usage may be that the experiences of Hyderabadis during Partition – sexual violence, land grabbing, and struggles to extract adequate compensation from the new states for property lost or destroyed – are in some ways similar to that of people in other parts of the subcontinent. Furthermore, perhaps "Partition" also refers metaphorically to a constellation of smaller partitions, such as the dam that denies Taqi Mamu access to his ancestral land and the enforced separations that prevent Zeba from seeing her childhood playmates until many decades later. In addition to this, the word in the Hyderabad context also challenges the commonly held notion (Kaul 9; Pandey, "In Defence" 560; Hasan, *Inventing* 30) that Partition affected only border states such as Punjab and Bengal, or only North India.

¹⁴² That "Pakistani" and "Muslim" have been often conflated in nationalist perceptions since Partition is significant. Anxieties about Muslim loyalties suffuse the account of events in Hyderabad by K.M. Munshi, the Agent-General of India in Hyderabad, who writes "I was clear in my mind that if India was to live, the Muslims in India must cheerfully accept to be an integral part of the Indian nation, making no separate claims, owing no expressed or unexpected loyalty to Pakistan, harbouring no antagonism to the other elements in the country" (80). Mushirul Hasan points out how during the "massive upsurge" over the Babri Masjid in 1989-1992, it was "widely argued that Muslims, having divided the country, should migrate to Pakistan or live in India on terms laid down by the Hindu parties," and informs us that the "Pakistan or *Qabristan*" ("Pakistan or the Graveyard") slogan was widely raised by Hindus in Muslim-dominated areas at this time (*Legacy* 54). For more on this, see the popular perceptions about Muslims that emerge in research conducted by Pandey in his article "In Defence of the Fragment: Writing about Hindu-Muslim Riots in India Today" (1991); see also Kakar (106-7, 127) and M.J. Akbar (19, 28). In addition to this, see for the condemnation of this conflation "Pakistan and the 'Loyalty Test'" in the "Founding Declaration" (2003) of the Bombay-based Muslims for Secular Democracy (MSD).

In *Madras on Rainy Days*, the metaphor of the abortion of Hyderabad, i.e. the symbolic annihilation of its identity by its forced integration into India, is transformed, but results in the same ramifications for Hyderabadis when Henna, a pregnant Muslim woman, dies along with her unborn child after being gang-raped and mutilated. Ali has explained in an interview to Shauna Singh Baldwin that the scene is based on the rape and murder of a Muslim woman during the communal riots that happened in Hyderabad city in 1990. The woman's husband was also murdered. Ali recalls how the gang never made it to the house in which she was living with her husband and in-laws. She feels that it was at the cost of "a fellow Muslim sister's life" that she herself was saved (Ali, "Every").

Sudhir Kakar writes that the riot of December 1990 happened after a period of relative calm in Hyderabad city. For about six years previous to 1990, there had been no "riots." From 1978 to 1984, riots had occurred every year. And no major communal violence had occurred in the city between 1948 to 1978 (47). The 1978 riot was triggered off by the rape of eighteen-year-old Rameeza Bi by three Muslim and one Hindu policeman in the Nallakunta police station.¹⁴³ Ahmed Hussain, Rameeza Bi's husband, was beaten to death. Initially, the mobs who protested against police brutality were both Hindu and Muslim, but then Hindus and Muslims became pitted against one another after a minor incident involving Hindu and Muslim boys (47-8). Between 1978 and 1984, over four hundred people died and thousands were injured in the communal riots (48). The

¹⁴³ The case of Rameeza Bi and the riots that followed have proved to be a watershed moment for Muslims in Hyderabad city. For example, Nissar, a young man who was responsible for committing violence and probably also killing people during the 1990 riots, explained to Kakar, "I decided to work for the [Muslim] nation after all I saw during the riots following Rameeza Bi's case" (71). Kakar found that Hindu-Muslim relations have significantly deteriorated in certain parts of Hyderabad city since the incident and that old Hindu-Muslim friendships have all but ended (125-6). For more details about the case and a feminist critique of how the case was handled by dispensers of legal justice, see Kalpana Kannabiran's "Rape and the Construction of Communal Identity" (1996).

countdown for the 1990 riots in Hyderabad city began with BJP President LK Advani's communally provocative *rath yatra* ("chariot procession") from Somnath to Ayodhya.¹⁴⁴

The riots started with the killing of a Muslim auto-rickshaw driver called Sardar by two Hindus and lasted ten weeks, during which three hundred people died and thousands were wounded (51). Kakar writes that the recent communal violence has caused Muslims from other areas of Hyderabad city to migrate to the old city, where there is already a large population of Muslims, while Hindus are moving outwards (10-1).

Indeed, the 1980s were a decade of bloody communal violence in India, and many political agendas that gained ascendancy then continue to haunt Indians today. Mushirul Hasan traces the fall of the Nehruvian secular consensus after Partition and informs us that riots were at their lowest since Partition in 1960, that they escalated in number and violence in the late 1960s, finally reaching an all-time high in the 1980s in terms of lives lost (close to four thousand) (*Legacy* 258-9). Hasan points out that while communal riots were not uncommon during Nehru's life time, they were still localized and controllable. However, subsequent "riots" were deadlier, more widespread, and extended over weeks or even months. They spread to rural areas, involved the active complicity of the police and paramilitary forces, and more and more people participated in looting, arson, and killings (260). He attributes the steady rise of communalism in the 1980s to Indira Gandhi's wooing of Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh communalists in order to buy electoral gains for the Congress (261-3) and to Rajiv Gandhi's maintenance of this status quo after

¹⁴⁴ Somnath is the site of a temple that was destroyed by Mahmud Ghaznavi, a Muslim ruler from Ghazni, during one of his many expansionist military campaigns in the eleventh century. The Babri Masjid in Ayodhya became the focal point for the convergence of violent communal sentiments in the 1980s because it stood on what was believed to be the location for a temple that had existed from the time of Ram and that had been destroyed by the Mughal ruler Babar. Ayodhya is also the city where Ram was born. The Babri Masjid was demolished by members of the Sangh Parivar during its Ramjanmabhoomi movement (1989-1992).

his mother's assassination¹⁴⁵ (266). This violence culminated in the demolition of the Babri Masjid on December 6, 1992, and "riots" rocked Bombay, Surat, Bhopal, and many other places in India. Hasan compares these events to Partition, in terms of their experiential value for the post-Partition generation (307-8). Ten years after Ayodhya, in 2002, Gujarat burnt. And in the ten years that have elapsed since the Gujarat riots, we have witnessed the meteoric rise of Modi, who not only continues to be the popularly elected Chief Minister of Gujarat, but is confident enough of support from the masses that he actually aspires to be Prime Minister of India.

At the receiving end of this violence stand Muslim women like Henna, who are raped and murdered to illustrate and propagate the ultimate ends of Hindutva ideology, i.e. the subjugation of Muslims and other minority and subgroups such as Christians, Jews, and people with non-heteronormative sexualities. The centrality of the female body in the patriarchal discourses and religious fundamentalisms such as Hindutva and Islamism is represented by persistent references to the female body in *Madras on Rainy Days*. In fact, it is *the* constant factor in Layla's and Henna's subject constitution. Bart Moore-Gilbert has shown that postcolonial life-writing texts, especially those written by women, make the body "a central element in the construction of auto/biographical identity" (48), expressing affiliation, rebellion, and other features of subjective identity through its representation. *Madras on Rainy Days*, in addition to representing how the female body is construed by Hyderabad Muslims as the locus of patriarchal domination, also makes direct references to how it is systematically theorized as the repository of

¹⁴⁵ Hasan points out that the secular consensus was set aside as Hindu and Muslim fundamentalists were each mollified by the Congress in turn, with the Muslim patriarchs winning the Shah Bano case against the interests of Shah Bano and other Muslim women, and the Hindu fanatics succeeding in getting the judiciary to resuscitate the dormant Babri Masjid issue (266).

family and community “honour” and how the loss of that “honour” brings personal and social shame that points to the culpability of the individual female or females in question. The female body is thus formulated as the object of a crystallized, codified patriarchal narrative of tyrannical regulation, where the most effective way to not only strip a woman but her community of dignity is to do it verbally and/or physically through her body. For instance, Layla’s parents’ verbal slurs against her, occasioned by her attempts to resist their total control over her, reinforce such oppressive norms that connect sexual chastity to dignity and honour¹⁴⁶ (4, 90).

The strict policing of Layla’s body by close family members, narratively elucidated in the very first pages of the novel, is further reinforced by collective memory that constructs and preserves community notions of honour. Therefore, in addition to pressures exerted by her parents’ immigrant anxieties, Layla also feels the weight of the overwhelming legacy of honour when she visits Golconda Fort near Hyderabad city. Here, she is made aware of local folklore that contextualizes within a wider framework the oppressive, patriarchal restrictions she lives with. Referring to the defeat of the Deccani Qutub Shahi dynasty by North Indian Mughal armies in 1687, she writes, “I overheard a guide saying, the women of the harem, the women of the Qutb Shahi family, had drowned themselves, unwilling to let their bodies also be invaded. This was the heritage I carried” (180). This collective memory serves to situate the centrality of honour in Hyderabad (patriarchal) traditions as well as provide an example for present day

¹⁴⁶ The total control of Layla’s sexuality by denying her the option to date, and the attempt to keep her rooted to Hyderabad Muslim culture by bringing her to Hyderabad city every year, are literary representations of common strategies of parental surveillance in diasporic Muslim communities in the US (Haddad and Lummis 138-9; Haddad et al 74, 87) and Canada (Khan, *Aversion* 19), such as Hyderabadis (Leonard, “Construction” 59). Furthermore, it is the role of the mother to ensure the chastity of the girl child (Khan, *Aversion* 74, 114). Shahnaz Khan has argued that religion becomes desirable for diasporic Muslim communities not only because it addresses their spiritual needs, but also because it grounds people in an alien place where immigration processes generate insecurity and exclusion from mainstream life makes it difficult to put down roots (“Veil” 149-50).

Hyderabad women to emulate.¹⁴⁷ It also goes to show how Layla's subjectivity is conceived in relational and not monadic terms. In this patriarchal world-view, it is the women who uphold family and community honour better than any other symbol can, and it is the "[e]xclusive control of ... [female] sexuality by the legitimate 'owner' [that] is the practical aspect of ... [this] notion of honour. That is why it is expected that an ideal woman should end her life, which is incidental anyway, if her chastity has been defiled" (Agarwal 38), or if there is even a threat of its defilement.

The Golconda scene is also prophetic because Layla's heavily pregnant cousin Henna, who has accompanied her on the excursion, is subsequently gang-raped and murdered by eight armed young men during a communal "riot." Her pregnant body is mutilated with a broken whiskey bottle (290-91), and her child is "whole" when it is "sliced out" by her attackers (293). Layla's husband Sameer witnesses the event and reports that the men were "snickering at her body. They said her breasts were engorged, all juicy like mangoes – and just as sweet. Baby, they drank her milk!" (293)

Henna's situation is both different and similar to the rapes and pregnancies that women endured during Partition. Unlike many of these women, Henna is raped after she

¹⁴⁷ Purshottam Agarwal points out that "[r]ather than look at how closely legends approximate to actual historical happenings, we need to look for the matrix of anxieties, fears and attitudes reflected in the construction and cultural acceptance of a particular legend or a myth" (36). Referring to the legend of the *jauhar*, or mass suicide, of Rani Padmini and her retinue when faced with the reality of invasion by Muslim conqueror Alauddin Khilji in the fourteenth century, Agarwal writes that what is important is not whether or not lust for Padmini was the real cause for Khilji's attack on Chittorgarh, but that many Hindus have chosen to preserve this "memory" and believe it (36). Kakar makes the same point about the destruction of the Somnath temple (50). It is important to note here that the (in)famous Thoa Khalsa mass suicide by Sikh women during Partition was interpreted widely as "sacrifice" and "martyrdom," and Rameshwari Nehru, a Congress Party personality and worker, went so far as to incorporate it into the Hindu idea and "history" of *jauhar*. Comparisons were made between the women of Thoa Khalsa and Rani Padmini and her retinue. Nehru also wrote fervently of them as *satis*, describing how she and her colleagues felt honoured to have the chance to worship these *satis* (Pandey, "Community" 2043). The oral transmission of such legends from generation to generation contribute to the internalization of stereotypes and prejudices (Agarwal 36; Kakar 42), so much so that such stereotyping progressively devalues the Other community to the point of dehumanization (Kakar 43), making the task of creating a democratic, dialogic discourse very difficult, especially when there are forces that have vested interests in perpetuating and reinforcing fears and anxieties (Agarwal 37). Similarly, both the Padmini legend as well as the legend of the Qutub Shahi women's mass suicide gesture towards patriarchal anxieties about female sexuality and its symbolical value for community honour and provide an approved patriarchal template of personal conduct that women are meant to internalize and adhere to in times of political crisis and threats to communal honour.

becomes pregnant. She is a married Muslim woman carrying a Muslim child, so there is no communal or official anxiety over the taboo of violated virginity or “mixed” reproductivity as there was during Partition. Furthermore, Henna’s rape takes place during communal riots about four decades after Partition. But Layla’s mother-in-law Zeba compares the danger that Layla herself is in during this riot with the danger Layla’s mother faced as a child, when she witnessed the decisive attack on her family’s feudal estate in Miryalguda by workers and/or invaders in the 1940s. Zeba tells Layla how her mother was much younger than she when “this happened to her” (285). In Zeba’s mind, the current threat of violence against Muslims by Hindus in the late 1980s is directly comparable to the violence in Hyderabad State in the 1940s, committed by communist peasants, political workers as well as some likeminded landlords during the Telangana uprising (1946-51), as well as Indian state forces during their invasion of Hyderabad in 1948. She connects the rapes, looting, and murders that were perpetrated by various groups against each other in the 1940s to the threat of rape, looting, and murder that looms over them now. Elsewhere in the novel, she refers to the events of the 1940s in Hyderabad specifically as “Partition” (125-6).

Scholars such as Butalia (*Other 4*), Amrit Srinivasan (310-1), and Hasan (*Legacy* 307-8) have noted that post-Partition events, such as the 1984 anti-Sikh communal “riots” after Indira Gandhi’s assassination, and the demolition of the Babri Masjid and the subsequent communal “riots,” have been connected in traumatized survivors’ memories to Partition. Older Sikhs told Butalia as she assisted in citizens’ relief efforts in 1984 that the recent murderous attacks were “like Partition again” (*Other 4*). This connection to Partition in collective memory is not only borne out by survivor testimonies, but also in

the ideological propaganda distributed by aggressors. In his discussion of how violence against Muslims is justified by Hindu communalists as a pre-emptive measure to curtail what is imagined to be imminent Muslim aggression, Gyanendra Pandey has reproduced a leaflet meant to mobilize Hindus against Muslims in Bhagalpur in late 1989 and early 1990. This document refers repeatedly to issues connected with Partition, such as the dispute over Kashmir as well as the creation of Pakistan, which is where, it is suggested, all Indian Muslims should go, leaving India for Hindus¹⁴⁸ (“In Defence” 566-7).

Srinivasan also reports rumours amongst Hindus after Indira Gandhi’s assassination when Sikhs were, ironically, suspected and accused of crimes that were actually being committed against them. These rumours neatly evoked formulaic images of Partition crimes, for they alleged that trainloads of dead Hindus were coming in from Punjab, and that Sikhs had poisoned the water in Delhi (314-5).

Purshottam Agarwal argues that the perspective of “nations-at-war” that communalism maintains usurps collective memory and creates a historical narrative that justifies its present political practice¹⁴⁹ (32). This is certainly the case with Partition memory, which is selectively appropriated and deployed by right-wing forces in their own interests. Thus, the testimonies of the Sikh survivors of 1984 as well as communalist propaganda against Sikhs in 1984 and Muslims in 1989 show that current communal riots draw upon the events of Partition for their program. Partition is, therefore, very much

¹⁴⁸ This is a common refrain in Hindutva propaganda. After the 1989 riots, Kakar interviewed a Muslim woman called Ghousia in Hyderabad city, who told him that “‘they’ are saying all over the country, ‘Go to Pakistan. That is yours. This is for Hindus’” (127). He also adds, “‘Babar ki santan, jao Pakistan’ [offspring of Babar, go to Pakistan] ... is today one of the most popular slogans of Hindu mobs during a riot or in the preceding period of rising tension between the two communities” (127).

¹⁴⁹ Agarwal’s context is the Hindu communalist reiterations of the legend of Padmini’s *jauhar*.

alive in collective memory, and some recent events may be read and understood in its context.

It is in this framework that Henna's gangrape and murder – a crime committed during a “riot” that Zeba compares to Partition – must be analyzed. Gayatri Spivak's and Rajeswari Sunder Rajan's theoretical formulations about *sati* are particularly relevant in this regard. Spivak treats nineteenth century *sati* and contemporary dowry deaths by burning as “displacements on a chain of semiosis with the female subject as signifier” (“Can” 313). Following her cue, Rajan treats nineteenth-century *sati*, contemporary dowry related deaths, as well as contemporary *sati* as different but related phenomena (*Real* 33). I propose to treat the gangrape and murder of Henna in a similar fashion, and my argument proceeds from the premise that the rape, mutilation, impregnation, and murders of women during Partition, and the gangrape, mutilation, and murder of a heavily pregnant Henna are two different points on the same semiotic chain, with the maternal female body as signifier. The argument that rape is a political statement is indispensable to this analysis.

Alongside other scholars (Bidwai et al 7; Kakar 13), Agarwal points out that communalism is essentially a political project, a battle between two nationalisms – authoritarian and democratic (32). Needless to say, communalist identification is accompanied by the firm conviction that the interests of one nation “not only diverge from but are in actual conflict with the interests of other[s]” (Kakar 13). Communalism is motivated more by politics than by religious or socio-economic strife and, for the participants, “every riot is actually a battle in the unfinished war not between two religious communities, but between two racially defined nations” (Agarwal 32).

Furthermore, this “nations-at-war” theorization constructs parallel notions of morality so that the morality of war is different from the morality of normal times (32).

Agarwal attributes the transformation of the religiously constructed identity of Hindus – i.e. Hinduism – into Hindutva, a politically constructed, racially and territorially defined, and historically shared identity, to the discourse of V.D. Savarkar (1883-1966), the oft-quoted, chief ideologue of the contemporary Hindutva right (40-1). It is this stripping of morally, religiously conceived consciousness from the traditional Hindu identity by forcing the abdication of God or a divine head, and the subsequent coronation of the nation as the absolute divine, that serves to eliminate any qualms about rape as a political weapon against “an internal enemy who can be blamed for the humiliations and defeats of the nation”¹⁵⁰ (43). In fact, communal discourse is marked by an “obsession with the semiotics of sexuality” (44), so that the logic behind patriarchal world-views that locate women like Layla and Henna as defining symbols of family and communal honour leads to the metamorphosis of women into metaphors of both sacredness and humiliation in struggles between communities.¹⁵¹ The virility of the community (“read men”) thus hinges upon defending one’s honour by protecting one’s “own” women and humiliating the Other by abusing “his” women (38). Harbans Mukhia notes that this masculinity of violence in communalism is, therefore, “doubly emphasized: the male image of the Muslim perpetrator of dishonour as well as of the Hindu avenger” (26). In other words, the historical and legendary rape of Hindu women by Muslim men as well as the

¹⁵⁰ This conception of nation is singularly rooted in territorial origins and loyalties (Kakar 39). The nation is perceived to be always under threat by Muslims, who are aliens living within the territory of the nation (40).

¹⁵¹ This governing anxiety about female sexuality and communal honour is visible in the fact that many riots are ignited after reports are circulated of Muslim men laying sexual claim to Hindu women’s bodies. These reports may be real or fabricated with the purpose of triggering a premeditated pogrom. For the extensive preparations in this context, see Mukhia (31). For examples of instances of the alleged sexual harassment of women setting off a riot, see Ashish Banerjee’s “‘Comparative Curfew’: Changing Dimensions of Communal Politics in India” (1990) (53-4).

supposedly imminent rape of Hindu women by Muslim men in a foreseeable future must be avenged and prevented (respectively) by Hindu men raping Muslim women (Kannabiran 33; cf. Sarkar, “Semiotics” 2874).

So rape becomes a political weapon with which to attack and undermine the Other community (Agarwal 31; Mukhia 31). Furthermore, in an organized aggression (as all contemporary “riot” situations are in India), rape becomes a spectacular ritual of victory in which the solidarity of the perpetrators is publicly established through collective participation and witnessing,¹⁵² and the solidarity of the vanquished, enemy community is demolished through physical disempowerment and the ultimate defilement of its honour (Agarwal 31; Mukhia 31). Agarwal observes that this internal enemy community is “the Muslim community,” which is singularly defined (unlike many other racial or religious groups in India) in spite of great regional diversities and differences, so as to aid the construction of Muslims as *the* well-defined, principal enemy of the Hindu nation¹⁵³ (46).

For Savarkar, who elaborately constructs the sexual preoccupation angle of medieval Muslim conquests of India, there are two perverted virtues amongst Hindus in

¹⁵² Disagreeing with the Freudian and Jungian traditions that maintain that once personal identity dissolves in a crowd, a regressive, primitive state of mind (where the violent side of human nature resides) is unleashed, Kakar points out that these formulations are limited and speak to their own space and time and are, therefore, not applicable to Indian “riot” scenarios (46). Instead, he argues that identity in a crowd gets refocused, as each emotion and each sensory perception is amplified, “heightening a feeling of well-being into exaltation, fear into panic” (46). The loss of personal identity in the crowd makes individuals act according to the behaviour expected from an anti-Hindu or anti-Muslim mob. Thus, the individual is “not operating at some deeply regressed, primitive level of the psyche but according to the norms of the particular group. The violent acts are thus not random but represent the expression and adaptation to a novel situation of a historical tradition of anti-Hindu or anti-Muslim mob violence” (46). The fervor of religious processions is a particularly hospitable place for the stirring up of polarized feelings, which is why so many riots, like the one in *Madras on Rainy Days*, take place in the immediate temporal vicinity of religious festivals such as Ganesh and Muharram (46, 48).

¹⁵³ This construction of a national enemy stems from Savarkar’s body of so-called historical scholarship, which is rife with narrative elucidations of how Hindu women were repeatedly ravaged across history by Muslim conquerors (Agarwal 47) who thought of rape as an essential tactic in order to increase their numbers. Thus, besides being considered the medium through which communal honour is preserved or desecrated, women are the medium for communal reproduction and growth (49). For Savarkar, this is a consistent pattern, in spite of the fact that the sexual motif of conquest connecting land, religion, and women does not exist in representations of the medieval Muslim conquest of India and its governance in Persian court chronicles for nearly six centuries starting with the twelfth century CE, and appears to have been constructed later (Mukhia 29).

relation to Muslims that must be urgently discarded: religious tolerance and misplaced chivalry towards “enemy” womenfolk (Agarwal 48). He views the perceived “weakness” and passivity of Hindu men in acting virtuously towards Muslim women from an upper-caste Hindu self-perception that envisages Hindus as historically always tolerant and virtuous and (therefore) also always at the receiving end of unrelenting, unilateral Muslim aggression, which is innately present in all Muslim men (47). For Savarkar, this aggression is the reason why Hindu men need to become ferocious and violent. And it is because Savarkar carefully constructs this patchwork narrative of history about the atrocities of Muslim rulers and soldiers upon Hindu women dialectically, through reference to stereotypes and subconscious prejudices, that the past tense collapses into the present in the minds of a receptive audience and furnishes them with a present course of action (49). This conviction is adopted by present-day Hindutva commentators on Savarkar, in whose communal fascist outlook it is typical to propose the humiliation of Other women as retribution or as a pre-emptive measure to prevent the violation of “our” women (43). Hindu nationalist discourse, therefore, contextualizes rape “consciously ... [and] exclusively in the problematic of the contest between two communities or nations, thus transforming it into a morally defensible act, in fact into a much needed political strategy” (39). Hence, rape is not a crime and is, in fact, a valid weapon in battles against Muslims. It is Savarkar’s take on rape as a necessary political act in the service of the Hindu nation that explains why even women, such as Krishna Sharma of the Women’s Wing of the VHP, see rape as retribution justified, when she says, “Hindus must make sure that they are feared by others. We have to prove our mettle. If they rape 10-15 of our women, we must rape a few to show them that we are no less” (Anitha et al 332). It is

also this conviction about rape as a political weapon that is revealed when we look at the most recent pogrom in Gujarat in 2002, where the accounts of hundreds of rapes and murders are “chilling reminders of how young men can be trained in violence against women, as part of a political culture that uses the mask of religion for secular activities” (Shiva 52).

It is in this context of rape as a permissible, even encouraged, political act during Partition and in present-day communal violence that Henna’s gangrape can be read. Agarwal’s observation that not only is rape important as a retributive or pre-emptive measure, but it is also a “nationalistically moral method to achieve ethnic cleansing” (43), is also relevant here. Impregnating a woman from the enemy community through rape ensures that the community’s lineage is genetically “contaminated” or “diluted.” Tanika Sarkar has also observed in the context of the horrifying acts of torture that rape and gangrape consisted of during the Gujarat “riots” of 2002 that beatings, and mutilations of the vagina and the womb indicated the literal and symbolical destruction of reproduction amongst Muslims (“Semiotics” 2876). This pattern is also seen in the extraction of unborn foetuses from women’s pregnant bellies with swords and the killing of children during the Gujarat riots (2875-6). The drive to commit such horrendous acts comes from deeply engrained Hindutva narratives that breed fear about the supposedly superhuman virility of Muslim men and the incredible fertility of Muslim women that will result in Muslims taking over India and driving out or annihilating Hindus. Indeed, sexual torture also becomes a way of punishing Muslim women for their fertility and consequent ability to ensure the community’s future (2875-6). Kakar, who uses the Hindu-Muslim communal riots that happened in Hyderabad in 1990 as a case study to develop a

psychoanalytical explanation of communal conflict, points out that the castration of males and the chopping off of female breasts during Partition “incorporate[s] the more or less conscious wish to wipe the hated enemy off the face of the earth by eliminating the means of its reproduction and the nurturing of its infants” (30). He points out that in addition to this conscious wish, there is also a more subconscious perception occasioned by the fear of violence to one’s own self, that “the castration of the enemy may be viewed as a counterphobic acting out of what psychoanalysis considers as one of the chief male anxieties: that is, a doing unto others – castration – what one fears may be done to one’s self” (30). Rape, then, becomes an elaborately conceived gendered form of genocide or ethnic cleansing.¹⁵⁴

This historical pattern of rape as ethnic cleansing is seen in the language of the violence inflicted upon Henna, i.e. its *modus operandi*, which parallels the violence suffered by women during Partition as well as present-day communal violence. Rape or gang-rape is not the only common factor, but the mutilation of Henna’s body, the marking of her Othered (female and/or Muslim) body by men, the violent extraction of her whole, unborn female child, and the comments and actions that focus on her lactating breasts as an indication of her sexuality, reproductivity, and maternity, are remarkably similar to the specific formulae adopted by sexual perpetrators during Partition as well as

¹⁵⁴ The comparison of communal violence in South Asia (especially with reference to its viciousness in Gujarat in 2002) to genocide has been persuasively made by the Coalition Against Genocide (CAG). The CAG is located in the US and Canada and consists of thirty-eight Muslim, Christian, secular left-wing organizations (such as the Forum of Indian Leftists (FOIL) and Amnesty International), and ten supporting organizations (such as Saheli for Asian Families, Sakhi for South Asian Women, etc) (Ghosh 221). It has charged the Modi government with “actively and covertly encourag[ing] violence against women during the Gujarat pogroms when sexual mutilation and rapes of women and children” were used as ethnic cleansing devices (qtd in Ghosh 221). The CAG has called for Modi to be prosecuted for crimes against humanity and has expressly and pointedly called the Gujarat massacre a genocide of Muslims (Coalition, “Media”). The International Initiative for Justice has also compared the Gujarat violence against Other women, “symbols of the community’s honor ... the ones who sustain the community and reproduce the next generation,” to genocide, and drawn parallels between the way women were treated during conflicts in Gujarat and Rwanda, Bosnia, and Algeria (Panel, “International”).

today to isolate, identify, and mark women within their specific social value as biologically, sexually, and reproductively female, as distinguished from men in all three categories.¹⁵⁵ Furthermore, the function of nurturing and sustenance provided by lactating female breasts to children, the future of a community, is arrested by the violence done to the breasts. In Henna's case, by drinking her milk, her rapists blaspheme against her motherhood and, consequently, mock and humiliate her community, usurping her breasts and depriving the future community of sustenance.

So, this attack on the future of a community (its ability to reproduce itself) by raping its potential mothers is certainly a feature of both Partition and also contemporary communal violence.¹⁵⁶ Layla's father-in-law Ibrahim's concern over Layla and Sameer's proposed trip to Madras is an articulation of the anxiety born out of or contained in this formula of violence: "'A young couple,' he paused, his eyes drifting away, his fingers tapping the table, 'a young couple is always a good target for these gangs. They symbolize hope to a community; killing them is like putting out a candle flame'" (259). Youth, which carries the possibility of reproduction of communities, is threatened in the increasingly genocidal motivations of communal violence. While Layla and Sameer are spared, Henna is at the receiving end of this violence. She becomes a synecdoche for the Muslim community, for "[t]he enactment of violence targets the whole through the part; a

¹⁵⁵ The communal affiliations of Henna's attackers are not made clear in the novel and this does not matter. What matters is Henna's experience as a woman, and how her family and community respond to it. The reality and history of violence against Muslims in India, and the prejudice that is arguably born or reinforced by this and by the immediate context of an imminent communal riot in the novel, are such that her family and community automatically consider her attack as being motivated by her Muslim identity. If we consider Henna's fate from simply the perspective of a woman and not specifically a Muslim woman, as Layla does (291), it acquires significance in a larger subcontinental context of women affected by male sexual violence during communal riots, both during and since Partition.

¹⁵⁶ The fact that demands were made by several members of India's Constituent Assembly that more Hindu and Sikh women within reproductive age (and not just old women and little children) should be recovered from Pakistan by the Central Recovery Operation (Das, *Critical* 68-9) only reinforces the point that rape and impregnation were interpreted as attacks not only on national and communal honour but also on the ability of the nation and the (Hindu/Sikh) community to reproduce itself.

few or more victims became substitutes for the community” (Mayaram 149). Layla vividly recalls Ibrahim’s metaphor of an extinguished candle after Henna’s death and remarks, “The light of a community had been blown out” (296). Thus, the rape of a woman is interpreted as a decisive attack upon the identity of a social group, which consequently falls into crisis.

Hence, Ali locates Henna’s death within the larger ideological context of communal genocide through the specific targeting of youth, women, and children. Henna and her child die after being raped, thereby reducing the Muslim community in number, while during Partition, the community was “weakened” genetically by (generally) non-Muslims usurping Muslim wombs and appropriating paternity. In addition to this, her mutilation and death as well as the death of her unborn child function as a spectacular warning to the Hyderabadi Muslim community in the novel, whose profound demoralization figures prominently as one of the closing images of the novel.

Furthermore, the concrete immediacy of her rape in the narrative means that Henna’s end is seen by her family exactly as it is: rape and murder.¹⁵⁷ Her pain and terror are felt by her parents, who go into severe shock, and the entire family experiences a deep

¹⁵⁷ It is through rendering rape representable that *Madras on Rainy Days* makes it real. By literalizing the representation of rape through the perspective of Layla’s husband Sameer, who witnessed the incident, Ali resists mystifying rape, making it (therefore) urgent to address (Rajan, *Real* 77). So, in spite of his initial confusion, Sameer remembers fragments of concrete and horrific details about the incident and tells Layla about them. *Madras on Rainy Days* does not relegate rape to the realm of mystifying, fetishized unrepresentability, thereby making it possible for intervention to happen at both practical and theoretical levels. Rajan points out that the absolute distinction between real rape and the representation of rape by scholars such as Terry Eagleton in the case of Western master texts such as Samuel Richardson’s *Clarissa* (1748) or popular genres such as romance “breaks down in a historical situation where the literary text and feminist politics are engaged upon the same terrain and engage with each other through the dialectics of ‘representation’ and the ‘real’” (78). While there is a valid point in post-structuralism that any representation is mediated and, so, should not be equated with natural reality, the suggestion that it is impossible to represent rape would also render impossible any move to morally and politically oppose rape (10-11). Thus, the reality of rape through representation in *Madras on Rainy Days* makes intervention possible; the text critically disrupts the official, hegemonic narratives of Partition that have attempted to silence the protest of Hyderabadi Muslims against the treatment meted out to them (which has prominently involved rape and murder) during and since Partition by the Indian government as well as adherents of Hindutva.

sense of loss.¹⁵⁸ Significantly, contrary to everything we have seen so far in the novel, there is no sense of violated honour that her family and kin believe must be avenged. The details Sameer eventually provides about the rape serve to demystify Henna's experience and enable the recognition of her pain. Not only does this pain constitute Henna's experience, but it also defines the horror that Sameer feels as he gradually begins to comprehend what he has witnessed and the trauma that afflicts Layla as she realizes what Henna's last moments were like. The acknowledgement in discourse of the "subject of/in pain" (*Real* 34), writes Rajan in the context of *sati*, is what makes intervention possible. Thus, the acknowledgement of pain in the discourse on rape demystifies rape by bringing home its reality and physicality. As a result, the representation of Henna's pain makes it possible for other characters as well as readers to experience moral and political rage. Her pain becomes an indicator not only of her victimhood but also becomes, paradoxically and significantly, a "specific, gendered ground for subjectivity" (35), indicative of the agency located in her body (34). Hence, it is possible to generate an interventionist feminist politics from a conception of female subjectivity "generalized from the inherence of pain in the female body"¹⁵⁹ (34).

After Henna's horrifically graphic death, besides Sameer and Layla, Henna's family and community are also traumatized. They appear to be suffering from the kind of

¹⁵⁸ Because she dies during Muharram, a holy month in the Islamic calendar during which Shias mourn the martyrdom of the Imams, mourning for Henna becomes intertwined with old Shia traditions of ritual mourning. This is also another indicator that Henna's loss is understood by Layla not only in personal terms, but also in terms of the loss it signifies for the community. Layla says that the mourners at Henna's funeral were "grateful . . . that the entire Old City was in black. As we were in black" (308). She also imagines that "[i]t was as though the whole of India was mourning these deaths" (308). Anees Jung points out how the tradition of *Azadari*, mourning for the imams, supplies Shia Muslim women in Hyderabad city who have lost loved ones in communal riots with a grief that has focus and provides relief (59).

¹⁵⁹ The danger of identifying in such pain a necessary condition for the attainment and/or expression of female subjective agency is deflected by the isolation of context, so that we look at each instance of women in pain separately and on a case-by-case basis (Rajan, *Real* 35).

trauma Kai Erikson describes as issuing not only from a discrete event, but also from a “*constellation of life experiences*,” sustained consistently over a period of time (185). Others have also formulated trauma as an insidious, long-term phenomenon that afflicts certain groups who suffer marginalization in history and society on account of their religion, ethnicity, gender, race, sexuality, and class (Root 240; Burstow 1308; Brown 107). Erikson argues that traumatized communities are not aggregates of traumatized people. Instead, traumatic wounds inflicted on individuals in a group can “combine to create a mood, an ethos – a group culture, almost – that is different from (and more than) the sum of the private wounds that make it up. Trauma ... has a social dimension” (185). This collective trauma “damages the texture of community” (187), the “tissues of community” (185), making it weaker with each blow it receives. This social dimension of trauma is represented in Ali’s novel in the utter dejection and powerlessness Muslims feel, as the memory of repeated onslaughts on their political, social, and economic existence during and since Partition grows stronger and stronger with each successive blow to the community. Although poorer Muslims are more vulnerable to these offensives launched by sections of mainstream Indian society and polity, members of the middle-class are also very much at the receiving end of such crushing discrimination.¹⁶⁰

As a consequence, for Layla and her family, Henna’s unpunished rape and death¹⁶¹ emphasizes the state’s failure to recognize or protect Muslims as full citizens; it also depicts the sense of oppression Indian Muslims feel at the hands of hateful

¹⁶⁰ For example, besides Henna’s rape and death, Ali’s novel also represents other forms of discrimination that the middle-class characters face in terms of property rights and professional careers. Sameer is obsessed with the idea of immigrating to the US, for he believes that the prejudice he faces in India in the engineering job market will not exist in the US. As an informed piece of writing by a diasporic writer located in the US, the text renders Sameer’s naïve convictions problematic; however, it also represents with great persuasive power that Sameer’s reasons for his lack of faith in Indian democracy as a Muslim are justified.

¹⁶¹ The culprits, who have influential political connections, get away scot-free.

communalist ideologies. This sense of being let down by the Indian state in the text is amplified by its context and inspiration: as Ali has said in an interview (“Every”), the fictional rape of Henna is based on the rape of a Muslim woman during the communal violence triggered off in Hyderabad in 1990 by the ongoing, unabashedly anti-Muslim *rath yatra* undertaken by BJP President Advani from Somnath to Ayodhya (Kakar 51). As I have mentioned earlier in this chapter, three hundred people died and thousands were wounded in Hyderabad during these “riots” (51). The aim of this campaign across North India was to garner widespread support for the demolition of the Babri Masjid in order to build a temple dedicated to Ram at the same site. That Hindu nationalist organizations were eventually successful in demolishing the mosque in 1992 and the Indian state was powerless to stop them or bring the chief actors such as Advani to book explains why Muslims are and do feel persecuted in India.

This awareness of a trauma that extends beyond the self and is shared by and affects many is most vividly represented in Layla’s meditations about the layout of the family cemetery and the way it memorializes her family’s history, starting from her grandfather, shifting to her brother who died in infancy, and ending with Henna and her unborn child. She notes, “Next to my aunt’s feet lay Nana’s grave, and I stared at it, silently informing him that this was what was left of his hopes for the future” (311). Layla also meditates upon the fact that for the family, she is now “the sole heir of their collective sorrow” as well as their only hope (311). Thus, Layla recognizes that the family, which shares the trauma of Henna’s death as well as other injustices that it has experienced over the years since Partition, sees her as a repository of hope, as the only person left who can carry the bloodline forward and represent them. This

acknowledgement is another indicator that Layla not only sees her own experiences as synecdoche for the experiences of Muslims, but also realizes that she is the “holder of the family’s postmemory” (Hirsch, *Family* 30) of Partition.

Hirsch defines postmemory particularly in terms of the children of Holocaust survivors, who live in the perennial shadows of their parents’ narrations of their traumatic experiences (127). Although postmemory differs from memory because of its generational distance from the traumatic event (22), it is extremely powerful because “its connection to its object or source is mediated not through recollection but through an imaginative investment and creation” (22), through “representation, projection, and creation”¹⁶² (“Surviving” 9). Postmemory is indirect, displaced, vicarious, and delayed¹⁶³ (*Family* 13; “Surviving” 9), mediated by the survivors’ narrations but determinative for their children and other people of the next generation, who grow up “dominated by narratives that preceded their birth, whose own belated stories are evacuated by the stories of the previous generation shaped by traumatic events that can be neither understood nor recreated” (*Family* 22). These images and narrations that transmit trauma are “so powerful, so monumental, as to constitute memories in their own right” (“Surviving” 9). This is why Layla’s problems and concerns, which are otherwise obsessively pursued in the text, become relegated to the fringes of the narrative whenever Zeba or Taqi Mamu eloquently voice their traumatic experiences during Partition.

¹⁶² Hirsch clarifies that it is not that memory of the Holocaust generation itself is unmediated, but that it is “more directly connected to the past” (*Family* 22) than the postmemory of the next generation.

¹⁶³ Hirsch writes that the notion of postmemory derives from the fact that traumatic memory is itself delayed in its recognition of trauma as having occurred, a point made by Cathy Caruth (10). Thus, perhaps it is only through the transmission of trauma across generations as postmemory that trauma can be witnessed and worked through (Hirsch, “Surviving” 12).

The work of postmemory is a “particular mixture of mourning and re-creation” (251). Like the ambivalence of Art Spiegelman in his graphic novel *Maus* towards his father’s memories of the Holocaust, as understood by Hirsch (13), Layla too is both interested and affected by the injustices narrated by her family as well as inevitably distanced from them and unable to understand them. Like the children of Holocaust survivors, her postmemory of Partition is also conditioned by exile from “the space of identity” (243), “a world that has ceased to exist, that has been violently erased” (243), where there now stands a dam, and which, for her parents’ generation and Taqi Mamu in particular, is no longer there. In this way, Layla is twice-exiled: not only does she live in exile in the US, away from Hyderabad, but she also cannot return to the Miryalguda of her mother’s time, simply because it physically does not exist anymore. And even if she were to return to Hyderabad permanently, Layla would still psychologically remain in exile, interminably affected by her family’s persistent memories of displacement and trauma. In Hirsch’s words, “[t]he children of exiled survivors, although they have not themselves lived through the trauma of banishment and forcible separation from home and the destruction of that home, remain marked by their parents’ experiences: always marginal or exiled, always in the diaspora” (243). Like Hirsch, who has not visited her parents’ Czernowitz, Layla too never goes to Miryalguda (268).

Furthermore, *Madras on Rainy Days* also “represents the aesthetic of the trauma fragment, the aesthetic of the testimonial chain” (Hirsch, *Family* 39-40), which is found in the intermittent and occasionally vague testimonies about Partition reproduced by Layla. The “unassimilable loss” (40) incurred by people during Partition is appropriate in its incongruity to the “aesthetic of postmemory” (40), which involves both

“incomprehensibility and presence, a past that will neither fade away nor be integrated into the present” (40), a “practice of mourning [that] is as determinative as it is interminable and ultimately impossible” (245). Thus, Layla’s representation of Partition belies who she is, a young woman born in post-Partition Hyderabad who cannot fully understand what Partition was about nor escape the obsessive memories her uncle and her mother-in-law have about that event. In addition to this, her Partition-related postmemorial trauma is sharply qualified and reinforced by the fresh, fatal outbreak of communal violence in which Henna dies. Since this violence now affects her so intimately (on account of her closeness to Henna), Layla’s mind is imprinted not only with her postmemories of Partition, but also her memories of present-day communal violence. Both memory of contemporary violence and postmemory of past violence buttress each other, only aggravating Layla’s trauma.

Moreover, not only is Henna’s gangrape a terrible manifestation of this continuation of Partition trauma into the 1980s (which was, as mentioned before, a terribly bloody decade in India’s history), but Partition trauma is also represented in material loss associated with Partition. Taqi Mamu is embroiled in a legal battle against the government over reasonable compensation for his ancestral estate in Miryalguda. Seized from Taqi Mamu’s father during the upheavals of Partition and passed through various hands, the estate is finally taken over by the government. This echoes the general trend in property loss during Partition in other parts of the subcontinent as well; people were forced to migrate under pain of death amidst communal violence, and many left behind everything they owned. Some middle-class people in other parts of India such as Delhi were able to exchange their standing property with departing people in their new

country and were, therefore, compensated relatively easily; the state too lent a hand and often helped these refugees to get compensation for their loss.

However, Taqi Mamu's situation is different. What is politically significant here is that the logic of the persistent claims of the Congress government in the late 1940s that Hyderabad was a part of India, and the subsequent forced integration of Hyderabad into India, renders Taqi Mamu an Indian citizen displaced within India. By this logic, the Indian state should have helped Taqi Mamu because he is, after all, an Indian. But internally displaced Muslims like Taqi Mamu were not considered refugees by the Indian state. According to the Indian Government's Rehabilitation Finance Administration Act (1948) and the Displaced Persons (Claims) Act (1950), a "displaced person" is "a person who, being displaced from any area (now forming part of Pakistan) on account of civil disturbances or fear of such disturbances, has settled and is engaged or intends to engage in any business or industry in India" (qtd in Ananthachari 100). So, these Acts do not include any provisions for internally displaced persons like Taqi Mamu to demand compensation from the state.¹⁶⁴ Indeed, reports exist of displaced and looted Hyderabad Muslims being denied compensation and threatened with libel by Indian policemen after the Indian forces took over Hyderabad in September 1948 (Sundarlal and Ghaffar 106).

Taqi Mamu's inability to extract compensation from a state which has not only refused

¹⁶⁴ None of the South Asian national states are signatories to the UN's 1951 International Convention for the Protection of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol. Refugees are treated as per the laws pertaining to foreigners in India under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution, and *ad hoc* measures are taken for specific cases (Kaarthikeyan 118; Rizvi 208; Nair 92-3), although courts do intervene to protect the interests of the refugees (Kaarthikeyan 118; Nair 93-4). Several commentators have pointed out that the situation of internally displaced persons is far worse than that of refugees since they cannot receive international aid and may not even qualify for any assistance from national governments (Chari 23; Bose 53). Tapan K. Bose and Rita Manchanda write that the fact that India has not acceded to the UN Convention or Protocol means that even though the UNHCR has extended its mandate to cover internally displaced persons, there is no legal framework in place in India for their protection (13). Amongst national organizations that have made efforts towards the rehabilitation of refugees and internally displaced persons is the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) (Kaarthikeyan 122). For the legal dimensions of not having a national law for refugees and an outline of possible options for India (acceding to the UN conventions, and/or developing a national law for refugees), see Sumbul Rizvi's "Managing Refugees: The Role of UNHCR in South Asia" (2003) (208-10) and D.R. Kaarthikeyan's "Resolving the Refugee Problem: A Role for Human Rights Organizations" (2003) (118-21).

thus far to accommodate him, but has also usurped his estate, represents the callousness and communalism of post-Partition administrations towards internally displaced Muslims, who were discriminated against with regard to protection and rehabilitation (Kidwai 42, 65, 110, 197; Pandey, *Remembering* 139). In fact, in many cases, local administrations actively colluded in aiding refugees to occupy property that belonged to internally displaced communities and persons (Kidwai 250, 181-90).

In connection with internally displaced persons, Tapan K. Bose and Rita Manchanda have tellingly pointed out that “[t]he dilemma is how to ensure humanitarian aid and respect for human rights of the displaced in a hostile domestic environment where the state is an active perpetrator of violence” (13). Ranabir Samaddar argues that this violence is seen in the nationalizing impulse of South Asian states, which pushes for the creation of majorities and minorities, in which the categories of minorities and migrants are conflated and subjected to terrible and recurring violence (“Understanding” 78). In fact, Bose writes that communal violence is a “refugee generating factor” (60) and cites as examples the exodus of Bengali Muslims from Bombay, Surat, and Ahmedabad after riots in the early 1990s, Sikhs from different parts of India in the wake of the 1984 massacres, and Kashmiri Pandits as a result of the perpetual war footing maintained in Kashmir (60). Another large group of displaced persons are the survivors of the communal violence that took place in Gujarat in 2002 (Verma 15). And as I have already explained in the second chapter, Hindus were displaced in and from Hyderabad during the last, tumultuous years of the Nizamate, and Muslims were displaced as a result of reprisals by the Indian forces. Bose also argues that besides communalism, it is the other by-products of nation building and consolidation, such as unprincipled development

policies and unnecessary hype over national security that create situations where people become refugees, migrants, or internally displaced persons¹⁶⁵ (57-62). Taqi Mamu is at the receiving end of this discrimination as legislation and communalism converge to foil his chances of extracting a legitimate compensation.¹⁶⁶

This treatment at the hands of the Indian state is the reason Taqi Mamu always bitterly resents his father's refusal to migrate to Pakistan during Partition. Disgusted, he says, "Even after they've stolen his home he says this is his home" (298). This statement indicates that as a Muslim, Taqi Mamu feels that he would have more rights and justice as a citizen in Pakistan; his predicament validates Partition by suggesting that India does indeed treat its Muslims as second-class citizens and that, therefore, Muslims should have a separate homeland. In spite of living in a house that belonged to his father and that he has rightfully inherited as his home, Taqi Mamu exemplifies the sense of rootlessness that many Partition survivors experience, so that "[n]either at home in the space of relocation nor in the defamiliarized homeland ... [they] felt displaced whether they migrated or not" (Gera Roy and Bhatia xviii). In fact, for Taqi Mamu, the dam the government has built on his land *is* Partition (148-9). His statement – "*Ar're*, that's not a

¹⁶⁵ For a rejection of the grossly exaggerated and problematic thesis of the threat posed by refugees to national (political and social) security of the host nation, see Suba Chandran's "Refugees in South Asia: Security Threat or a Security Tool?" (2003)

¹⁶⁶ However, while the discrimination Taqi Mamu faces as an internally displaced Hyderabad/Indian Muslim at the hands of the Indian government must be registered, any reading of his justified anger must also be tinged with the acknowledgement of his considerable class privilege. Taqi Mamu is a member of the old Hyderabad aristocracy, and he and his siblings live in their house in Hyderabad city after they escape from Miryalguda. His lot is, thus, far better than the two hundred thousand *adivasis*, Dalits, women, and the landless, small, and marginal farmers in Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Madhya Pradesh, who are threatened with forced displacement and loss of livelihood, sustaining social networks, and shared community resources if the Sardar Sarovar Dam project on the Narmada river, designed in the "national interest," goes through (Basu, "Development" 225-6, 229). In fact, government estimates show that the *adivasis*, who constitute a little over 7.8 per cent of India's population, account for more than forty percent of those displaced during the construction of dams (225). Furthermore, in light of the fact that his estate was originally seized by workers fighting against landlord oppression and brutality in Telangana, Taqi Mamu's sense of injury must also be considerably mitigated in any radical reading of Ali's novel. The compensation issue is also sharply qualified when we realize that only landowners receive compensation for land taken away by the government for development projects. What, then, happened to the workers on Taqi Mamu's estate?

dam. It's Partition. That is what Partition looks like" (149) – suggests that the edifice of modern Hyderabad city with all its advanced technological paraphernalia is built upon the open wounds and unsolved problems of Partition. He is hurt and disappointed to find that his Muslim identity hinders the process of extracting a reasonable compensation from the government, thereby reinforcing the prolonged, modern history of communal discrimination on the part of the state.

Henna's violent death turns out to be the last straw for Taqi Mamu, and in spite of fighting ceaselessly for years, he makes an abrupt decision to accept whatever compensation, no matter how inadequate, the government wants to give him. The attack on his, his family's, and the community's identity finally breaks his strength, ridding him of his righteous anger and allowing a submissive impotence to set in.¹⁶⁷ And so, he "bowed his head and announced, 'I've taken the money. Just now, I phoned. I told them, two *lakh*, three *lakh*, whatever they want to give me for my land, I'll take it. No more fighting,' he mumbled, backing out of the room" (298). In what is clearly a very sad state of affairs, Taqi Mamu succumbs to his disadvantaged place in the scheme of things, and his final decision to accept whatever compensation he is offered without a fight suggests that those wounds and problems of Partition will remain unsolved. It is made vividly clear to him both by the compensation dispute and Henna's violent death that he belongs to a minority that "might be allowed to be part of the nation, but 'never quite'" (Pandey, "Citizenship" 101). In this understanding, Muslims stand in direct opposition to the

¹⁶⁷ The representation of Muslim men in the novel generally runs counter to the communalist stereotype of Muslim men as aggressive, tyrannical, insatiably lustful, and sexually violent towards non-Muslim women (Agarwal 37-8, 47, 49; Basu et al 29). This is despite the fact that there is plenty of violence towards "their own" women, such as the beatings Layla is subjected to by her father. However, not only is there no attempt to avenge Henna's death with counter attacks against Hindu women as communalist stereotypes would predict, but, in fact, when it comes down to it, none of the men are able to help "their" woman – Henna – against the aggression of the Other. Both Sameer and Henna's husband Hanif witness her gangrape and murder, and both flee the scene and fail to fetch her help. Abu Uncle is helpless in his grief to seek any recourse to justice, and Taqi Mamu gives up entirely.

“invisible” Hindus, whose belonging is taken for granted and needs no emphasis, since they are “the nation’s natural condition, its essence and spirit. Their culture is the nation’s culture, their history its history. This needs no stating”¹⁶⁸ (120). In other words, unlike Muslims, Hindus are automatically Indian and, consequently, automatically entitled to the nation-state’s compensation and justice, the normal privileges of citizenship in a democratic polity.

Taqi Mamu’s utter dejection is seen when he hands over to someone else the wooden litter carrying the bodies of Henna and her child. He steps aside, falls to the ground, crawls to the edge of the road, and sits there staring and mumbling (308). In this way, what happens to Henna not only connects the present to the past, but also seems to finalize the family’s future through the way the present unfolds. After witnessing Taqi Mamu’s capitulation, and reflecting upon the layout of the family graveyard, Layla registers the ineluctable connection of their present to their past. She traces the tragic trajectory traversed by her family since Partition in Taqi Mamu’s passionate struggles and ultimate resignation in the dreadful finality of Henna’s violent death. Finally, even though *Madras on Rainy Days* does not confront questions of how life unfolds after rape¹⁶⁹ and what strategies women, their families, and communities use to cope, such an

¹⁶⁸ Similarly, with regard to minority (read Muslim) women, Kannabiran writes, “Women of minority communities are located outside the Indian State, as it were. Constructing their ‘otherness’ then is the beginning and end of constructing the ‘otherness’ of their community vis-à-vis the ‘Indian community’” (33).

¹⁶⁹ Novels like *Madras on Rainy Days* that weave the turbulence of sustained gendered aggression across the plot cannot avoid a “certain tension, not unlike sexual titillation, and on the other a certain relaxation of tension, resembling post-coital boredom, around that point” (Rajan, *Real* 74). In fact, the novel is set up in such a way that Henna’s rape becomes inevitable. But Rajan recommends the location of rape at the beginning of a narrative, because this pre-empts the reader’s expectation of it later in the plot and also diminishes it, stripping it of fetishism and mystique, according to “a more purely functional purpose in the narrative economy” (73). This also ensures that “narrative interest becomes displaced upon what follows” (73). So, what becomes most important is that the raped woman is represented as one who becomes a subject “*through* rape rather than merely one subjected to its violation” (77), thereby not becoming completely relegated to the dark as a “victim,” but exercising agency. This is not what happens in *Madras on Rainy Days*, where the relentless, prolonged, and sustained focus on the bodies of Layla and Henna, the tyrannical domestication of their sexuality through parental control and marriage, the violent threats they face – rape at the hands

end does echo the experience of women who were raped and killed during Partition riots as well as during communalist violence in Hyderabad in the late 1980s. It reminds us of the crushing and irreversible reality of loss incurred, of the impossibility of knowing such experiences via personal testimony, and of the fact that the historian's or the scholar's archive or research will always be incomplete (Didur, *Unsettling* 139). The finality of Henna's death and her consequent silence, therefore, caution us to inflect our projects to "recover" the silences of women with care.

And silence operates as the deciding factor not only in the way things shape up for Henna, or in the resolution of Taqi Mamu's concerns, but it also looms over the character of Layla's wet nurse and *ayah* Nafiza. While Henna's and Taqi Mamu's silences are imposed, Nafiza's silence is both imposed and voluntary. In view of the facts that the Telangana districts of Hyderabad witnessed an extensive class struggle against landlords and state apparatuses from 1946 to 1951, and that people's experience of Partition violence in other parts of India was also determined by their class affiliations, the characterization of Nafiza demands our attention. Shrouded as it is in silence, her

of others, or death at the hands of kin – and which centre on honour as vested in the female body, the social censure that Henna faces as she indulges in forbidden sex with her husband during the Shia holy month of Muharram, and even the outlawed, intimate, sensual moments that Layla and Henna share in hushed whispers under cover of darkness, all serve to pre-determine or even over-determine the imminence of tragic violence in their future. Such narratives seek "a further (post-coital) erotic goal ... offered in the 'trials' – the death or disappearance – of the raped woman" (74). Henna dies, and the narrative offers no possibility for a post-rape narrative for her, where the strategies for survival employed by raped women in the aftermath of communal violence may be traced. A more productive, radical representation where "the cost of rape for its victims [is seen] in terms more complex than the extinction of female selfhood in death or silence" (77) is absent. The raped woman has been completely silenced. What is even worse is that Layla's own future and freedom seem to be premised on Henna's rape and death; she escapes from her in-laws because Sameer gives her up in an act of contrition for having witnessed Henna's rape and death and not trying to prevent it. This is a profoundly disturbing exchange of one woman's freedom for another's silencing, death, and/or degradation, though it is not an uncommon one even in feminist novels. This feature of Ali's novel illustrates Spivak's theorization in "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism" (1985) that even interventionist feminist texts are not free from this bartering of one woman's life for another. However, there are more promising Partition texts in the subcontinent that explore the impact of rape in the lives of women who do not die because of being raped. These include: Amrita Pritam's Punjabi novel *Pinjar* ("Skeleton") (1950), where the struggle of the raped protagonist to rebuild her life after abduction and attendant violations of family and community honour constitute the main action of the novel; and Saadat Hasan Manto's Urdu short story "Khol Do" ("Open It"), that represents the horrific experience of a girl who, in her traumatized state, obligingly gestures towards her body as "open" for rape, and lets everyone know she is alive.

personal history is easy to ignore amidst the self-engrossed and bitterly vocal preoccupations of the élite characters in the novel. This neglect is also reinforced by the narrator's tendency to perceive and report Nafiza's silences and curt comments on Partition but never reflect on them to ascertain their significance. For instance, the narrator explains that Nafiza came to work for Layla's grandfather on his estate when she was about four. She is described as

a child who'd been born to villagers on Nana's land in distant Miryalgurda.

During Partition, when the servants and villagers had risen up against ... *nana*, using the chaotic time to claim his *haveli*, his land, as their own, she had been one of three servants to remain loyal to the family, fleeing with them to Nana's city cottage in Vijayanagar Colony. She was a year or two older than Amme and remembered no family of her own other than ours. (48)

With the exception of one more instance, Nafiza's decision to reject the revolt and stay loyal to her master is never brought up again in the novel.

However, Nafiza's rejection of solidarity with her peasant brethren stands out starkly when we take into account Ranajit Guha's point that peasant insurgency relies on emulation and solidarity between its participants for its success (*Elementary* 167). The communal character of a rebellion dictates that to rebel is good, and not to rebel is bad. To undermine this would mean flouting the leaders' authority (189), and not supporting a rebellion could result in both cultural (being "put out of caste" through caste defilement or social boycott that prevents caste relations (190-1)) and physical (intimidation, beatings, and ostracism (193)) sanctions against the guilty party. P. Sundarayya (65, 212), Raj Bahadur Gour (58-9), and Ravi Narayan Reddy (59), leaders of the Telangana

movement, have documented that “traitors” were warned, humiliated, tortured, and killed by revolutionary squads consisting of peasants and workers.¹⁷⁰ Guha also points out that there is usually one affinity among many that predominates in a rebellion to produce solidarity. Class, or a “congeries of class” (169), was the strongest in the Telangana uprising. However, the fact that the minority ruling culture was Muslim and affirmed its hegemony via strict institutional restraints on language and religion also makes ethnic and sectarian affinities an important aspect of this struggle. Thus, while the rebel peasants fought against both Muslim and Hindu landlords and “musclemen” (Stree 4, 33), and while there were many progressive Muslims fighting against the Nizam’s oppressive regime (9), it is probable that the struggle became, for some, connected to ethnic and sectarian identities. For instance, Gajjela Balamma, a participant in the Telangana uprising and a survivor of a mass rape committed by Razakars in the communist village of Akkirajupalli, believes that it was a Muslim villager who betrayed them to the police and that, therefore, “[i]t’s because the Muslims came in that such a thing happened. It was the Muslims who did this” (Stree 59). So the relevance of ethnic and sectarian solidarities must not be underestimated in case of the Telangana uprising. In fact, Guha cautions that ignoring the religious aspect in rebel solidarity and “ascrib[ing] it to a phoney secularism” (*Elementary* 173) is tantamount to falsification of the “intellectual history of the peasantry” (173).

The possibility of such affinity between rebel peasants on the basis of class belonging also allows for the possibility of sectarian and ethnic affiliations between landlords and peasants. Such considerations show Nafiza’s choice in an entirely different

¹⁷⁰ Sundarayya assures us that the Sangham and the Communist Party “discouraged and later prohibited such primitive forms of torture and wild revenge” (65).

hue. It becomes possible to interpret her loyalty as stemming from a belief that she would be safer with the Muslim landlord family she has been with since her childhood, rather than aligning herself with a group of agitated peasants who might see her religious affiliation as part of the enemy's identifying insignia. And such a choice would entail Nafiza's categorization as a traitor in the eyes of the peasants. The representation of such a character also allows for the literary creation of a socio-cultural milieu where it becomes possible to discursively and hypothetically question the insistence of Telangana leaders that peasants and workers did not care about sectarian affiliations, but were almost unanimously and consistently united against the ruling class.

Therefore, while Guha is summarily dismissive of "traitors," calling them "the irreducible dregs of a backward consciousness" (198), it is important to temper such pronouncements by accounting for factors such as gender, religion, and fraternity. Nafiza's sense of community and self-consciousness and, consequently, her loyalty, may stem from her Muslim identity, as well as the fact that she, in Layla's words, "remembered no family of her own other than ours" (48). However, her betrayal would be defined by her class brethren as her "persisting in the traditional political relationship between master and servant" (Guha, *Elementary* 202). Her active collaboration with landlords strikes at the very root of the inversive process triggered by peasant rebellion, "[s]ince it is the object, in fact the fundamental object, of a rebellion to destroy this very relationship" (202). This means that the peasant's enemy is not identified solely as the insignia of the landlord's authority, but also as the peasant-collaborator, who in spite of being as poor as the peasant-rebel, becomes an enemy because she is "the carrier of a corrupt consciousness in their own ranks" (219). Guha's study does not extend to

analyzing how peasant-collaborators themselves experience such alienation and isolation from their own class based on their choices.

Nor does *Madras on Rainy Days* do any such thing. What is instead highlighted in the narrator's introduction of Nafiza is the implicit praise of her loyalty to her masters; furthermore, while Nafiza's acts of insubordination are also noted in the novel, the context and/or rationale behind them are not explored. In this partial but crucial elision of Nafiza's subjectivity, the narrative betrays its classed character. A prominent example of the elite censure of Nafiza's defiance and resistance, which does not take her perspective into account, is seen in the alleged "seduction" of Taqi by Nafiza many years ago; this supposed seduction is represented as unbearable audacity on Nafiza's part because it is equated with the violation of the absolute, essentialist hierarchies and separations of class.

Besides the short introduction of Nafiza quoted above, another instance that sheds some light on Nafiza's experiences during the upheavals in Hyderabad in the late 1940s, and when Layla might be expected to comment or express curiosity or interest in Nafiza's experiences, occurs when Layla mentions to Zeba, in Nafiza's presence, that she has never seen her ancestral estate. Nafiza replies, "No need to see it ... All gone, you *nana's* land. No-thing left to see. Even his *haveli* burn down – they burn it down," after which the narrator adds, "She turned back to the beans, cursing the invaders under her breath"¹⁷¹ (127). At no point does Layla, who otherwise feels deeply the oppressive weight of her

¹⁷¹ The agents of aggression and injury remain undefined in the novel, morphing first from "workers" to "invaders" and then "government" (65, 127). Only the land, a metaphor of Partition, and associated with injury, remains a continual reminder of violence and dislocation. Specific sources of aggression are found to be undifferentiated also in the narratives of women who participated in the Telangana uprising, which often do not specify whether it was the Hyderabad or the Indian state apparatuses that were responsible for violence (Stree 48-9). In fact, many women see the two states as two sides of the same repressive coin, and one even asserts that "the Razakars and the [Indian] Union Army all did the same thing. The Union got its work done through the Razakars" (223).

family's aristocratic legacy and is laden with postmemories of Partition, ask Nafiza for an eye-witness account of the sacking of the family estate. This illustrates Hirsch's point that narrative violence and destruction of archives can occur within the family, revealing "the power of the father to silence the mother's voice, the power of the son to rewrite the father's words" (*Family* 13). Thus, while Layla's postmemory of Partition is generated through the repeated narrations of Taqi Mamu's experiences, and later, Zeba's retellings of what happened during Partition, there is no attempt on Layla's part or her family's part to draw Nafiza, who is also a survivor of Partition, into the work of memory and postmemory. It is Taqi Mamu's and Zeba's memory, and Layla's postmemory that "generates" (Hirsch, *Family* 31) Layla's sporadic narration of Partition experiences in the novel.

This neglect of Nafiza becomes especially puzzling when we realize that Nafiza progresses from being a minor presence in the novel to a character whose thoughts and acts acquire great significance in retrospect. Her stubborn instincts and her insistence on reporting Sameer's lack of sexual interest in Layla to both his family and Layla's family shows that she is the only character who really loves and cares about Layla and who is shrewd enough to spot the cause behind Sameer's odd behaviour. Furthermore, the male characters with whom she had played as a child are emotionally attached to her, as we can see from Taqi Mamu's and Ibrahim's sadness when she dies, and yet, bafflingly, we do not learn anything more about Nafiza. Her inferior class and gender status, therefore, work in tandem to keep her history outside the collective, élitist memory and postmemory of Layla's family, even though it is the only family she has known.

What makes the novel's silence about Nafiza as well as other working-class characters even more telling is the way their speech is rendered in the novel. The words of SAWNET reviewer Susan Chacko, who calls it a "painful pidgin" ("Madras"), go a long way in explaining the awkward and condescending tone of Ali's rendition of Dakhni Urdu into English. So, Nafiza and Raga-be say things like "I no can help you!" (48, 56), "Still, he man who no real man. Still, you wife who no real wife" (159), "Me you Mama, me no care what you say, me no servant to you" (190), and "What you say, Bitea? You trap-trap!" (307). Such an offensive depiction implies that Dakhni Urdu, widely spoken by working-class people in Hyderabad, has no grammar or organizing principle, and is, therefore, inferior to the Urdu spoken by elite Hyderabadis.¹⁷² It suggests that working-class people are incapable of declining nouns and conjugating verbs and that their language lacks basic linguistic development. By extension, these rigid, halting representations of their speech also imply that Nafiza and Raga-be are unable to speak, or that they do not know how to speak at all.¹⁷³ Hence, only the middle- and upper-classes,

¹⁷² Urdu was brought to the South by way of North Indian military campaigns in the thirteenth and fourteenth-centuries (Saksena 32; Schimmel 130; Sadiq 50; Zahir 1). Dakhni Urdu, which developed in the Deccan as a result of the confluence of North Indian Urdu/Hindi and South Indian vernacular languages, differs from North Indian Urdu/Hindi in many ways. It is influenced more by Arabic than Persian, and reveals a more thorough and harmonious interweaving of local Indian vernaculars such as Telugu, Tamil, and Marathi (Schimmel 131; Saksena 32). It appears to contain more Punjabi words than North Indian Urdu/Hindi (Sadiq 51). The two most noticeable grammatical differences between Dakhni and North Indian Urdu/Hindi lie in the absence in Dakhni of the agent case (indicated by the postposition *ने*, "ne") in the past perfective tense, and in the usage of the oblique genitive as a base for declension in phrases such as *मेरे को*, "mere ko," or *मेरे कु*, "mere ku," instead of *मुझ को*, "mujh ko," or *मुझे*, "mujhe," which are used in the North Indian variants of the language (Saksena 32). Ali Zahir points out that after Aurangzeb's conquest of the Deccan in 1687 CE, and the collapse of the Adil Shahi and Qutub Shahi Sultanates who were known for their significant patronage of Dakhni language and culture, North Indian Hindavi/Rekhta (present day Urdu), began to gain ascendancy (3). The military conquest of the Deccan made Dakhni the language of the defeated, and it became a point of ridicule to speak or write it. The ruling class began to think of it as a lesser medium of expression. Thus, Dakhni was no longer the preferred language for literary expression or even written communication (5). However, it remains dominant till the present day as the spoken language of Hyderabad city (3).

¹⁷³ In a different but similar context, Stree Shakti Sanghatana express the difficulties they faced while trying to translate the Telangana Telugu spoken by older peasant women who participated in the Telangana uprising. This language does not have a standard written form, and has, therefore, become so obscure, unfamiliar, and marginalized that alongside its linguistic aspect, the gendered socio-political milieu that finds expression in its spoken form also faces the threat of extinction (283).

with their refined forms of Urdu, can aspire to grammar and, therefore, speech, and by extension, voice.¹⁷⁴ This narrative logic indicates that the dislocating experiences of Nafiza and the other working-class characters in the 1940s are not valid; it is only the Partition testimonies of the élite characters that matter. Alternatively, it also suggests that even if Nafiza has anything worthwhile to express about Partition, she is handicapped because she has no means (or only inferior means) to articulate her opinion.

The perception that speech is an indicator of voice stems from the political norms of a democratic polity, where speech is understood to be a fundamental right, and suppression of speech is a denial of that right (Rajan, *Real* 84). Thus, “the access to speech has defined social hegemony, just as its lack has defined subalternity in unequal social structures and situations” (84). This makes silence, any and all silence, a persuasive measure of subalternity, an efficient indicator of the impossibility of agency.¹⁷⁵ Rajan as well as Mayaram rigorously question the view that silence and speech are absolutely distinct categories, and while Mayaram uses the effective metaphor of “[l]ayers of silence [that] mask both inscription and speech” to show that the issue of speech as the rupture of silence is not so straightforward (161), Rajan writes that the equation of speech as transparent and silence as imposition is a reiteration of old, exhausted truisms (*Real* 84).

Ali’s approach of representing the speech of the working-classes and peasants using diglossia, a socio-linguistic phenomenon that involves the simultaneous prevalence

¹⁷⁴ The representation of Nafiza’s daughter Roshan is, in this regard, revealing. Roshan marries a tea-shop proprietor and, therefore, climbs up a few rungs on the socio-economic class ladder. So, unlike her mother, she does not speak in broken sentences, nor does she sit on the floor when she comes to meet Layla, preferring instead to perch uncertainly on the edge of a chair (156).

¹⁷⁵ Kamala Visweswaran offers clues about the provenance of this belief in her identification of speech-based agency as a strategy of dominance in colonial and nationalist (read élite) historiography, which aims at silencing women who resist colonial aggression and nationalistic determinations of womanhood. First, such a strategy denies speech to most women, and second, it sets into motion feminist attempts to recover “lost enunciatory positions” (92).

of two dialects in one language community, only asserts the classed nature of her novel. As Guha points out, in a country like India where school-based education is still in many ways a privilege few can afford, “the formal or high style [of language, which] is often closely associated with education ... [becomes] an unmistakable sign of elite culture and authority” (*Elementary* 44). Thus, by creating a halting, “low” working-class speech pattern in stark opposition to an articulate, “high” form of expression for her élite characters, Ali claims for the latter “an elite standing which is, of course, denied to the subaltern” (44). Hence, speech becomes an indicator of superiority.

What further complicates the issue of subaltern speech in the novel is the question of “truth” because not only is Nafiza’s speech cumbersome and unwieldy, it is also often interpreted as lies and mischief making. Both these negative representations have been connected to dominant discourses about gendered speech (Rajan, *Real* 88; Visweswaran 113, 90) and classed speech (Visweswaran 90-1, 121). By representing women’s speech as “lies, hysteria, comic volubility, empty gossip, or ignorance” (88), patriarchy affirms silence as a desired “feminine” attribute. Thus, women’s speech “fails as statement, testimony or communication chiefly as the result of the successful operation of two kinds of strategies: one, by being pre-empted, i.e. invalidated in advance; and two, by being discredited, i.e. rebutted after the event” (88). The latter point explains why nobody believes Nafiza when she articulates her suspicions about Sameer. In an earlier but connected context, Kamala Visweswaran points out that colonial historiography, which has contributed greatly to the fundamental assumptions of the secular, democratic, nationalist polity that is India, reduced women *satyagrahis*’ words and speeches to formulaic utterances, noises, or the effect they produced on audiences (“disturbance,”

“excitement”) (90). Furthermore, the erasure of poor women in these records is rendered complete by the mutually exclusive, binary distinction in “women and the poor” or “women and the masses,” which implies that “women” signifies middle-class women, and “poor” signifies poor men (91). Hence, “poor women” fall in-between two stools and exist only in the margins of margins, coded as observers and silenced as participants in the freedom struggle (121), or forgotten as they remain quiet shadowy sites where Partition violence was enacted.

In light of the fact that Nafiza’s silence is never a point of contemplation for the narrator, and that her speech is skewed and her thoughts dismissed as lies, it is safe to say that Ali’s novel presents an “interested and precarious construction” (Didur, “At a Loss” 54) of the past, one that only accounts for a middle-class Muslim understanding of Partition and where class as a category of struggle is not represented. Ali’s novel certainly highlights the predicament of middle-class Hyderabadi Muslims and how they still experience the violence of Partition and its regurgitations in communalist propaganda, but it also relegates to oblivion the experiences of working-class Muslims. Jill Didur argues that the role of historical memory in literary contexts is to consider how “texts act as a call to witness by disrupting ‘our’ understanding about ‘the past’ and its relationship to the present each time the reader engages in the act of reading as remembrance” (55). While *Madras on Rainy Days* certainly throws a spanner in the works of official history, which ignores the trauma suffered by displaced Hyderabadi Muslim families during Partition, it also replicates the official censorship imposed on the history of class struggle in Hyderabad. I have already documented in my second chapter the attempts by official and mainstream sections of Indian society to silence Hyderabadis

by banning and later denying the existence of important reports and books testifying to the violence that gripped Hyderabad around the time of Partition. Such an erasure is, I argue, replicated in the implicit devaluation of Partition testimonies of working-class characters in *Madras on Rainy Days*.

How, then, are we to read Nafiza's silence? What possible insights does a text that registers but does not reflect on her silence offer us? Rajan argues that silence has a presence, such that while "the content of silence cannot signify – being only silence – its space, its temporality and its facticity give form to its existence" (*Real* 86). Hence, its formalism "permits its representation in texts as a presence rather than as unrepresentable non-being" (86). Perhaps, to appreciate the significance of such meaningfully present silences, we need to learn to listen differently, like Butalia does, to "the hidden nuance, the half-said thing, the silences which are sometimes more eloquent than speech" (*Other Side* 12). In connection with women's narrations, Stree Shakti Sanghatana has also written about the desirability of "read[ing] against the grain of the text's volubility and listen[ing] for the gaps, the hesitancies, the silences, the evasions. In other words, attend[ing] as much to what the stories reveal, as what they say"¹⁷⁶ (32). Therefore, perhaps we can learn something more if we only learn to listen to Nafiza's silence about Partition, which is thrown into sharp relief by Layla's meticulously self-preoccupied narration and Taqi's obsessive loquacity.

One possible reading emerges if we take into consideration Didur's critique of the tendency of historiographers to approach realist literature on Partition and its "reflective and mimetic representational strategies" ("At a Loss" 55) as a window allowing us to

¹⁷⁶ Pramila Mahendra, who participated in the Telangana struggle in Hyderabad city, clearly distinguishes between the way men (like Taqi) and women (like Nafiza) speak about the political upheavals of the 1940s, saying that "it is different speaking to them [men] – they pour out everything. We keep it to ourselves" (Stree 117).

“directly” access the past. This approach reveals a strategic desire to “recover” the experience of abducted women, in order to expand or correct our understanding of history into a seamless record of the past, which risks transforming women who testify about their Partition experiences into informants who permit us to remember the past in “comfortable ways and to move on” (“At a Loss” 55; *Unsettling* 50). To suggest that literature can somehow fill in the blanks of knowledge with the missing pieces of women’s testimonies is also to deny the magnitude of loss incurred (“At a Loss” 59). Scholars, who no doubt have good intentions, are complicit in this recovery project because we all believe to some extent that to “recover the speech of victims is, in a sense, to reinvest the victim community with subjectivity” (Mayaram 150). On the other hand, Didur resists this urge to recover subaltern speech as a “‘corrective’ condition” (Rajan, *Real* 88) to the “definitional condition of the subaltern” (88) as silent and suggests through her reading of Jyotirmoyee Devi’s novel *The River Churning* (1995) that surrendering to the silences or gaps in women’s accounts of Partition alerts the reader to “what is effaced from modernist accounts of history in order to allow (masculine) Indian subjects to emerge as autonomous citizens” (“At a Loss” 67). Accordingly, in the absence of Nafiza’s testimony, we are obliged to think of her liminal, ambivalent, marginal status in her family, community, and nation and reflect on how the ambiguity of her silence about her past questions the elite, patriarchal conventions that seek to frame her within established gendered and classed vocabularies or even erase her entirely.

Furthermore, along with other scholars, Didur argues that not only is the silence of women on Partition an indication of their difficulty in speaking about the traumatic events they experienced and/or witnessed, but it is also indicative of their tactful

withdrawal in light of their best interests. In other words, in many cases, women know that it is better not to reveal what they know about Partition, for what they know often implicates the men they are related to and/or are dependent on (Didur 57; Das, “Act” 221-2; Hardgrove 2430). Silence, then, becomes a means for women to regain control over their lives. Moreover, silence is an exercise of subjective agency that is not only observed in case of women, but also marginalized groups such as poor and/or lower-caste Muslims who struggle to navigate in inter-communal (and in Nafiza’s case, inter-class) waters after Partition in order to survive (Mayaram 151, 161). Perhaps this is why Nafiza remains silent, because what she knows about Partition may contain the guilt of the only family she knows. Extreme repression of peasants in the form of torture, rape, and murder by landlords, their armies, and state-sponsored Razakars during the Telangana struggle is a commonly known fact and may apply to the actions of Layla’s family as well. Revealing what she knows would then jeopardize Nafiza’s livelihood and also separate her from her family. In this way, Nafiza’s agency, exercised through silence, is indirect, unlike Taqi Mamu’s direct agency, which consists of “the actions of individuals that are public, self-conscious, and unfettered by social structures – actions taken by an autonomous subject” (Didur, *Unsettling* 80).

The exercise of agency through silence is also suggested in Nafiza’s silence about her sexual encounter with Taqi. Nafiza is blamed by Zeba for seducing Taqi on the estate when they were both young, yet Nafiza herself never refers to this incident. In retellings of this incident by his élite associates, Taqi is represented as completely innocent and Nafiza, completely guilty (of violating class hierarchies).¹⁷⁷ This clearly demarcated

¹⁷⁷ Guha’s point about the negative and hostile language in which peasant subalternity is described in élite accounts of insurgencies may be relevant here. He writes that “[t]he antagonism [in such accounts] is indeed so complete and so

allocation of guilt is thrown into question when we take into account the novel's own representation of truth as a relative phenomenon. What seems to be the truth may not always be the truth, it is suggested. So, Layla agonizes over her miscarriage and blames the non-consummation of her marriage on her ill-judged nocturnal tryst with Nate, her American boyfriend, while the real reason for Sameer's lack of interest in her is that Sameer is gay. So, truth can be simultaneously constructed from different perspectives, and often what masquerades as truth is not truth at all.

In light of the complexities of truth behind silence, and the desirability of silence for some survivors, recovery as a process associated with Partition should be approached with caution. Attempts to unproblematically "recover" women's history in "a definitive way" (Didur, "At a Loss" 60) reduce women to mere objects of knowledge, whose information serves only as self-confirmation for historiographers and their readers. Instead, Didur argues in favour of "a staged dialogue between literary and historiographical narratives [that] puts pressure on totalizing constructions of the self, experience, and agency and their relation to the notion of citizenship in the modern nation-state" (*Unsettling* 44). To read Partition texts as mediated by craft and in relation to other discourses would be a more productive way to remember Partition than direct identification of the text's content to "reality" ("At a Loss" 60-1; *Unsettling* 139-40). In doing so, she writes, the modern and patriarchal assumptions behind the official project of recovering women that serve to accord them object status, can be dismantled.

firmly structured that from the terms stated for one it should be possible, by reversing their values, to derive the implicit terms of the other" (*Elementary* 16). Therefore, it becomes possible for historians to use "this impoverished ... language as a clue to the antinomies which speak for a rival consciousness – that of the rebel" (16). *Madras on Rainy Days* and the manner in which Taqi's "seduction" by Nafiza is represented by the elite characters can be read in this way.

In literary narratives that are sensitive to such discourses, Didur explains, women resist incorporation and absorption into a reductive and destructive official archive that has produced or desired their silence in the first place. Their silences should not, therefore, be “resolved, accounted for, translated, or recovered” (“At a Loss” 67; *Unsettling* 156), but read as resistance to the attempts by state and community to account for the gaps in their testimonies, which only serve to enact further violence against these women (“At a Loss” 65). So, decentred, fragmented literary representations of women’s experience through “a realist narrative that is constantly interrupted” (“At a Loss” 63) may signify women’s resistance to the casual dismissal of their experiences through simplistic, violent appropriation (63). After all, by extending the argument that speech is an expression of the self, silence becomes a barrier to another knowing or penetrating the self (Rajan, *Real* 84). Hence, Rajan argues, in certain contexts, “the operation of silence becomes an operation of power rather than powerlessness” (87) because silence moves from being an enforced ban on speech to a “freely chosen refusal to speak” (87). To Rajan, then, “the conversion of socially imposed silence into a deliberate and voluntary statement, and the subversive ‘reading’ of silence as meaningful communication” (87) is a strategy used by feminist theorists, writers, and filmmakers to exploit silence as a form of political resistance.¹⁷⁸ In fact, Didur goes on to assert that it is in such fragmentary narrations that Cathy Caruth’s formulation about the possibility of history (particularly,

¹⁷⁸ Here, there is a danger of “romanticizing and thereby acknowledging alterity as the female condition” (Rajan, *Real* 89). Rajan recommends that the feminist theory and practice of “reading” silence must neither commit to confidently pronouncing the inability of the subaltern to speak, nor must we romanticize silence as the agentive refusal of the subaltern to speak. While speech is “contaminated” as far as research into women’s subjectivities are concerned, it is not politically invalid, provided it is not treated as a transparent medium (89). Rajan points out that “as feminist theorists who are not ourselves subaltern we are then led to speak ‘for’ the subaltern, or to provide them access to the social forums of speech, or to enforce the social receptivity to their verbal articulations” (87-8). She recommends that “[c]ritical strategies of interpretation ... [be] crucially called into play in negotiating the complexities of subaltern speech” (89).

history of/as trauma) emerging out of the gaps in representation (11, 18) becomes relevant (“At a Loss” 63).

Thus, Nafiza’s silence, to the extent that it is self-imposed, becomes a strategy of subaltern resistance, for it comes to represent Nafiza’s reluctance or refusal to volunteer information that would fix and formulate her within defining patriarchal and hegemonic discourses. The long, unbroken silences thick with unspoken opinions and testimonies, and the short, clipped sentences in which Nafiza economically conveys information about the upheavals on the family estate are a common trend in the speech of people and communities also traumatized by Partition. Like Nafiza, others too drop their pronouns, as if resisting painful memories of persons and things lost or refusing to allocate blame where it may rightfully belong (Mayaram 151). Nafiza’s silence is, therefore, a covert resistance, one which desists from “a spectacular demonstration of the subaltern’s independent will and self-determining power”¹⁷⁹ (O’Hanlon 99). It serves as an example to illustrate Didur’s suggestion that to find history, not only must we question the ostensible transparency of language, but we must also knock on the opacity of language, and listen attentively to its solid silences.

Bearing all these things in mind, we have to focus not on the details of Nafiza’s encounter with Taqi Mamu, but instead we must be sensitive to the uncertainty created by her complete silence on the matter. Nafiza’s agentive silence marks a firm resistance against the discriminatory explanations of elite characters, whose attempts to recreate what happened and accuse her of wrongdoing become attempts to recover her history within a classed and patriarchal framework. This strategy of maintaining the family’s

¹⁷⁹ O’Hanlon outlines how one of the shortcomings of the Subaltern Studies project is that it focusses on spectacular, overt forms of peasant resistance (99), highlighting the “masculine form of a full-blooded rebellion” (100) by an autonomous subject-agent, and ignoring liminal and more complicated, less visible forms of struggle, such as Nafiza’s.

“honour,” class status, and class distinction by berating the poor as agents of their own moral destruction is also seen in the vilification of Nafiza when she complains about the non-consummation of Layla and Sameer’s marriage to their respective families. It is then that Zeba, anxious to hide the truth and bring her homosexual son to the “correct,” “Islamic” path through a heteronormative relationship, suggests that little more can be expected by the trouble-maker who once seduced Taqi in the attempt to gain influence and access to his family’s power.¹⁸⁰ But when Nafiza’s suspicions about Sameer are confirmed, we are forced to rethink not only what we know about Sameer, but what we know about Taqi’s “seduction” by Nafiza and what we have been told about the family’s experience during the turmoil of Partition.

However, the narrator herself does not express doubts about the totalized constructions of Nafiza’s guilt and Taqi’s innocence by other characters. In spite of Nafiza’s refusal to reconcile herself to the élitist version of any story of the past by confirmation, and also the tactful sense of self-preservation contained in her refusal to reject comfortably established narratives, the novel does not pick up on this “absent presence” (“At a Loss” 67; *Unsettling* 156). It is this insidious, narrative silence that often lurks behind the otherwise prominently loquacious text of the novel. By neglecting to reflect upon or analyze Nafiza’s silences and the ambiguities surrounding her past on the family’s estate, the narrator and author exercise their choice to not see, hear, or imagine Nafiza’s history. In such an absence, Nafiza is clearly and incontrovertibly identified and condemned as an unscrupulous, immoral woman, her views and perspectives thoroughly undermined.

¹⁸⁰ This is an example of how women, who are the main recipients of oppressive and violent patriarchal codes such as “honour” and “purity,” are also complicit in patriarchy. They perpetuate patriarchy “in order to maintain their patriarchal patronage at the expense of the women concerned” (Didur, *Unsettling* 148).

As Mayaram has pointed out, the texture of the official records about Partition violence against the Meos proves that neither language nor speech precludes silence (127). Referring to the communal violence in Mewat in 1947, she says that the administrative record “masks the creation of terror with terms such as ‘communal strife’ and ‘disturbances’” (138), while local journalistic accounts from Alwar reversed the nature of forced religious conversions when they testified that Meos were “offering themselves for conversion” (150) to Hinduism. In this way, writing becomes a means to obliterate violence from collective memory by choosing what to articulate and quelling any voice that threatens to create a rupture in the preferred narrative.¹⁸¹ Furthermore, deference in speech by subalterns, the most explicit and overt form of feudal authority, matters even more in demarcating class divisions than kinship or sexual status (Guha, *Elementary* 41). Guha theorizes about the “zero sign of utterance” (47), which he derives from Panini’s idea of *lopa* and conditions using Saussurian linguistics as well as Roman Jakobson’s notion of zero degree. He argues that if a member of the lower classes or castes uses an insulting word or a language idiom considered inappropriate for usage by lower classes or castes, then s/he violates the “zero sign of utterance – that is, silence used formally and yet eloquently enough as a ‘significant absence’ of speech” (47). As a result, language comes to be known “only by virtue of its elision so that the ban imposed by custom on various kinds of discourse could announce and display the subordination ... of low caste to high caste and generally of the underdog to the elite” (47). Using this theorization, Nafiza’s silence can also be interpreted as “significant absence,” the correct protocol for her interactions with her masters. She knows her “proper place” and adheres

¹⁸¹ Mayaram writes that this silencing is also extended to appropriate the silence of marginalized people and groups. Their silence, whether self-imposed or imposed by others, is incorrectly seen to mean by hegemonic groups that violent discrimination has ceased to affect “victims” and does not matter anymore (161).

to it, and this is why the élite narrator takes it for granted and chooses not to reflect on it. Nafiza's condemnation of the workers who overrode the estate is a condemnation of the inversion of dominant feudal codes by insurgents. So, the silly language that Ali uses for Nafiza in the novel becomes a covert strategy to keep Nafiza in her place and, thereby, maintain class hierarchies. Her speaking subjectivity is halting, suggesting its subalternity within dominant discourses of agency and power, and her eloquence and insights on the rare occasion when they are proffered are unwelcome. Thus, we walk away from the novel only with élite accounts of Partition and seduction. It is the patriarchal, middle-class, and élite Hyderabadi Muslim narrative that is endorsed as normative and credible in the novel.

In Guha's terms, what is needed in historiography, and what is also conspicuously absent in many literary representations of historical events, such as *Madras on Rainy Days*, is "a re-writing that heeds the small voice of history [and that] will put the question of agency and instrumentality back into the narrative" ("Small voice" 11). It is of direct relevance to my argument that Guha's immediate context consists of the "small voices" of women who fought in the Telangana movement and whose own agenda for women's liberation and emancipation was undermined by the communist leadership of the struggle. Guha points out that the reason women had joined the struggle in the first place was because, in addition to united resistance to the repressive ruling classes, it also promised to free them from the shackles of a rigidly patriarchal society (9). But as I have already explained earlier, women felt betrayed as social reform took a backseat on the pretext that fighting against class oppression was a more urgent and legitimate concern

(Stree 236, 240, 245). And peasant and working-class women were relegated, once again, to being “small voices” that did not matter much in the larger scheme of things.

Even though it is successful in highlighting one form of marginalization – communalism – by focusing on Partition and present-day experiences of Muslims in Hyderabad city, *Madras on Rainy Days* does the exact opposite in terms of its class discrimination. In a better representation, the small voice of Telangana’s history, even that of a “traitor” such as Nafiza, who refused to conform to the demands made on her by the rebelling workers on the Miryalguda estate, will get a hearing only “by interrupting the telling of the dominant version, breaking up its storyline and making a mess of its plot” (Guha, “Small Voice” 12). It will not be sacrificed as it is in Ali’s novel, where “the diversities of character and event ... [are] controlled according to the logic of the main action” (12).

It is also important to reflect upon who performs the task of interpretation of silent/silenced subalterns like Nafiza. Rosalind O’Hanlon has argued that subaltern subjectivity is always relational and never autonomous because it is recovered (conditionally, partially, problematically) by élites through many refractions (87). Drawing on O’Hanlon’s argument, Visweswaran concludes that any recovery of subaltern female subjectivity is contingent upon relations of power and must be acknowledged to be so (90). She highlights the fact that Spivak has also stressed this point, stating that “the subaltern cannot exist without the thought of the élite” (Visweswaran 91). Subaltern agency is dependent; it does not have “originary autonomy: it is the underside of the subject which seeks to contain it” (125). However, O’Hanlon writes that one possible strategy for Subaltern Studies might be to resist essentialism “by

revealing that presence to be one constructed and refracted through practice, but no less ‘real’ for our having said that it does not contain its own origins within itself” (87).

Visweswaran elaborates upon this possibility further:

If we agree that the point of retrieval marks the subaltern’s silencing in history, and that it is at the point of erasure where the emergence of the subaltern is possible, then this analysis transits the lines of enfranchisement and disenfranchisement, oscillating between nationalist agency and subaltern agency. It is in this tension, this moment of oscillation, I would argue, that we recognize the effect where the gendered ‘subaltern’ is felt. Woman as subaltern; subaltern women. (125)

Put differently, the subalternity of gender is felt at the moment of recovery, and it is at the point at which erasure becomes imminent that the presence of the gendered subaltern is felt through her effect. Similarly, while discussing the exercise of subaltern agency through peasant rebellion, Guha has noted that while historiographical records by policemen, soldiers, bureaucrats, landlords and “others hostile to insurgency” can be read as representations of the official, hegemonic will, they can also be read indirectly as representations of the will of insurgents because they are predicated on that will. Thus, it is possible to read in these documents “the presence of a rebel consciousness as a necessary and pervasive element within that body of evidence” (*Elementary* 15). This rebel consciousness makes itself felt through the reporting of rebel utterances in snatches of conversation, reproduced statements by captives under police interrogation or before courts, as well as rumours. Guha writes that “intercepted discourse of this type testifies no less to the consciousness of the rebel peasantry than to the intentions of their enemies

and may quite legitimately serve as evidence for a historiography not compromised by the latter's point of view" (16).

Using O'Hanlon's, Visweswaran's and Guha's arguments about the indirect, multiply refracted subaltern presence via its effects, it is possible to ascertain the significance of Nafiza's views as they are represented in her elite charge's account. Taqi Mamu's pained and self-preoccupied loquaciousness over his displacement and disenfranchisement in the Indian nation becomes a foil for Nafiza's silence. Both Nafiza and Taqi Mamu witness the seizure of the estate, but the fact that Taqi Mamu angrily airs his views whenever he can, and Nafiza chooses not to, makes for a stark contrast; her silence marks the place where the novel is restricted by class difference and cannot or will not go. It also indicates that there is a zone of voluntary silence in personal narratives of Partition as it affected Hyderabad, about which there have been some hints, but which has not been fully understood as an example of gendered subaltern agency. I have also examined in this chapter the silence of Henna, whose gang-rape and death violently re-opens the old wounds and memories of Partition; when she dies, Taqi Mamu stops fighting for his rights, and the weight of Layla's postmemory of Partition is overlaid with new and vivid memories of communal riots. Thus, Ali also makes crucial connections between how such violence not only affects Hyderabadis on the subcontinent, but molds and remakes as well the postmemory and memory of diasporic Hyderabadis like Layla. In this way, while Ali undeniably elides the perspective of the Hyderabadi classed subaltern on Partition, she successfully represents the horrific violence inflicted on the bodies of women during communal riots and how such violence traumatizes over a long period of time the entire community.

**True Colours: The Representation of Durga, Sikhs, Cows, and Women in the
Service of Hindutva in Neelkanth’s “Durga”**

As I have shown in the last chapter through my analysis of the representation of rape and silence in Samina Ali’s *Madras on Rainy Days*, the events and experiences of Partition still have an alarming degree of social, political, and personal impact on the lives of Hyderabadis. In this chapter, I take that discussion further through an analysis of the Hindi novel *Razakar* (“Volunteer of God”) (2005) by Kishorilal Vyas “Neelkanth.”¹⁸² *Razakar* is a Hindu nationalist text that serves as an example of how the Hindutva right-wing represents the history of sexual violence perpetrated by Muslim Razakars against Hindu women in Hyderabad in the late 1940s as a pretext to justify present-day Hindutva violence against Muslims, especially Muslim women and children. In doing so, as I show in this chapter, Neelkanth conflates the Razakars, who were powerful only from 1946 to 1948 and whose influence was largely limited to princely Hyderabad, with (almost) all Muslims in present-day India. In fact, Neelkanth declares that the Hindu/Indian state must not let its guard down; it must watch Muslims constantly in order to ensure that new Razakars are not born amongst them. Furthermore, the problematic Hindu nationalist tilt of Neelkanth’s text also extends to the attempted cooptation of Sikhs into the Hindutva fold, as the representation of the Sikh woman in his text suggests. This, as I show, is a subtle but forceful strategy employed by the Hindutva right-wing in an effort to close ranks against minorities such as Muslims.

Neelkanth’s Preface to *Razakar* begins with references to the gendered violence of Partition and reproduces the oral testimony of an elderly Punjabi neighbour, who tells

¹⁸² “Neelkanth” is the writer’s *takhallus* (“pen name”). A Hindi word, Neelkanth means “the blue-throated one,” and evokes conventional poetic images of songbirds like the *koel* (“cuckoo”) as well as the god Krishna.

him that she witnessed her three young daughters commit suicide in order to escape imminent rape at the hands of Other men. Emphasizing that traumatic memories of Partition still linger in the hearts of survivors, Neelkanth writes that one of his reasons for writing this book is that his family was also affected by Partition violence (xiii). His parents and paternal uncle and aunt were displaced from their home in Nizamabad district in Hyderabad and sought refuge in Barshi (in present-day Maharashtra). They returned “after the storm went silent” and had to resume their lives again. But the “broken branch of life could never be put back again. A chain of tragedies kept following us”¹⁸³ (xiii). Neelkanth writes that his book is based on actual events that took place in Hyderabad. He points out that there is both an autobiographical and a biographical element in his novel: “What has befallen oneself and what has befallen the world – this novel of mine is an attempt to juxtapose an individual’s sorrow with the people’s distress. Most of the incidents in it are true” (xiii). The clarification that *Razakar* is autobiographical and yet also biographical is a common feature of many literary narratives associated with Partition.

Referring to the intertwining of the autobiographical and biographical in postcolonial life-writing,¹⁸⁴ Bart Moore-Gilbert has emphasized that the postcolonial autobiographical subject does not construct her/himself in sovereign, autonomous terms; in fact, s/he constructs subjectivity in relation to the group(s) to which s/he professes belonging. Therefore, life-writing, or autobiography, becomes as much a “biography” of

¹⁸³ All translations are mine.

¹⁸⁴ Moore-Gilbert uses the word *life-writing* “to describe work which is autobiographical without necessarily observing the classical rules of the genre, as is often the case in the Self-narration of western women and postcolonial subjects” (131). Furthermore, other scholars such as Sandra Lila Maya Rota have suggested that we look at (canonical) autobiography in terms of the same rhetoric that previous commentators have presented it: “self-absorbed individualism that exalts the white male citizen” (52). She writes that life-writing, then, becomes a means to subvert this ideal by postmodern and postcolonial subjectivities (52).

the group(s) as it is a personal endeavor expressing individual experiences. Moore-Gilbert also points out that while there might be a

general absence or marginalisation of immediate ‘significant Others’ in male postcolonial life-writing ... [this is,] however, often compensated for by identification and solidarity with a variety of groups in relation to which the writer constructs his sense of Selfhood ... [such as] political claims to representativity and relationality at a national level. (31)

Therefore, an important axis of individual/collective (self-)identification in male postcolonial life-writing is, frequently, national or, to extend Moore-Gilbert’s argument to the case of Neelkanth, communal identity (31). While Neelkanth does not exactly erase his own immediate family from his construction of his selfhood, particularly in terms of his justification for writing *Razakar*, the larger emphasis he places on how his text represents both “the individual’s sorrow with the people’s distress” (xiii) situates his work as an attempt to represent the experiences of Hindus who faced terrible violence and traumatic dislocation at the hands of Razakars in Hyderabad during Partition. This portrayal fits in well with what we know about the historical reality of the persecution of religious minorities during Partition. However, as I show in this chapter, the traumatized Hindu community that reaches out to us from the pages of this text acquires a sinister hue as it begins to take shape in Neelkanth’s hands as a watchful group that must pre-empt the ostensibly imminent violence by alleged “leftover Razakars” (xii-xiii) amongst the Muslims of present-day India (2000s) by committing violence against them.

The “novel” (उपन्यास) itself is divided into discrete, independent sections that are dedicated to narrating specific legends, anecdotes, and/or historical episodes from

Hyderabad.¹⁸⁵ Aware that his text does not conform to the conventions of Hindi novel writing, Neelkanth writes,

This novel is different from the traditional arrangement of Hindi novel writing. In this novel, it is the people who are the protagonists, the state that is the subject-matter, and the shaping of the incidents that are occurring is the craft. Literary purists will be disappointed if they try to look for an artistic essence in this novel.

(xiv)

By disavowing the artistic or aesthetic aspect of novel writing, Neelkanth draws attention to the deeply political nature and intent of his “novel.” It is because of this primacy of political content and purpose that Neelkanth names a literary text representing many different kinds of episodes from Hyderabad’s history *Razakar* and nothing else. Indeed, Neelkanth’s assertion that his text is more political than artistic only underscores the political meaningfulness of the title of *Razakar*.

This chapter is devoted to analyzing the Preface to the “novel” and its first episode, which is named “Durga.” This restricted choice is made necessary in the interest of doing justice to what is a very diverse and complicated text. I have also chosen “Durga” specifically because it is a literary text that represents Razakar violence towards Hyderabad women during Partition. As I have already described in detail in the second chapter, the Razakars were the paramilitary wing of the Majlis-e-Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen (“Council of United Muslims”); the Majlis is a political party in Hyderabad that reached its violent, communalist potential in the late 1940s under the leadership of Qasim Razvi, who became its President in 1946. In a climate that was already politically and

¹⁸⁵ There is no connection between many episodes in terms of plots, characters, or even time frame. For example, one section deals with Ronald Ross and his pioneering work on malaria in Hyderabad; another is devoted to the flood relief efforts by Nizam VI in 1908.

communally fraught, Razvi instigated the Razakars against Hindus by referring repeatedly in his public speeches to the sexual violence perpetrated against Muslim women in India during Partition (Munshi 143). Under his leadership, Razakars raped women (Sundarayya 65, 68, 73; Gour, “Hyderabad” 15), looted and burnt houses, killed people, and forcibly collected levy and excise duty on behalf of landlords and other state apparatuses (Sundarayya 65; Hyderabad State Congress 9). Razakar terror forced Hindu exodus to the villages (Stree 77) as well as outside the state (Hyderabad State Congress 3; Ali, *Tragedy* 81). It also caused irreparable tears in the syncretic social and economic fabric of Hyderabad; these ruptures in interpersonal relations also encouraged migrations of dispossessed and traumatized Hindus out of Hyderabad (Gour, “Hyderabad” 70; Smith 19; Munshi 1, 137).

No other section of Neelkanth’s *Razakar* deals with the theme of Razakar violence in quite the same way as “Durga” does. A peaceful residential locality called Jampanna Gate in the neighbourhood of Brahmapuri in the Nizamabad district of Hyderabad is threatened by Razakars. Since the men have left for work, only women and children remain at home. The women cower in fear, certain that the Razakars will break down the iron gate and rape and murder them. In the end, it is a Sikh woman called Balwinder Kaur, a refugee from partitioned Punjab, who adopts the warlike demeanour of the goddess Durga, confronts the menacing Razakars, and saves the women from being abducted, raped, and/or killed. This chapter focuses on the present day political context, motives, and implications of Neelkanth’s literary conception of Jampanna Gate as a little idyllic India defined in purely Hindu and significantly gendered terms; the relevance of the choice of Durga as the women’s saviour; and the threat posed to this idyll by the

attack on two of its most sacred symbols, women and cows. I show how Neelkanth justifies his ominous calls for “decisive action” against Muslims in his Preface by subsuming all Muslims under the category of potential Razakars and narrativizing incidents of Razakar violence that date back to the Partition experiences of many Hyderabadi Hindus. In doing so, I also explain how the fact that it is a Sikh woman who saves the day represents the attempt to use Sikhs as instruments for further communal violence. I argue that Neelkanth’s narrativized appropriation of Sikhs to a violent cause is a literary attempt to mend relations between Hindus and Sikhs after the intensification of the Sikh militant movement in the early 1980s and the anti-Sikh riots in 1984 caused the annihilation of trust and understanding between these two communities. However, what mediates this seemingly well-meaning endeavour on Neelkanth’s part is the fact that it belongs to a larger Hindutva narrative that aims to subsume Sikhs within “the Hindu community” in order to reinforce its own cadres in the violence it perpetrates against Muslims. To sum up, this chapter shows how Hindu nationalist writers such as Neelkanth reconstruct the communal violence perpetrated by (some) Muslims in Hyderabad in the 1940s as an ideological tool to propagate fear, sentiments, and violent action against Muslims in India in the 2000s, and as the narrative pretext to recruit Sikhs, even Sikh women, to their rabid, divisive cause.

The most important and insidious strategy through which Neelkanth narrativizes his Hindu nationalist agenda against Muslims is through the representation of Balwinder Kaur as the goddess Durga. This image is carefully crafted through a focus on Balwinder’s appearance and her visage, both of which recall Durga as a warrior-goddess. The earliest representation of Durga in this military *avatar* occurs in the “Devi

Mahatmya” in the *Markandeyapurana* (circa 400-500 CE), which portrays Durga as a weapon-wielding, ten-armed goddess who strides purposefully into an occupied Heaven. Heaven has been usurped by the *asuras* (“demons”) and their leader *Mahishasura* (“Buffalo-demon”). Durga destroys the demon army and *Mahishasura* himself and restores Heaven and worldly order to the gods. In Neelkanth’s story, as the Razakars threaten to break the door, Balwinder takes on the mien of Durga as she is depicted in the “Devi Mahatmya”: she leaps up and snatches a sword hung on a nail on the wall, draws the sword from its scabbard, and loosens her long hair so that she looks like Durga about to slay the demons. The narrator tells us,

When the sun’s rays fell on the naked sword, it flashed like lightning. The terrified women were simply unable to believe it. Balwinder’s face had an unflinching and sacrificial expression. Her face was lit with a strange glow. Her big eyes and open hair recalled Durga of Bengal. She moved forward with steady steps ... she went and stood near the gates ... sounds of incessant blows upon the door could be heard continuously. (8-9)

Balwinder shouts at the Razakars to stop the din, and total silence ensues. She then opens the smaller door in the huge gate with a jerk and challenges the Razakars ferociously and dares them to enter the premises (8). The Razakars scatter (9).

While there are many other attributes and aspects of Durga,¹⁸⁶ the only one that is propagated by right-wing Hindutva organizations such as the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (“National Association of Self-Volunteers”; RSS) and other affiliates of its

¹⁸⁶ Durga is described in the “Devi Mahatmya” as kind, nourishing, content, tranquil, patient, and gentle. She is also a bringer of good fortune (471) and offers boons of faith, intelligence, and modesty, among other things (483). She dispels poverty and pain (485). Her creative capabilities are honoured when she is called “original Nature” by the gods and also when she is credited as being the “cause of all the worlds” (483).

“family” (“Sangh Parivar”) such as the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (“World Hindu Council”; VHP)¹⁸⁷ is that of her ferocity, aggression, and anger as she slays the demons. This is also the case with present-day mainstream Hindu culture in Bengal, for example, which leads India in its worship of Durga every autumn during the Durga Puja festival. Idols that are temporarily erected for the ten-day duration of Durga Puja always depict Durga as *Mahishasuramardini*, “she who slays the Buffalo-Demon” (Kovacs 374). This particular image of Durga suppresses “the available pastiche of Durga myths and attempts to emerge as a totalising narrative which renders its material as coherent, continuous and unified” (Pathak and Sengupta 288). Moreover, this chosen image becomes even more problematic when we remember that Hinduism is not a unified religion with a founder or ecclesiastical organization and that, consequently, “Hindu deities are ... constituted through plurally authored, multiply motivated myths which must be read not only as alterations and reinterpretations but also as appropriations and contestations” (288). It

¹⁸⁷ The RSS was founded in 1925 (Basu et al 12; Jaffrelot 33), and claims to be a cultural and social organization, not a political one (Basu et al viii). It is significant that the Majlis was formed in Hyderabad at around the same time (1927) and that it too pretended to be a cultural and social organization till about 1938. Like the Majlis in 1940s Hyderabad, the RSS too played and, in fact, continues to play a significant political role in Indian politics through its total indoctrination of its adolescent recruits into a majoritarian conception of Hinduism (13, 34-9); its expansion of its ideology through its more overtly political affiliates (collectively known as “Sangh Parivar,” or “family of the organization”) has betrayed its true intentions of taking over the Indian polity by molding the way successive generations of Hindus approach history, culture, society, politics, and religion. Thus, while the RSS continues to work in insidious ways, “pursuing ... long-term goals through quiet but sustained physical-cum-ideological training of cadres” (24), its “guiding hand ... simultaneously concealed – and subtly displayed” (95), the VHP, a Sangh Parivar affiliate, was created in 1964 to forge “a corporate Hindu identity, to unite all Hindu sects in opposition to Islam” (Basu et al ix, 64; Jaffrelot 193). It is through the VHP that Hindutva ideology has truly acquired its expansionist dimension, and women, youth, and *sadhus* (“ascetics”) have been mobilized against Muslims through the ingenious, flexible, and extremely dangerous use of technology, such as video films, audio-cassettes, stickers (Basu et al ix, 93, 99-101), and now, DVDs and internet resources. It is also the VHP that makes the most effort to engulf communities that have professed a distinct identity, such as Sikhs and Dalits, into their homogeneous community of “Hindus” (59-60, 63). To understand to what extent the Sangh Parivar has infiltrated Indian political and public life, and how much it has influenced the way Indians live and die, we only need to take Gujarat as an example. This state, which witnessed a government-sponsored, month-long orgy of rape, gangrape, and massacre of Muslims in 2002, had at the time, the following Sangh-trained officials: the Chief Minister (Narendra Modi), the Governor, the Lokayukta (chairman of the state public service commission), the Vice-Chancellor of Gujarat University, the senior government pleader at the Ahmedabad High Court, senior police officials, etc (Sarkar, “Semiotics” 2872-3). What was also very helpful in giving a free hand to the Gujarat government in the atrocities it perpetrated was the fact that the then Indian Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, as well as the Indian Home Minister, L.K. Advani, are RSS veterans and major BJP leaders (2873). In addition to this, the state radio and a section of the Gujarati press, led by *Sandesh* and *Gujarat Samachar*, were actively used by Modi to manufacture and freely circulate stories of Muslim violence against Hindus (2873).

becomes imperative, therefore, to explore the objectives behind the privileging of one specific attribute of Durga through repeated and constant narrative reiterations of the same in Hindutva representations as well as mainstream Hindu representations of this goddess.

However, we must first examine Neelkanth's choice to represent Balwinder Kaur as Durga, which appropriates for the author's own sinister ends the way Durga is referred to in Sikh martial tradition. Finding himself and his followers in an increasingly tense conflict with successive, oppressive Mughal administrations, Sikh Guru Guru Gobind Singh (Nanak X) inaugurated the Khalsa in 1699 as a logical culmination of the military and revolutionary impetus provided by earlier Sikh gurus. The Khalsa were "a casteless and self-abnegating commonwealth of Sikhs ready to take up arms to fight for justice and equality" (Singh, *Feminine* 119). Initiation into the Khalsa involved the baptism of Sikh men and women with water churned with a double-edged sword. Male khalsas, who renounced their earthly responsibilities and lives, were called "Singh" ("lion"), and females were called "Kaur" ("princess") (119-20). Balwinder Kaur's name, then, firmly situates her in the history of Sikhism. This total military transformation in Sikhism was also inspired and encouraged by Guru Gobind Singh's poetry, which fuses the devotional and the martial (120). It has two focal points: to sing praises of God and to infuse new energy into a listless and oppressed society (120). The Guru chose themes from Hindu sacred literature to produce verse that was charged with military feeling (121). Durga was his favourite literary subject, and the myth of her battle with demons is narrated in his Braj composition *Chandi Charitra* ("The Exploits of Chandi"),¹⁸⁸ and in Punjabi in *Var*

¹⁸⁸ In his writings, Guru Gobind Singh refers to Durga by her many names and forms: Kali, Chandi, Chamunda, and Bhadrakali (Singh, *Feminine* 121).

Durga Ki (“The Ballad of Durga”) (121). A panegyric devoted to Durga’s immense prowess is also present in his *Akal Ustati*, a hymn written in praise of God (122).

Nikky-Guninder Kaur Singh argues that Durga is present in all her *Puranic* glory in Guru Gobind Singh’s writing, but that the Guru does not profess to be her devotee. Instead, she is recalled as a mythical and literary figure and metaphor (122, 123). She points out that while the “Devi Mahatmya” situates Durga as the subject of ritual, devotion, and cult, the Guru’s narration does not¹⁸⁹ (124). What the Guru does is effect a transformation of mythos into ethos. In other words, he uses the archetypal potential of myth to set up Durga as a role model for what he saw as an inert society that needed to fight for justice (126) because the myth of Durga as *Mahishasuramardini* “held possibilities for the present, for the future” (127). He “singled her out as a model of moral force and martial prowess for both men and women” (127). It is easy to see why such an idea appealed to the Guru. Durga is the only goddess in the *Puranas* who is independent of male partners. She also impressively personifies the battle against injustice and evil because she is the central figure fighting the demons who threaten to destroy the world (127). She contains in her powerful person the united strength of many gods, “so that she alone [and not the gods] is able to defeat the demons” (127). Singh points out that the

¹⁸⁹ In fact, Singh argues that both the *Chandi Charitra* and the *Akal Ustati* are specifically addressed to the Sikh idea of God, a beginningless, formless, infinite being (124). So, she asserts, the recalling of Durga by the Guru does not entail veneration, but a literary reconstruction of her heroic deeds (125). The fact that Singh makes a considerable effort to explain that the Guru does not worship Durga as a goddess but represents her as a mythical or literary figure worthy of emulation stems from Singh’s own stance as a Sikh scholar. As she tells us herself, there is a controversy amongst Hindu and Sikh scholars over the Guru’s poetry about Durga. Hindu scholars such as S. Radhakrishnan have interpreted the significance of Durga in the Guru’s oeuvre as indicative of the profound influence Hinduism has had on Sikhism, thereby suggesting that, like the Hindus, Sikhs too worship Durga. However, Sikhism is expressly against the worship of idols. In reaction to such interpretations of the Guru’s poetry by Hindu scholars, some Sikh scholars have gone to the extreme of completely denying the Guru’s authorship of the above-mentioned works featuring Durga (122). I will argue further in this chapter that such an appropriative stance by Hindus and a correspondingly defensive position adopted by Sikhs is but one example from academic circles of a larger political, social, and cultural move by Hindutva to involve Sikhs in its communalist, hateful movement. While Singh herself certainly does not deny the Guru’s authorship of these works, the fact that she takes great pains to emphasize the non-devotional aspect of Durga’s character in the Guru’s poems situates her within this attempt of Sikh scholars to distance the Guru from any hint of idolatry suggested by Hindu scholars.

Durga of the *Puranas* is not a Durga who will go on a rampage and annihilate the world.

On the contrary, she writes,

the immense energy and fury of Durga are thoroughly disciplined: these are directed towards annihilating and destroying only the demons, symbolic representations of evil and negative forces in the individual psyche and in society. Durga is indeed a destroyer, but she simultaneously saves humanity from the pit of hell. (128-9)

The centrality of Durga and her sword continues to this day in Sikh religious practice, and the first verse of *Var Durga Ki* is recited by Sikhs at the beginning of their prayers twice a day (123).

Hence, because of the precedent in Sikh religious tradition that places significance on the figure of Durga and her sword, it would appear at first glance that it is not unusual for Balwinder to be connected to Durga. Balwinder in the form of Durga is successful in protecting the helpless Hindu women. Like Durga, Balwinder scatters the violent Muslim Razakars without any male assistance. The historical parallel between the Sikhs of the seventeenth century fighting Mughal oppression and Balwinder in the mid-twentieth century fending off the communal paramilitary forces of a state ruled by a Muslim despot is clear. The decision to lay the responsibility of protecting the Hindu women in Balwinder's hands is also made apt by the information we are given earlier in the text about Balwinder's refugee status. Balwinder and her husband have experienced personal and financial loss during Partition and have fled from the communal violence in Punjab. So when Balwinder becomes the one who dispenses with the Razakars, it appears as if justice is served.

But although there is a precedent in Sikh religious tradition that would make such a representation plausible, this portrayal has to be read in its immediate context: the attempted cooptation of Sikhs into the violent project of Hindu nationalism. Besides claiming to represent all Hindus, Hindutva ideology threatens to engulf certain other minority communities such as Sikhs, many of whose members frequently resist these attempts because they wish to maintain a separate political identity from Hindutva¹⁹⁰ (Moliner 312). However, Hindu nationalist organisations from the Arya Samaj to the RSS “have been consistent in their claim that Sikhs are an integral part of the Hindu social and religious structure”¹⁹¹ (307). Since Partition, which positioned Sikhs and Hindus against Muslims, Hindu nationalist discourses have claimed with greater and greater insistence that Sikhs are Hindus (313) because Muslims killed Sikhs along with Hindus during Partition (314). These discourses also maintain that the urgency to be united comes from the fact that if “the Hindus” split up into Sanatanists, Sikhs, Jains etc., they will cease to be a majority against “the Muslims” (314). But in spite of the fact that identities of Hindus and Sikhs were conflated by Muslims during Partition, a point exploited by Hindu

¹⁹⁰ For example, it is this tone that emerges as significant in *Panthic.org*, an “online Sikh news and views publication” that has been active in uncovering the “unscrupulous activities” of the RSS and other Sangh Parivar affiliates (Singh, *Panthic.org*).

¹⁹¹ This strategy appears to have its roots in the writings of Hindutva ideologues such as V.D. Savarkar (1883-1966), particularly in his pamphlet *Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?* (1923), as well as M.S. Golwalkar (1906-1973), in his book *Bunch of Thoughts* (1966). Both ideologues insist that Sikhs are Hindus (Savakar 39, 45); that Nanak was a Hindu reformer and comparable to Ram, Krishna, and Chaitanya because of their connection through *jati* (in Savarkar’s discourse, “brotherhood”) (Savarkar 41, 89; Golwalkar 67); that Guru Tegh Bahadur was a Hindu leader and liberator (Savarkar 54-55, 94); and that Sikh religious thought is a part of the great body of Hindu religious thought (*Hindudharma*) (Savarkar 108; Golwalkar 105). Bankimchandra Chattopadhyaya (1838-1894), one of the founding fathers of Indian nationalism, was also responsible for triggering off the attempted appropriation of Sikhs into the Hindu fold through his glorification of “Hindu” (read Rajput, Maratha, and Sikh) resistance against medieval Muslim rulers (Basu et al 4). In addition to this, even though there was some cooperation in the late nineteenth century between the Arya Samaj and Sikh groups to prevent the conversion of Hindus and Sikhs to Islam and Christianity, it ended in 1900 when, according to Sikhs, the Arya Samaj betrayed them by converting lower caste Rahtia Sikhs to Hinduism (Moliner 309-10; Basu et al 10). Around this time the Arya Samaj also adamantly tried to prove that the Sikh Gurus were inferior to their own founder Dayanand Saraswati (1824-1883) and that Sikhs were nothing else but Hindus (Moliner 311).

nationalists since then, tensions between Sikhs and Hindus continued in independent India, most prominently during the Khalistan movement.

Seeking to establish a separate homeland for Sikhs, the Khalistan movement reached its zenith in terms of militancy in the 1980s. Veena Das has argued that the Sikh militants' discourse at this time consciously developed a language that would realize a politically united group of Sikhs with a separate, unchanging identity; she points out that Sikh militants stressed that for this distinct identity Sikhs have always had to and continue to struggle against great odds (*Critical* 121, 128). Their discourse consisted of "a series of rigorous dualisms in which masculine and feminine, Hindu and Sikh, and state and community function as counter-concepts" (118). In fact, the militants saw "the Hindu character" and the Indian state, which came to stand for each other, as the biggest threats to Sikh identity¹⁹² (121). Hindus were represented by Sikh militants as "weak, effeminate and cunning" Others who have tinged the state apparatuses in similar hues thanks to their large representation in this area (122); Sikhs were depicted as having always historically despised yet bravely protected the feminized Hindus¹⁹³ (122). Das points out that this discourse was afflicted with the anxiety that Hindus seek to

¹⁹² Thus, restrictions on carrying the *kirpan* ("sword"), which is a mandatory item in Sikh traditional attire, on Air India international flights and Indian Airlines domestic flights were seen as the attempt by the "Hindu" state to rob the masculinity of Sikhs (127-8). In fact, any alternative definition of Sikhism, such as the religious practices of Nirankari Sikhs, became interpreted as a conspiracy of the Hindu state to wipe out Sikhs (133-4).

¹⁹³ This martial self-representation of Sikhs is connected not only to the military history of Sikhism but also to the post-1858 definition of Sikhs by British military men (serving in India) as one of the "martial races" of the country. For examples of this characterization in the aftermath of the Sepoy Rebellion (1857-1858), see A. H. Bingley's *Sikhs* (1899) and Lieutenant-General George MacMunn's *The Martial Races of India* (1933). See also Pradeep Barua's "Inventing Race: The British and India's Martial Races" (1995) and Heather Streets's *Martial Races: The Military, Race and Masculinity in British Imperial Culture, 1857-1914* (2005). In the construction of (male) Hindus as feminine and Sikhs as martial and masculine, Sikh militant leader Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale particularly targeted Gandhi. He said that Sikhs were insulted at the thought of being included in a nation that considered Gandhi, a man who mobilized people around feminine symbols like the *charkha*, to be the Father of the Nation (Das, *Critical* 126). The present-day Hindutva overtures towards Sikhs as the "sword arm" of the Hindu community seem to have drawn not only on colonial stereotypes and Sikh militants' discourse, but also on Hindutva ideologue Golwalkar's writings. It was Golwalkar who insisted that Sikhs were the "sword arm" of "the Hindus"; he even stressed that the Khalsa were created for the protection of Hindu society (105-6).

emasculate Sikhs and make them effeminate and weak like themselves and, in this way, erase them from history (126-7). The escalation of the tension maintained by this discourse, which pitted Hindus and Sikhs against each other, culminated in Operation Bluestar (3-6 June 1984), a state military operation designed to weed out militants hiding in the Sikh Golden Temple at Amritsar. This attack by what was seen by Sikh militants and their followers as “the Hindu state” on the most sacred shrine in Sikhism was followed by the assassination of Indira Gandhi on October 31, 1984 by two of her Sikh bodyguards. The assassination in turn triggered off anti-Sikh riots in Delhi and its surrounding areas in which three thousand Sikhs were killed by Hindus, many of them Congress leaders and workers, in Delhi alone (Grewal 2). It is estimated that a total of five thousand Sikhs were killed during these “riots,” which affected mostly North Indian states that were being governed by the Congress (Singh, *I Accuse* 30).

Political efforts to mend the Hindu-Sikh breach after 1984 include the alliance between the BJP and the Akali Dal in Punjab in 1996. The result of the BJP being given access to Punjab is seen in the government patronage of the Sangh Parivar, a patronage which has allowed Hindutva organizations, such as the RSS, VHP, Bajrang Dal, and Shiv Sena, to develop Hindu nationalist activities in Punjab¹⁹⁴ (Moliner 308). The RSS also created an organization called the Rashtriya Sikh Sangat (“National Sikh Association”; Sangat) in Delhi in the aftermath of the 1984 pogrom. What is deeply objectionable about this organization is that it is meant exclusively to drive home to rural Sikhs the point that they are, after all, Hindus, and must reintegrate with their brethren to serve the violent

¹⁹⁴ Although these organizations had been active earlier as well, they had to lie low during the militant movement of the 1980s. In line with Hindutva operations elsewhere, these organizations have different functions in Punjab: the Rashtriya Sikh Sangat focuses on the religious sphere; the Bajrang Dal acts as the cultural police; the Shiv Sena sustains the Sangh Parivar’s anti-Muslim rhetoric; and the BJP tries to hold on to electoral power (Moliner 317).

cause of Hindutva against Muslims (Moliner 317-8; Pandher, “RSS”). Through its door-to-door campaigns and personal contact programs, the RSS has tried to recruit young Sikhs to the Hindutva movement (Pandher, “RSS”). These mobilization drives were strategically begun in 1999 before Sikhs began to celebrate the three hundredth anniversary of the inauguration of the Khalsa.¹⁹⁵ Through these outreach programs, the RSS and the Sangat have tried “to impress on villagers in Gurdaspur and Amritsar districts that Sikhs are only a sword arm of the Hindu faith” (Pandher, “RSS”). The RSS also took considerable pains to emphasize to Sikh villagers that those who seek to institutionalize a separate identity for the Sikhs are nothing but “Pakistan-sponsored terrorists” (qtd in Pandher, “RSS”), thereby revealing the perennial anxieties of the Hindutva right-wing about further post-Partition “vivisections” of the “motherland.” Such fears not only permeate the advances Hindutva organizations make towards Sikhs, but they also become rhetorical justifications for persecuting Indian Muslims, who are constantly being suspected of conspiring to divide the country.

In order to “return” Sikhs to the Hindutva fold, the Sangat’s activities include manipulating religious imagery shared by all Punjabis. It cleverly mixes Sikh and Hindu symbols on banners, posters, and pamphlets in such a way that it appropriates Sikh identity and inserts it into a larger, dominant Hindu identity. For example, on one poster, representations of the ten Sikh Gurus are squeezed into the body of a cow, held sacred by many Hindus (Moliner 318). Sikhs are also enraged by the suggestion in a 2006 RSS film

¹⁹⁵ An indicator of how much the RSS is committed to making inroads into Sikh communities in Punjab is that they are in touch with Akali Dal leaders and that their “awareness” meetings and social functions feature Sikhs who have held prominent posts in public office. For example, Joginder Singh, the former Director of the Central Bureau of Investigation, and Sarabjit Singh, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (Amritsar), have been known to attend such meetings as honoured chief guests. Besides reaching out to powerful officials, the RSS is also trying to craft its own future presence in Punjab by keeping note of how many Sikh youth have joined the Indian army, Central Security Forces (CSF), and the state police (Pandher, “RSS”). The fact that the RSS seeks out and attempts to influence young and ideologically malleable individuals who are part of the state’s military apparatuses shows that it aims to build durable channels into the vital functioning and political control of the Indian state.

that Golwalkar told Sikhs to protect Hindus during Partition because it implies that Sikhs are at the beck and call of the RSS, which may order them to protect Hindus as and when it likes¹⁹⁶(322). In addition to this, the RSS actively strives to rewrite Sikh history in ways that confirm their claim that Sikhs are the sword arm of the Hindu nation (318). For example, Sikh martyrs such as Haqiqat Rai, Udham Singh, Guru Nanak, and Guru Tegh Bahadur are turned into Hindu heroes and given special pride of place on walls in the Jalandhar office of the RSS (318-9). In fact, scholars have pointed out that the discourse of Hindutva ideologues such as Savarkar and Golwalkar sees Sikhs as an important part of the long struggle for the birth of the Hindu nation (Pandey, “Hindus” 242).

Needless to say, Sikh groups such as the Shiromani Akali Dal, a radical faction of the Akali Dal which links the plight of Indian Sikhs to that of other Indian minority communities, the Dal Khalsa, the Khalsa Panchayat, and the Damdami Taksal have fiercely opposed recent RSS activities in the state (Moliner 321). There are also individual actors such as the editor of a Sikh publication, Sant Sipahi, and the Director of the Institute of Sikh Studies in Chandigarh, who are involved in mobilizing people against the RSS in Punjab (321-2). Furthermore, the Akal Takht, the supreme religious authority of Sikhs, has banned the Rashtriya Sikh Sangat in a *hukamnama* (“edict”) in July 2004, which forbids Sikhs from being involved in any way with that organization (322).

Divisive ideologies have also been undermined by citizens’ groups who have joined together to reconstruct pre-Partition cross-community bonds between Sikhs,

¹⁹⁶ Many orthodox Sikhs also consider the ongoing debates about the status of the *Dasam Granth*, in which Guru Gobind Singh refers to Durga, as yet another attempt by the RSS to undermine Sikh religious identity and Hinduise Sikhs (Moliner 326). As I have already explained above, this point also explains why Nikky-Guninder Kaur Singh, in her analysis of the Guru’s poetry on Durga, takes great pains to establish that the Guru does not consider Durga an object of veneration or worship.

Hindus, and Muslims in Punjab. For example, rural Sikh and Hindu landlords, priests, farmers, school and college going boys, and migrants who came to Punjab during the violence of Partition have recently “repaired, rebuilt or built from scratch” two hundred mosques across Punjab that were damaged in the Sikh/Hindu-Muslim violence during Partition (Dogra, “Shades”). This work marks an important achievement in Punjab in light of the divisions the Sangh Parivar is determined to create and sustain. At the reopening of one such mosque, Maulana Habibur Rahman Sani Ludhianwi, the grateful Shahi Imam of Punjab to whom the mosque was formally handed over by a member of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, said that the reconstruction is “a good lesson for those communal leaders who often trigger riots in the country in the name of religion” (Rahman, “Sikhs”; Khan, “Sikhs”). These ongoing efforts to rebuild communities rent asunder by Partition are steps towards jointly getting over the trauma of Partition and focusing on rebuilding crumbling pre-Partition communities, interactions, and alliances.¹⁹⁷

However, what makes the presence of the Sangh Parivar in Punjab dangerous is the sheer versatility and innovation of Hindutva ideology¹⁹⁸ (Moliner 315). It is this

¹⁹⁷ Since Partition, there is no longer any significant population of Muslims in Indian Punjab. According to the latest edition of the Statistical Abstract of Punjab (2010), there were 14,592,387 Sikhs, 8,997,942 Hindus, and 382,047 Muslims in Punjab in 2001 (Government, *Basic*). Muslims account for 1.5% of the population of Punjab, “mostly migrant labour from UP and Bihar and some Gujjar families from Jammu and Kashmir who have settled here, in addition to small pockets of Muslims, such as those belonging to Malerkotla, who did not go to Pakistan in 1947” (Dogra, “Shades”). Thus, there is no possibility of direct joint confrontation of Sikhs and Hindus against a numerically negligible population of Muslims that the Sangh Parivar can exploit in Punjab for its political objectives. Instead, it tries to sustain its nation-wide political agenda against Muslims by constructing and maintaining in Punjab “a vehemently anti-Muslim and anti-Pakistani discourse” (Moliner 308).

¹⁹⁸ The ability of the Hindutva movement to act opportunistically can be seen in the fact that the RSS stood by the Arya Samaj and adopted its pro-Hindi stance during the Punjabi Suba movement of the 1950s until it realized that the central government in Delhi would meet the Sikh-dominated Akali Dal’s demand and indeed create what is now called Punjab. The RSS then promptly dropped Hindi as a cause and adopted a pro-Punjabi stand. It appealed to Punjabi Hindus to return Punjabi in Gurmukhi script as their preferred language in the census and based this appeal on its constant refrain that Sikhs are Hindus after all (Moliner 315). Another example of political expediency is the fact that the Bharatiya Janata Party (“Indian People’s Party”; BJP), which focuses on the electoral sphere of Hindutva (and, consequently, cannot alienate Sikh voters), tactfully maintains that while Hindus and Sikhs have “cordial” relations, they have

remarkable ability of Hindutva to act expediently that we see in the insidious narrative strategies in Neelkanth's "Durga." Through the martial representation of a Sikh woman, the armed saviour of the Hindu women, Neelkanth subtly and meaningfully employs mainstream narratives of Partition, which incorrectly maintain the perception that Partition violence exclusively consisted of inter-communal (and not intra-communal) violence against women.¹⁹⁹ He places Hindu and Sikh women in binary opposition to predatory Muslim Razakars in yet another politically interested attempt by Hindu nationalists to build bridges with Sikhs against Muslims in the aftermath of 1984. He does this by applying to Balwinder the template of the warlike aspect of Durga, which, as I will discuss later in this chapter, is being used by Hindutva organizations to recruit Hindu women to commit violence against Muslims during periods of communal tension. By referring to the context of Partition, when many Hindu and Sikh women were raped by Muslim men, and aligning a Sikh female character alongside Hindu women against Razakars, Neelkanth is emphasizing what Hindu nationalists have been stressing for a century or more: Sikhs are, after all, Hindus and must fight alongside Hindus against Muslims, all of whom, according to Neelkanth, have the potential to be Razakars.

Thus, couched in a familiar and convenient Partition story about the possible abduction of women by violent men of the Other community, the upright and righteous Balwinder as Durga represents yet another Hindutva attempt to mobilize Sikhs against

separate (but not different!) identities which can be accommodated in Hinduism, which is "not a religion but a way of life" (qtd in Moliner 321). What the BJP probably also uses to its benefit is the point that Indian legislation too considers Hindu "all denominations of Hindus, Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs" (Singh, *Against* 66). And the divide between these "Hindus" and Muslims is compounded by the fact that India has two sets of personal law relating to marriage, divorce, adoption, maintenance, and succession: one law for "Hindus" based on secular ideas and another for Muslims based on *sharia*, the Islamic law code.

¹⁹⁹ For refutations of and evidence against this widespread perception, see Butalia (*Other* 153-71) and Menon and Bhasin (45-60).

Muslims.²⁰⁰ Neelkanth's sustained focus on Balwinder's sword, which "flashed like lightning" (8), can be read as an appropriation of the *kirpan* ("sword") that Sikhs are meant to carry as a mark of their faith. The *ardas*, a supplicatory prayer recited at the end of daily prayers and before the start of a significant undertaking, also starts with "remembering the sword" (Singh, *Feminine* 143). Remembering the sword is a meditative process that starts with the inspirational material reality of the sword, which encourages contemplation beyond its own physical body and upon the formless, infinite being of God. Associated with Durga, the sword becomes a point of contemplation for Sikh men and women. Durga's feats and the deeds of her sword become interchangeable (146). Both are referred to as *bhagauti*, and this is taken to signify that "[t]he means for the restoration of an ethical order, as envisioned by Guru Gobind Singh, is the sword" (147). The sword is meant to resist tyranny, and like Durga, "was to be invoked only in self-defense and as a last resort" (147). So the sword and, by implication, Durga become symbols of self-respect and freedom in Sikhism (148). While it is this connection between the sword and the way to freedom under tremendous odds that is behind Neelkanth's extensive focus on Balwinder's sword, we must also situate this representation in terms of the Hindutva attempts to appropriate Sikhs for a cause that has little to do with freedom or justice.

What reinforces this point is the Preface, where Neelkanth's own motives emerge.

In it, Neelkanth offers a brief history of Hyderabad that concludes in praise of

²⁰⁰ And there are other examples of this attempted mobilization through narratives in Neelkanth's "novel." In another episode that also deals with Razakar violence, the idea that Sikhs are the sword arm of Hindus is emphasized. Reference is made to an older practice amongst Hindus of dedicating the eldest son of each Hindu family to Sikhism; this practice is sought to be revived in the story so that each Hindu family has a Sikh bodyguard, as it were (128). For a multi-dimensional, highly nuanced literary representation of this tradition amongst Hindus, and the development of Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh communal politics on the eve of Partition from both a private as well as high political perspective, see Shauna Singh Baldwin's *What the Body Remembers* (1999). Furthermore, Hindus are criticized by Neelkanth in yet another episode in his novel for not learning "the language of the 'sword'" from the Sikhs (134).

Vallabhbhai Patel's "foresight and courage" in dealing with the Indo-Hyderabad dispute during Partition, which was resolved in 1948 through the violent invasion of Hyderabad by the Indian army. That the political approach and language of Patel, who was the Deputy Prime Minister of India, led to the systematic persecution and killings of many Muslims as well as communists fighting against feudal and communalist oppression in Hyderabad does not appear to bother Neelkanth (Munshi 181; Ali, *Tragedy* 151-2, 191-236). In fact, Neelkanth's admiration for this decidedly communalist statesman marks Neelkanth himself as a communalist. Further, he points out that "today Hyderabadi Muslims are ashamed of the past anti-national violence perpetrated by the Razakars" (xii). Such a statement considers all Hyderabadi Muslims *today* complicit in the guilt of the Razakars, who were active and influential mostly in Hyderabad and only between 1946 and 1948. It holds all Hyderabadi Muslims, from the 1940s till today, accountable for the violent actions of the Razakars in Hyderabad and suggests that there is a need for all of them to explicitly denounce the Razakars²⁰¹ in order to establish their loyalty to the nation. The ahistorical, deceptive sense of a homogeneous Muslim community with a single, fixed political outlook is reinforced. No allowance is made for internal differences in political opinion stemming from diversity of sect, class, caste, gender, sexuality, language, or region. As I have shown above with reference to Sikhs, such a collapsing of a large demographic of people into one group with a uniform and singular identity, which can then become politically useful as a symbol of good or evil, is a strategy Hindu nationalists use not only to deal with Muslims, but also in the way they relate with Sikhs and other minority communities such as Buddhists, Jains etc.

²⁰¹ This is in general connected to the question of the loyalty of Indian Muslims to India, an expression of which Hindutva organizations and even many Hindus who do not profess Hindutva affiliations repeatedly demand. I have noted this point in some detail in a footnote in the previous chapter.

Neelkanth goes on to write that “[t]he age of the Razakars is over. The Razakars are finished. But who knows, some leftover Razakars may have become active again – having changed their name and guise! They may be boring holes in the court of republican values again!” (xii-xiii) He stresses the need to “investigate” whether or not there are still active Razakars around, “if only in the context of bomb explosions! If only in the context of terrorist activities!” (xiii). The repeated use of exclamation marks at the end of these sentences conveys an unmistakable sense of urgency and is intended to encourage watchfulness and even fear of Muslims amongst Hindus. Neelkanth emphasizes that bigotry has not ended and that it is challenging humanitarian values across the world, “its thousand [snake] hoods raised” (xiii). At first glance, Neelkanth’s concerns with terrorism seems unremarkable, given the recent context of the attack by Islamist terrorists on the Indian Parliament in 2001 as well as the many incidents of old as well as recent and ongoing militant violence that pepper the fraught history of Kashmir, yet another much disputed erstwhile princely state. However, his warnings to his readers to remain alert for the signs of bigotry take on an entirely new hue when we consider the specific context of Razakars, Hyderabad, and Muslims in which he situates his writing in 2005. In a country where there is already widespread persecution of Muslims, the most recent and most horrifying example being the state-sponsored genocide of Muslims in Gujarat in 2002, Neelkanth’s comments become another source of justification for the aggressive violence that Hindutva organizations promote and perpetrate against Muslims. Indeed, because Neelkanth holds all Muslims guilty for Razakar violence, thereby effecting a smooth narrative fusion between the terms “Razakar” and “Muslim,” so that

both become synonymous in his writing, every Muslim becomes a justified target for surveillance and persecution.

Thus, to preface a literary narrative containing a martial representation of a Sikh woman who protects Hindu women from Muslim Razakars with an implicit call for the need to watch and persecute Muslims amidst a climate of rapid Hindutva expansion is tantamount to pointing out to Sikhs their instrumental function within Hindutva as those who will lead Hindutva violence and oppression of Muslims. Let me clarify that I am not suggesting that there is no possibility of there being plural, fluid notions of community in which Sikhism and Hinduism flourish side by side. My concern is that the kind of Sikhism Hindutva is interested in seeks to erase any ambivalence that Sikhs may profess towards Hindutva and aims to instead use them as weapons in an aggressive, expansionist cause that is not in the interests of democracy or any kind of secular, egalitarian thought. What is significant is the fact that this move to incorporate minority groups into one singularly defined Hindu nationalist identity attempts to engulf everyone into the service of a violent ideology that has no claim to fighting the kind of oppression it claims Hindus are suffering. This Hindutva strategy amounts to the misappropriation of the teachings of Sikh Gurus engaged in fighting a kind of oppression that does not exist today. To suggest that a confrontation of Sikhs and Hindus against Muslims that is comparable to the conflicts that arose in the later Mughal period (or even during Partition) exists today in India, and that Sikhs need to contribute to the cause of Hindutva and fight some imagined spectre of “Muslim tyranny” is, quite simply, a total fabrication which tries to fraudulently manipulate Sikh history, an attempt that many Sikhs are actively resisting. Indeed, there is little threat of Hindus or Sikhs getting wiped out by a Muslim community

that is much-reduced both numerically and politically since Partition, “in real life a minority, grossly under-represented in the bureaucratic, military, professional and business elites” (Basu et al 113).

The insidious manner in which Hindutva ideology functions to create these myths is also visible in the dedication of *Razakar*. Out of many Hyderabadi heroes such as Chaityala Ailamma, Acchamamba, Doddi Komarayya, Raj Bahadur Gour, and Makhdoom Mohiuddin, who also fought against the Razakars, Neelkanth chooses Shoebullah Khan, a radical journalist slain by the Razakars, for his dedication. The book is meant to be a tribute to

the bright pillar of keen national consciousness, correspondent of *Imroze*, the immortal journalist martyr Mr. Shoebullah Khan, who was murdered in broad daylight on August 20 [*sic*], 1948 by fundamentalist *Razakars*, and who has been completely forgotten by state as well as national governments.

While these words appear at first glance to attest to Neelkanth’s secular credentials, I contend that it is yet another right-wing attempt to appropriate the figure of a communist journalist who defiantly published his support of the Telangana struggle as well as other democratic movements against the Nizam and boldly challenged the Razakars in his writings. Enraged by Khan’s refusal to stop his written propaganda against the Razakars, the Razakars sought to prove that the pen was not mightier than the sword by attacking him and chopping his hands off. Not only does Khan’s terribly violent, graphic, and symbolically meaningful death serve as fertile ground for Neelkanth’s literary talents as a writer, it also suits his purpose of reminding his readers how dangerous and cruel the

Razakars were and, therefore, because he conflates the two, how violent and menacing *all* Muslims can be.

Khan's death is also a better platform for Neelkanth's literary and political purposes because it markedly differs from the relatively unremarkable deaths of Chaityala Ailamma, Raj Bahadur Gour, and Makhdoom Mohiuddin. However, the fact that Neelkanth ignores Doddi Komarayya's equally violent death during the Telangana Struggle and dedicates *Razakar* solely to Khan also points to the BJP's attempts to manufacture an identity for Muslims that would be tolerable in a foreseeable Hindu nation.²⁰² The most important part of this proposed "Muslim" identity is, in line with the thought of Savarkar (113, 139) and Golwalkar (127, 133, 321), the disavowal of any other identity (religious, linguistic, cultural, historical) over the nation. In a related context, Rajeswari Sunder Rajan has pointed out that Hindu nationalist politics is "expansionist and adaptable, and shows itself to be (selectively) incorporative of various 'progressive' elements in the political interests of enlarging its appeal to women, lower castes and, even, other minority communities" ("Is" 38). It is this attempt to expand the influence of the right-wing by feigning a secular identity through the strategic recuperation of a Muslim figure such as Khan that is seen in the tone of Neelkanth's dedication, which fits in very well with the increasing attention the BJP is showering on Khan as a nationalist hero from Andhra Pradesh. For example, on August 21, 2012, a day before his sixty-fourth death anniversary, the state BJP honoured Khan in Hyderabad as a nationalist martyr who died for the sake of the freedom of the Indian nation ("BJP Paid"). By a simple, seemingly innocuous slippage, the freedom struggle of Hyderabadis from

²⁰² This is also why the BJP has puppet Muslim politicians such as Sikander Bakht, Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, and Syed Shahnawaz Hussain and why it also has a Minority Morcha ("Minority Front").

the Nizam's autocratic misrule and the Razakars' terror is reinterpreted as the struggle to defend the Indian (read Hindu) nation against "Muslim tyrants."

Neelkanth's rhetoric continues on the same lines in the Preface as he reminds his readers that it is those who remain silent who are responsible for the rise and strengthening of such forces as the Razakars. This is why it is necessary to "look every now and then in the mirror of history. Because 'we have only learnt from history that we have learnt nothing from history'"²⁰³ (xiii). He counts *Razakar* as an attempt to peep into history through the novelistic medium. Once again, this intention to create a literary memorial of the history of Partition violence (Gera Roy and Bhatia xiv) appears to make sense in light of the official silences on the subject, until we take into account the context in which Neelkanth writes, and quite possibly, the readership that he addresses. In a tellingly familiar tone, he writes that his novel "is a challenge to the appeasing policy of governments; towards the flimsy, weak, selfish administrative rule and hole-ridden law of the government, in which the guilty escape scot-free and law-abiding gentlemen, common folk are continuously suffering and abused" (xiii). Neelkanth's reference to the "appeasing policy" (तुष्टीकरण नीति) of governments replicates the exact words of the BJP and the RSS in their permanent refrain against successive non-BJP governments (such as the present Congress government that defeated the BJP in 2004 and has been ruling from the centre since then) and their supposedly biased policies with regard to Muslims (Basu et al 37).

²⁰³ Cf. the repeated point made by RSS Supremo M.S. Golwalkar (1906-1973) in 1966 that "[t]he fault lies with the person who does not exercise caution and protect himself against the possible danger ... [D]uring the last thousand years of our history ['the Muslim period'], even after repeated experiences of disgraces and disasters, we failed to learn the one basic lesson that we alone are responsible for our downfall and unless we eradicate that fatal weakness from ourselves we cannot hope to survive as a nation" (206-7).

A recent example of this perennial complaint was seen in April 2012 when the BJP called a new bill to revoke false terror cases against Muslims, proposed by the ruling Samajwadi Party in Uttar Pradesh, an instance of “minority appeasement.” Uttar Pradesh BJP President Surya Pratap Shahi was upset because “[t]he move to leave [*sic*] those who are held for their involvement in terror activities is against the national interest. It is an act of Muslim appeasement for vote bank politics” (“UP Government”). Therefore, serving justice to Muslims is seen by the BJP as an example of undermining the national interest. In other words, the interests of Muslims and the interests of the nation are seen to be mutually exclusive.²⁰⁴

This idea of appeasement of Muslims in India by non-BJP governments, which is implicit in Neelkanth’s choice of words and context, is followed by his view that [g]overnance is, after all, always carried out through hard punishment. A doctrine that is rendered unfruitful by polite protection ... this is the culprit of history. For an administration that has justice and discipline, assertiveness and foresight like that of Sardar Patel are requisites. History never forgives those who ignore the good of the nation as a result of their own weakness. Razakars have no religion; consequently, the first duty of any good administration is to harshly crush their

²⁰⁴ The centrality of the BJP’s refrain about “minority appeasement” can be seen in the conviction expressed in scholarly circles that it was the BJP’s sustained protests over the Shah Bano case in the late 1980s that gave it a fresh lease of life in Indian politics (Hasan, *Legacy* 264). All hell broke loose after the Supreme Court verdict favouring Muslim divorcee Shah Bano was released in 1985. Shah Bano’s ex-husband was legally ordered to pay her maintenance, which he had earlier ceased to provide. Angered by the verdict that favoured the interests of Muslim women over Muslim men, orthodox Muslim organizations claiming to represent the interest of all Indian Muslims forced Congress Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to reverse the Supreme Court verdict and create a separate Muslim law vaguely based on *sharia* to deal with Muslim marital and family-related issues (Basu, “Women’s” 110). This injustice has become an excuse, as Amrita Basu points out, for the BJP to attack Muslims and thwart attempts by Congress governments, however misguided, to maintain legal safeguards for Indian Muslims (“Women’s” 110-1). In other words, the BJP feigns secularist concern and outrage in its opposition to the patriarchal Muslim Personal Law, while all the time it opposes Muslim Personal Law precisely because it was intended to work in the interests of Muslims. By removing Muslim Personal Law, the BJP wants to take away safeguards that were intended in good faith to protect a vulnerable religious minority.

hoods of ill-intention. The age of Razakars was a nightmare that has passed. What must be ensured is that it is never repeated. (xiii-xiv)

It is clear from the context of Razakar violence in “Durga” that Neelkanth’s ideas of good governance and the “good of the nation” revolve around the central tenet of Hindutva: national security and territorial integrity, which are, as I have explained above, seen to be incompatible in Hindutva politics with the interests of Muslims. Both the security and territorial integrity of the nation can only be ensured by the ideal government, whose contours are delineated in two ways. First, the glowing references to the (mis)deeds of Patel in the context of Hyderabad suggest that Neelkanth condones aggressive state strategies such as armed invasion and the subsequent crushing of minority demographics in fulfilling the agenda of territorial integrity of the Hindu nation. Second, the prescription of hard punishment for perpetrators and criticism of “polite protection” in present-day politics are implicitly directed against all Hyderabadi Muslims through his reference to Razakars, who are, as I have shown above, depicted as representative of all Muslims.²⁰⁵ Thus, through a narrative blurring of the crucial difference between Razakars, a paramilitary group active in late 1940s Hyderabad, and Muslims, who were then and today a part of subcontinental society and polity, the maintenance of national security is portrayed as integrally involving the repression of Muslims. Tanika Sarkar has summed up this attitude that we see in Neelkanth’s Preface as well as in the rhetoric and actions of Hindutva organizations as stemming from the drive to seek revenge on present-

²⁰⁵ Indeed, there is not a single Muslim character represented in a favourable light in Neelkanth’s “Durga,” a fact that distinguishes it from many other examples of Partition literature. The right-wing thrust of Neelkanth’s writing is also seen in the striking similarity between Golwalkar’s thought, which has thus far determined the trajectory of the RSS, and Neelkanth’s ideas. For example, Golwalkar’s solution for “dealing with all such subversive elements [Muslims] is to treat them on par with the enemy and put them down with an iron hand” (280).

day Muslims, who are understood as being a permanent threat to both faith and nation (Sarkar, “Semiotics” 2874; Basu et al 74-5).

Furthermore, in Neelkanth’s declarations of the need to “harshly crush” present-day “Razakars,” we see the Hindutva conviction that Sarkar outlines thus:

revenge must be taken on present-day Muslims both for historical wrongs and for the future danger they embody ... For the Muslim of today embodies all past offences and future threats that have been allegedly committed and could be committed. Therefore, revenge may be taken on any Muslim anywhere for anything that any Muslim could do or had done. (“Semiotics” 2874)

And Neelkanth’s Preface indeed encourages the perception amongst readers that Razakars represent all Hyderabadi Muslims at all times, past or present. Therefore, according to Neelkanth, it logically follows that if history is not to judge us (read Hindus/Indians) harshly, we must hold responsible all present-day Hyderabadi Muslims for the Razakars’ actions and make them bear the consequences for what the Razakars did more than sixty years ago. To suggest the ineffaceability of the crimes perpetrated by Razakars, Neelkanth quotes a Hyderabadi Muslim professor whom he does not name:²⁰⁶ “The history of the Razakars is an *indelible* blot on the forehead of Hyderabadi Muslims” (xii, emphasis mine).

The central contradiction in these statements is that although Neelkanth professes secular thoughts such as “Razakars have no religion,” thereby refraining from blaming Islam or Muslims as a whole in this particular instance, he also goes on to write in adoring and glorifying terms of Patel. What further implicates Neelkanth is his uncritical

²⁰⁶ By not naming this source, Neelkanth makes it impossible for his readers to verify the information that he gives to them.

approval for Patel's approach to the Indo-Hyderabad dispute, which culminated in India invading Hyderabad. The many rapes and murders of Muslims that happened as a result of the invasion were actively hushed up by Patel and other prominent figures like Nehru.²⁰⁷

In addition to this, what makes Neelkanth's suggestive fear mongering even more troubling is that there is ample evidence to suggest that there is nothing spontaneous about communal riots in India; narrative constructions of Muslims as innately and spontaneously violent and dangerous contribute a great deal to the atmosphere in which riots are prone to occur. Indeed, these narratives have become part of the elaborate preparations that go into riots. For example, a joint delegation of the All-India Democratic Women's Association (AIDWA), Centre for Women's Development Studies (CWDS), Mahila Dakshata Samiti (MDS), and the National Federation of Indian Women (NFIW) notes in its report that it was the concentrated campaign of hate launched by the Sangh Parivar that led to the terrible crimes perpetrated against Muslims in Bhopal, Ahmedabad, and Surat in the aftermath of the Babri Masjid demolition in 1992 (AIDWA et al 305). Rumours circulated during these riots through word of mouth and media coverage included, for example, "news" about the kidnapping, rape, and detention in a mosque of the residents of a working women's hostel in Bhopal (307). The delegation concludes in this regard: "This seemed to be a design to make a section of the [Hindu] community active participants in the carnage and devastation that followed" (328). When the delegation interviewed the warden and residents of the hostel in Bhopal, they categorically denied the incident and said that life had continued normally for them since they lived in an elite, high-security area of Bhopal (316). The joint delegation reports that

²⁰⁷ For more on this, see my discussion on the Operation Polo report in Chapter 2.

these rumours then became the grounds for violence against Muslim women and children, whose suffering was then underplayed in newspapers, while traumatic experiences of Hindu women were highlighted, emphasized, and news of these spread like wildfire²⁰⁸ (307).

And in the most recent communalist violence in Gujarat in 2002, in which official estimates suggest nine hundred people were killed and unofficial assessments suggest that anywhere between two thousand and five thousand may have been killed (People's Union 1), Sarkar points out that the Gujarati press had invented the rape and murder of eighty Hindu women travelling on the Sabarmati Express at Godhra railway station ("Semiotics" 2875). Details such as the chopping off of women's breasts, a trope that goes back to the reality of Partition violence against women, were also fabricated. Sarkar points out that the falsity of such "news" was established by the fact that even the Gujarat police, which was notorious for its involvement in the violence, denied any such rape or murder of the women travelling on the Sabarmati Express (2875). Such narratives created a situation where the impalement, disembowelment, rape, gangrape, torture, burning alive, and burying alive of Muslim infants, children, and women were considered justified²⁰⁹ (2875). The public acts of sadism that constituted the violence in Gujarat were

²⁰⁸ Sections of the Hindi as well as English press actively contributed to spreading propaganda and rumours during the post-demolition riots in 1992-1993. The English press tried to justify the violence from a Hindutva perspective. For more on this point, see Basu et al (102-106). In yet another example of how narratives about violent Muslims are used as justification for sexual aggression against Muslim women, researchers report that Asha Sharma of the Rashtriya Sevika Samiti, a sister affiliate of the all-male RSS, claimed that Hindu women are paraded naked in Kashmir. When asked to substantiate this information with proof, she could offer none. She then went on to say that kinsmen of Hindu rape victims must take revenge against Muslims by raping Muslim women (Anitha et al 332).

²⁰⁹ I was studying in Baroda (Vadodara) in Gujarat in 2002. Baroda was at the heart of the communal violence. When I was able to go to my parents' home in Gandhinagar, which was relatively safer than Baroda by about March 10, I noticed that their cable operator made it a point to play the film *Gadar: Ek Prem Katha* ("Mutiny: A Love Story"; 2001) twice a week for at least a month. The film is loosely based on the real life experience of Zainab, who was abducted by Buta Singh during Partition; Zainab and Buta Singh fell in love with each other and wanted to remain together. But Zainab was forced to return to her parents in Pakistan; Buta Singh committed suicide after she refused to return to him (Butalia, *Other* 101-4). *Gadar* is marked by its virulent anti-Pakistani and implicit anti-Muslim hate

not only unprecedented, but they were of such a magnitude that Sarkar is forced to conclude that “we have exceeded the achievements of Nazi terror, Bosnian atrocities, our own partition violence – if not in scale or numbers, then in the intensity of torture, the sheer opulence and exuberance in forms of cruelty” (2872). In addition to such narratives that immediately precede riots or fan riots that have already begun, many scholars besides Sarkar, such as Paola Bacchetta, Anja Kovacs, and Amrita Basu (amongst several others), have explained how Hindutva organizations school their young, usually adolescent, male as well as female cadres in historical narratives of Muslim tyranny and violence against Hindus and Hindu women. In such a volatile situation, where narratives of historic wrongs, real or imagined, can feed such terrible violence, Neelkanth’s tone in the Preface to *Razakar* appears more and more politically interested, ideologically motivated, and terribly dangerous.

It is this very “interested and precarious construction” (Didur, “At a Loss” 54) of Partition narratives such as *Razakar* violence that emerges with particular force when we scrutinize how Neelkanth’s representation of Durga situates itself in terms of Hindu nationalist discourse. Scholars such as Kovacs (375) and Sarkar believe that the position of Durga in militant Hindu nationalism was firmly established with the canonical novel *Anandamath* (1881-2) by Bengali writer Bankimchandra Chattopadhyaya (1838-1894).²¹⁰

speech, and constructs Muslim men as invariably tyrannical, rabidly communalist, and innately violent, while Sikh/Hindu men are represented as all for inter-communal love and harmony. That a film based on Partition, representing Muslims in such a negative light, was shown repeatedly during the Gujarat violence is a chilling reminder of two things: the use of Partition narratives by the Hindutva right-wing to justify violence against Muslims and the elaborate methods of dissemination of Hindutva propaganda against Muslims in February and March 2002.

²¹⁰ *Anandamath* marks the birth of a completely new Hindu goddess who was associated with the Hindu nation (Sarkar, “Birth” 3959). Engagements between the profane and the sacred lead to the composition of “a new divine project as well as a politics of Hindu nationhood” (3959), in which “both Hindu and Nation were imagined through acts of opposition against the Muslim” (3969). The nation, the tri-partite Mother goddess, one of whose *avatars* is demon-slaying Durga, is represented as the greatest of all the divinities; however, the Mother is being undermined by “Muslim tyranny” (Sarkar, “Birth” 3964). The narrative constructs Durga as “the mother as she *would be*” (Bankim 41) when all her devotees, her children, worship her by killing all Muslims in India. It is in this very powerful, resplendent, and

Indeed, Bankim's contribution to what later became known as the Hindutva movement is critical when we remember that "the materials of Hindu-extremist political rhetoric current in postcolonial India were fashioned with the very birth of nationalist historiography" (Chatterjee, *Nation* 94). Sarkar draws attention to the fact that while there had been previous attempts to construct a nationalist narrative, it was with *Anandamath* that the two concepts "Hindu" and "national" were united into one, singular, compelling icon of the Mother goddess, which incorporates the *avatar* of Durga ("Birth" 3969). And it was this interchangeability of "Hindu" and "national" (*rashtriya*) that RSS ideologues such as M.S. Golwalkar considered central to their conception of nation, nationality, and citizenship (Golwalkar 137).

Like Neelkanth, Bankim blurs the difference between one Muslim and all Muslims, holding all Muslims responsible for the Nawab of Bengal's misrule in the 1770s. This narrative blurring informs the logic that is consistently employed by present-day Hindutva organizations. Bacchetta has argued that Muslims become scapegoats in a process where they are constructed by Hindu nationalist organizations, such as the RSS and the Rashtriya Sevika Samiti ("National Committee of Women Volunteers"; Samiti), in terms oppositional to those assigned to the model for ideal Hindu men. This is done so as to displace onto Muslims the undesirable characteristics of men from "the Hindu community" ("All" 148). Then Muslims and everything associated with them are

terrifying mood that we encounter Durga in Neelkanth's writing, where she confronts the Razakar demons. This is what is most relevant in *Anandamath* to the way present-day adherents of Hindutva devote themselves to the Motherland. *Anandamath* extends the notion of the devotee's piety from mere contemplation of the goddess and her *leela* ("divine sport") to actually taking over the goddess's divine activity. What is expected from members of the Hindu nation, therefore, is that they will violently assume charge of the Motherland's "life" or "history" and kill Muslims, which will bring back the Motherland's lost glory. No longer associated with rituals and contemplation, devotion is "relocated on a new register: that of war" (Sarkar, "Birth" 3966). Furthermore, war is not an option; it is a religious obligation, "enjoined upon by the goddess, in imitation of her own warlike aspect" (3966). Thus, a significant illusion that the novel creates through goddess-creation and the personification and deification of the Motherland is that the people of the land are the subjects of the goddess. They no longer constitute the country, and the country does not exist to nurture them. The Motherland has an agenda of her own; her subjects must rid her of her enemies (3966).

rejected; finally, organizations such as the RSS and the Samiti drive home to their adherents the fact that these undesirable characteristics now displaced upon Muslims must be eliminated as a way to cleanse the Hindu nation and put it in order.

This is particularly so where the narratives of the sexual predation of Muslim men towards Hindu women are concerned. Bacchetta points out that, according to this logic, “the violence ascribed to them [Muslim men] can only be expelled when the latter [Muslim men] are neutralised” (149). Furthermore, Muslim identity is essentially embodied in Muslim males, while Muslim women are “potential objects of communal and (hetero-)sexual appropriation” (149). In addition to this, Muslimness (as contained in Muslim men) is associated with the collective memory of violence against Hindus, as well as the notion of “justice,” which can and must be achieved through revenge (149). This collective memory is a patch-work narrative of reconstructed histories that spans not only “Muslim invasions” but also centrally showcases the “vivisection” of Bharat Mata (“Mother India”) during Partition and the rapes of Hindu women in this period. Bacchetta points out that “the ‘original’ violence is always essentialised, and out of it is extracted the notion of ‘Muslimness’” (149). Each subsequent Hindu-Muslim conflict is constructed in “a chain of substitution as metaphorically related to the so-called original violence” (149). This inflation is consistently present in Hindutva ideology today and is compounded when sister affiliates of Hindutva organizations construct their feminine Self as dependent on the male Hindu nationalist’s discursive construction of Muslim men as “demonic, threatening, and in particular, threatening to Hindu women” (134). In turn,

Hindu nationalist discourse depends on this construction of Hindu femininity, which is “fabricated as essentially vulnerable” to attacks by Muslim men (148).²¹¹

The contribution of Bankim’s Durga-as-Motherland characterization can be read in the fact that Durga makes an appearance in the name of the women’s wing of the VHP (Pathak and Sengupta 271). The significance of Durga’s fierce *avatar* as demon-slayer in the ideology and operations of Durga Vahini (“Durga’s Army”) is clear. Founded, significantly, in the aftermath of the enthusiastic participation of Hindu women during the Babri Masjid demolition in 1992, this organization aims to institutionally channel the enthusiasm of their many “Durgas” (Kovacs 376). Just as the VHP’s Bajrang Dal is intended to recruit young Hindu men, Durga Vahini recruits women between the ages of fifteen and thirty-five. The VHP’s expectations from the Durgas of Durga Vahini include the expectation that they will “create a Dharmic atmosphere and . . . re-establish Dharma by destroying all the wicked and crooked people like Durga Devi did in the ancient times. (“Durga Vahini”). And because the recruits are required to “ceaselessly work for the nation” and “adopt different programmes to create various virtues like awakening, unity, valour,” it is “but natural that these Durgas should be sturdy and quite competent both physically and mentally.” The motto of the organization is “Service, Security and Sanskar,”²¹² and besides regular Yoga and military training, the recruits are meant to frequently recite at least eight *shlokas* (roughly, “couplets”) of the “Devi Mahatmya.”

They are supposed to learn first aid, acupressure, and home remedies; to arrange for

²¹¹ This is also true of the Hindutva approach to electoral gains. Amrita Basu points out that the BJP faces a serious contradiction as it tries to foster Hindu-Muslim violence so that it can get Hindu votes and simultaneously also attempts to portray Hindus as victims “whose violence is defensive and reactive,” in spite of the political and economic asymmetry that favours them today. But what the BJP can do, she points out, and what it does very well is justify Hindu aggression by pointing at what is conceived as the essentially sexually predatory nature of Muslim males and the inherent vulnerability of Hindu women (“Feminism” 163; “Women’s” 116).

²¹² *Sanskar* is a Hindi word that originates from the Sanskrit *samskara*. It means “values” today in Hindi, but stems from the central Vedic notion of “ritual.”

“security” through legal aid and relief for young women who are widowed, deserted, or “involved in accident”; to arrange disciplined protests, exhibitions, and gatherings to resolve problems like obscenity, molestation, and human trafficking; to set up libraries, tailoring centres, medical centres, and crèches in poor urban locations; to “contribute towards forestalling the proselytising activities by cautioning our sisters of the conspiracies of alien faiths like Islam and Christianity”;²¹³ and to inspire women to involve themselves in “Gow-Sewa [cow-service], Gow-Pujan [cow-worship], Gow-Rakshan [cow protection], Gow-Samvardhan [cow development] informing them about the religious, cultural, agricultural, commercial and medicinal importance of the mother cow” (“Durga Vahini”).

Amongst all these declared aims, what emerges as the Durga Vahini’s main role is the work of agitation “by transforming religious discourse into a sustained hate campaign” (Basu et al 87). While the declared intentions of providing relief to young women in need and setting up centres to assist them appear to be worthy causes, they are little more than active recruiting strategies for the VHP’s violent political ideology. Despite their avowed aims to uplift Hindu women and provide them with institutional support, the VHP’s Krishna Sharma’s responses to forced arranged marriages, domestic

²¹³ This notion of the alienness of Islam and Christianity stems from Savarkar’s point that Muslims and Christians do not belong in the Motherland like Hindus/Indians because while Hindus think of the mother/fatherland as a holy land (*Punyabhū*), “[t]heir holyland is far off in Arabia or Palestine ... Consequently their names and their outlook smack of a foreign origin” (113). Golwalkar makes the same point and adds that “they” “still think that they have come here only to conquer and establish their kingdoms ... What else is it, if not treason, to join the camp of the enemy leaving their mother-nation in the lurch?” (127) This definition of nation “that is readily reduced to the question of territorial integrity” (Pandey, “Hindus” 252) is ultimately where the idea of the loyalty test for Muslims originates because Savarkar says that Muslims, Christians, and other religious minorities should “feel as Indians first and every other thing afterwards” (139). Golwalkar thinks on the same lines and points out that non-Hindus have a *rashtra dharma* (“national responsibility”), a *samaja dharma* (“duty to society”), a *kula dharma* (“duty to ancestors”), and it is only in their *vyakti dharma* (“personal faith”) that they can choose any path that “satisfies ... [their] spiritual urge” (133). Note that Hindus are automatically exempted from the need to prove their loyalty to the nation; it is Muslims who need to demonstrate their loyalty. Indian Muslims must, therefore, remember their non-Muslim ancestors, customs, language, culture and, couched in conveniently vague terms that may be filled in as and when required, “all such elements of national heritage” (321).

violence, and divorce are that women must learn to adjust and that they might consider stifling their screams while their husbands are beating them, lest the neighbours get to hear (Anitha et al 333). Indeed, the sister organizations of the BJP, the RSS, and the VHP intensively promote the wifely ideal espoused by sacred Vedic texts. Mridula Sinha of the BJP Mahila Morcha (“Women’s Front”) emphasizes that the primary role of women is child-rearing and that any professional jobs they may take on must not tax their domestic responsibilities. Women must adjust to keep the family together, she says (330). And although Asha Sharma of the Samiti supports women’s education, she supports it not because it is in the interests of women themselves, but because it makes them better nationalist mothers who would inculcate nationalist values in their children. She specifically points out that the Samiti is against “the concept of a ‘modern woman’ as she epitomises selfishness,” and that women are taught to give first priority to the family and to their children (330). She supports and defends *sati*, which for her exemplifies the ideal of female self-sacrifice. This kind of rhetoric validates Rajan’s point that the recuperation of radical goddesses such as Durga by Hindutva organizations or writers such as Neelkanth becomes problematic when we take into account two things: the way this radicalism is invoked, evoked, and deployed (against the interests of Muslim women)(“Is” 34), and the fact that the prevalence and prominence of goddesses in India do not necessarily represent the material and historical conditions in which the goddesses are worshipped²¹⁴ (Rajan, “Is” 35; Pathak and Sengupta 287).

²¹⁴ What is significant is that even though unconventional and/or powerful women may find sanction for their conduct through reference to them, goddesses, with the exception of the devoted consorts Sita and Savitri, are “rarely invoked as explicit role-models in the socialisation of girls” (35). Chatterjee has argued that the adulation of women as goddesses or mothers is actually a brilliant patriarchal, nationalist strategy that combines coercive authority and subtle persuasion (*Nation* 130).

Put differently, any claim to the appropriation of Durga as radical and empowering for women in Hindu nationalist discourses, such as those employed by women's organizations such as Durga Vahini or the Samiti or literary narratives such as Neelkanth's "Durga," is completely undermined when we note the material conditions of women in India today. Goddesses are the products of the feminization of attributes such as righteousness, justice, wealth, and learning, and do not represent any real, practically applicable status of women (Rajan, "Is" 35). While India has many goddesses, the sex-ratio is alarmingly unequal and points to other gender-related problems such as female foeticide, female infanticide, lower life expectancy for girls and women, domestic violence, and dowry-deaths. In fact, the 2012 annual report of the National Crime Records Bureau notes that 228,650 cases of crimes against women were reported in the country in 2011, as compared to 213,585 cases reported in 2010 (79). These figures mark an increase in crimes against women in India by 7.1% (79). The report further points out that these crimes have steadily increased since 2007 (79). In 2011, there were 24,270 rape victims (83); 8,618 cases of women who died of dowry-related issues (84); 94,041 cases of women who had been tortured ("cruelty by husband and relatives")(84); and 9,961 cases of sexual harassment (84).

These figures throw into particularly sharp relief any attempts to prove that the worship of goddesses is in any way connected to the real status of women in India. Rajan points out that reformists, revivalists, and Hindu nationalists in the nineteenth century, and anti-colonial nationalists in the early and mid-twentieth century, had promoted the image of the militant Hindu goddess to achieve several ends: for spreading propaganda about the elevated status of Hindu women and the enlightened outlook towards women in

Hinduism; to attempt to emancipate women; to mobilize women to participate in the freedom struggle; and, most importantly, to provide “an inspirational symbolic focus – as in the evolution of the Bharatmata figure – for national and communal identity” (“Is” 36). It is the last that we see in literary narratives by Hindu nationalists such as Bankim and, in present-day India, Neelkanth. Today, Hindu nationalists have pushed into the arena assertive female leaders and aggressive female orators such as Uma Bharati and Sadhvi Rithambara²¹⁵ as symbolic, “divine” entities; they have also set up organizations such as the Durga Vahini that promote the ideal of connecting an enlightened Hinduism which venerates goddesses to the notion that this corresponds to the high status that Hindu women are supposed to have enjoyed in the Vedic period. This popular perception, whose crystallization in people’s imagination is shown to have started in the late nineteenth century and persists till today, has been refuted by many scholars. For instance, Uma Chakravarti and Kumkum Roy have analyzed sacred Hindu texts as well as the debates surrounding them in nationalist discourses and have reached the conclusion that the image of an impressive past of Hindu women was largely fabricated in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries for political and ideological ends.²¹⁶

These ends can be reconstructed when we consider the persuasive attempts by the Sangh Parivar to create historical explanations of “a causal link between patriarchal

²¹⁵ The late Vijayaraje Scindia (1919-2001) from the royal family of Gwalior was also a prominent Hindutva speaker.

²¹⁶ To cite only one example from Roy’s research, the much-quoted statement from the *Manusmriti* that characterizes the worship of women as pleasing the gods is superficial when it is acknowledged that the “worship” of women was nothing like the worship of gods; it was actually circumscribed within the domestic sphere and overlaid with patriarchal values. So, the gifts that women were given, which were considered accessories of their worship, were designed to make them attractive to their husbands, thereby “enabl[ing] the woman to comply with her designated function as a procreative instrument” (21). Thus, Roy writes, exposing as hollow the clearly sexist paradigm of Hindu nationalist discourses that claim emancipated status for ancient Hindu women, “the very composition and preservation of the traditions which are claimed as precursors of present-day Hindutva were processes which were structured in terms of gender” (15). Like today, there was a gendered difference, namely gendered inequality, in the expectations of the way women lived their lives in the past (17).

institutions and the threat of the outsider/other” (Roy 11). Hindutva organizations have been working for years to cast Indian Muslims, particularly men, as those who threaten Hindus and Hindutva (Kovacs 377). Thus, the BJP’s Mridula Sinha says that “[i]n ancient India women were accorded great respect. It was Muslim invasion that restricted women to the domestic role” (Anitha et al 329-30). The BJP always refers to Vedic history and claims that Hindu women had equal status with men until Muslims came and all Hindu women had to go into seclusion (Basu, “Women’s” 111). The Samiti holds the same views (Anitha et al 332). An example of this perception can be seen in Neelkanth’s “Durga” when a character, Parvati, voices her worst fears about the Razakars: “And it would be alright if these people were to kill us, instead they will abduct us and put us in *burqa* and do this and that to us, they will put us behind *purdah* ...” (3). When looked at in the context of Partition violence and the horrific sexual violence women underwent, the “this and that,” as well as the subsequent ellipsis in Parvati’s speech can be interpreted to mean sexual violence. Parvati quite rightly fears rape by these violent Muslim hooligans.

At the same time, Neelkanth’s choice of demonstrative pronouns and punctuation creates an open sense of vagueness²¹⁷ that readers are left to populate with the worst fears their imaginations can conjure from a repertoire of long-established stereotypes about Muslims. Furthermore, the fear of *purdah* that Neelkanth endeavours to impress his readers with as a sign of Muslim aggression and backwardness also alienates Hindu women from Muslim women by suggesting that Muslim women are oppressed while Hindu women are liberated. This is another common and highly problematic right-wing

²¹⁷ This vagueness in women’s speech is typical in Indian society, which considers sex a taboo subject, often even amongst women.

as well as mainstream refrain that is meant to reinforce the inferiority and backwardness of Islam and posit that it was Muslim aggression and domination in the past that forced Hindu men to seclude Hindu women and make them backward too (Basu, “Women’s” 110, 11; Anitha et al 322; Menon, *Everyday* 28-9, 39-40). Indeed, Parvati’s words echo the oft-quoted sentiments of Hindutva orator Uma Bharati, whose hate speeches were instrumental in provoking and maintaining a communally tense environment before the demolition of the Babri Masjid in 1992. Bharati says that she “feels” for her “Muslim sisters,” who are so terribly oppressed that they actually want to wear the *burqa* (qtd in Basu, “Feminism” 172). The representation of Muslim women by Neelkanth as oppressed corroborates Roy’s point that the right-wing image of Hindu women not only envisages them as a homogeneous group of women undistinguished within themselves by individual aspirations and desires, and regional, linguistic, class, or caste differences, but it also very sharply distinguishes them from those who are excluded from this group (“Where” 10). In this way, potential solidarities along gender lines between Hindu and Muslim women at the time of Partition and even today over common struggles, such as the constant battle against male sexual violence and other patriarchal issues, are totally undermined.

Like other Hindu nationalist women’s organizations, the Samiti has adopted the Sangh Parivar’s overall objective of abolishing the present format of a constitutionally secular Indian state and imposing a Hindu nation in its place, which would exclude as citizens non-Hindus such as Muslims, of course, but also Parsis, Christians, and Jews, as well as “a great many people who call themselves Hindu but who do not conform to the Sangh’s ascetic machoised Hindu nationalist ideals” (Bacchetta, “All” 135, *Gender* 5).

This category includes members of *tantrik* and *shakta* sects, secular Hindus, and gay Hindus. Thus, despite differences in approach, both the Samiti and Durga Vahini refuse to refer to Durga solely as “an iconographic representation of the current or future state of Bharat Mata meant primarily to arouse the nation’s virile sons”; they uphold Durga explicitly as an example of female activism (Kovacs 377). Many of the nationalist women whom Kovacs interviewed maintain that even though there is compassion and kindness in Durga’s nature, these can be “no longer administered; in fact, it is explicitly argued that, in the face of ‘evil’, it is important not to show compassion anymore” (380). And it is to protect the people whom the Hindutva right-wing deems “Hindu” that their inner Durga emerges. It is in this context that we must read Neelkanth’s narrative choice of gendering the attempted appropriation of Sikhs into the Hindutva fold through the characterization of Balwinder as Durga.

The way Neelkanth manipulates goddess narratives as well as Partition narratives in conjunction with one another is another Hindu nationalist strategy, similar to the assertion by the VHP’s Krishna Sharma that it was the Muslim “lack of respect” for women that caused (Hindu) women to commit suicide during Partition. The Samiti’s Asha Sharma also valorizes the self-immolation of women during Partition riots as an instance of *sati* (Anitha et al 331). Both comments reveal how central Partition memories are to the construction of Hindutva narratives. Indeed, Partition trauma is used again and again by Hindu nationalist women to justify current violence against Muslims (Bacchetta, “All” 150). Partition is the most immediate referent for recent violence against Muslims. Bacchetta writes, “Perhaps the most emotive issue that communalists have been able to manipulate into their agenda of aggression, revenge and retribution for past wrongs, was

the mass rape and abduction of women during, and following on, the partition” (*Gender* 6). In this, then, Neelkanth is not alone, as he solders memories of Partition in “Durga” onto his carefully crafted fear of the Muslim Other in the Preface.

Furthermore, because the culprit is always made out to be Muslim, this phantom menace of an always present external threat or challenge cleanly absolves Hindu society of being oppressive (Roy 11). Confrontations of patriarchy within Hindu communities are discouraged by Hindutva men’s as well as women’s organizations, and grounds have been created by underscoring the urgent need to maintain “Hindu unity” and tackle the ostensibly imminent and constant threat from Muslims, so that the question of solving gender-related issues simply does not arise (12). Thus, even as we view the representation of Balwinder as Durga in a critical light, we must also simultaneously question Neelkanth’s construction of the idyllic community of women devoted to their housework, their children, and their worship. This role of Hindu women that revolves around their singular focus on the domestic sphere is exemplified in the elaborate, concentrated, and relatively lengthy depiction of Anandi, the maternal figure *par excellence*, serving Gauri, the old cow, as well as the herd of cows that later appears on the scene. As I have already mentioned with regard to the aims and responsibilities of the recruits of Durga Vahini, and as I will also discuss later in this chapter, caring for cows is seen by Hindutva adherents as a Hindu duty, particularly for Hindu women. And so we are told that after Anandi has, according to her daily habit, fed Gauri a few *rotis*, “[s]he kept sitting there and slowly and gently stroked the cow’s dewlap. At this pleasurable touch, the cow closed her eyes” (1). A little later, having brought a pail of water for the

thirsty calves that have also arrived at the scene, Anandi rebukes them as if they were her children. The narrator tells readers,

As they drank water ... sometimes the calves would push and shove each other and fight with each other. Anandi would then smack one or two of them and mumble, ‘Rascals, they will not even drink water quietly. They will fight here too. After all, they’re just like our children.’ (2)

It is this image of women as nurturers and caregivers which is ultimately deemed ideal and desirable to the Hindu nationalist project and which does not necessarily represent the political realities or aspirations of women.²¹⁸

In this way, in Hindu nationalist texts such as Neelkanth’s “Durga,” the powerful goddess is just a temporary *avatar*, to be employed when women – not only Hindu, but also, through their attempted appropriation, Sikh – are required to be violent and to be abandoned as soon as the Razakars have fled.²¹⁹ This is why we are told that after the Razakars run away, the women pay *darshan* (“devotional respect”) to Balwinder and then hug her and sob. Alert for any signs of the Razakars’ return, Balwinder continues to hold on to the sword; but as the other women weep, her eyes also become moist, and she too weeps. Her tears signify the ebbing away of Balwinder’s fierce *avatar* as Durga as well as her assertive role as an independent woman. Balwinder is back to being a woman, a

²¹⁸ This point will be dealt with in some detail later in this chapter. Also, it is not only contemporary creative literature such as Neelkanth’s *Razakar* that promotes the wifely and motherly ideal. The Gorakhpur-based Gita Press is a well-known publisher of books that centrally place Hindu religion and culture. The Gita Press emphasizes constantly in its publications that the proper role of Hindu women is to be unconditionally devoted to their families. It warns that there are dangers that await those who do not do so (Basu, “Women’s” 114). Such dangers could include being abandoned by one’s husband for the crime of getting an abortion (114). While it is difficult to find out whether or how there is a direct connection between the BJP and its Hindutva affiliates and the Gita Press, it is certainly true that they have fostered the climate where these views flourish (123).

²¹⁹ For an analysis of how Hindutva women’s organizations recede in “peace time” and focus only on maintaining the essential core of “Hindu values” (*sanskar/samskara*), see Sarkar’s “Pragmatics of the Hindu Right: Politics of Women’s Organisations” (1999).

fact which is signified by the tears that she sheds out of relief that she has managed to avert certain catastrophe. In the words of one Samiti leader, “[t]he tender-hearted woman becomes bold and aggressive, if time demands” (qtd in Kovacs 376) and then returns to her “feminine” qualities when that time is past.

What makes the fact of increased recruitment of women to Hindu nationalist groups an even worse blow to secularism is that it critically undermines gender solidarities that democratic women’s organizations and networks such as the Gujarat-based organization SEWA (Self-Employed Women’s Association for India), for example, are trying to build or mend. And the myth of Durga as *Mahishasuramardini* is frequently used by these Hindu nationalist women, such as those of the Vahini, to justify their role in the devastating communal violence that occurred in Bombay in 1992 and 1993; in Bijnor between 1990 and 1993; and in Gujarat in 2002 (Kovacs 374). Flavia Agnes has pointed out how in the 1980s a campaign by the Shiv Sena, yet another Sangh affiliate, amongst their female cadres in Bombay momentarily replaced the Hindutva ideal of the traditional meek and domestic Hindu woman with a new Hindutva image, that of Durga as *Mahishasuramardini*.²²⁰ This martial image of Durga, victorious over the outsider demons who have taken over Heaven, was meant to stir the women and goad them into attacking Muslim Others, who are seen in the discourse of Hindutva ideologues and their present-day adherents, as I have already mentioned, to be aliens and outsiders²²¹ (140).

²²⁰ The same shift can be seen amongst the RSS which idealizes those women from epic literature who embody suffering and self-sacrifice, but also celebrates courageous and powerful women who use violence, when it becomes necessary (ostensibly), to protect their communities (Basu, “Feminism” 171).

²²¹ Agnes points out that what is ironic is that it was the Indian women’s movement that had originally deployed and popularized the images of Durga and Kali in order to address violence within homes and communities (141). An example of such reference to goddesses is that India’s first feminist publishing house is called “Kali for Women.” To their utter dismay, Agnes points out, the women’s movement realized that not only have Hindutva forces been far more successful in mobilizing women with the use of these myths, but that women have turned from addressing patriarchy to attacking Muslims (141).

In the Bombay riots of 1992, in which a thousand people died (Banerjee, “Hindu” 218), women mobilized by the Shiv Sena slept on the streets to prevent army trucks and fire engines from entering areas to put out fires or rescue Muslim hostages (Agnes 150; Banerjee, “Hindu” 216). They also blocked the arrests of several Shiv Sena leaders, looted stores, and attacked Muslim women (Banerjee, “Hindu” 216). The sharpest indictment of their participation in the post-demolition riots must come for the fact that they tore off other women’s clothes to facilitate rape (Dietrich 42). In connection with the most recent riots in Gujarat in 2002, BJP MLA Maya Kodnani was charged on August 29, 2012, for leading Hindu mobs in the Naroda Patiya area of Ahmedabad and inciting them to commit violence (Soni, “Naroda Patiya”). Ninety-seven Muslim men, women, and children were killed in this massacre (Bhan, “Naroda”; “Gujarat Riots”). Muslim women were raped and gangraped, and a twenty-day old infant was killed (“Gujarat Riots”). Noting her crucial role in escalating the violence after her arrival in the area and encouraging the involvement of policemen in the attacks, Special Judge Jyotsana Yagnik called Kodnani the “kingpin of entire riots” and sentenced her to twenty-eight years in prison (Bhan, “Naroda”; Bhattacharya, “Former”).

Thus, Hindu nationalist women’s presence in politics today is certainly not limited to being symbolic figures, such as the powerful and successful orators and performers Sadhvi Rithambara and Uma Bharati, who came into prominence during the Ramjanmabhoomi movement in the 1980s when they incited and provoked Hindutva activists into demolishing the Babri Masjid, or spokespersons such as Sushma Swaraj, who uphold Hindutva through powerful government portfolios or even as part of the opposition in Parliament. With an active leadership, elaborately hierarchical

organizational structure, and constantly reiterated ideology, it is the Samiti, the Mahila Morcha, and the Durga Vahini, all of whom uphold Durga as an ideal that have caused the presence of Hindu nationalist women to develop and flourish at the grassroots level.²²² Kodnani herself is a Sevika (“volunteer” or “woman who serves”; member of the Samiti) and also the daughter of a staunch RSS worker who migrated to India during Partition (FP Politics, “Maya Kodnani”). Hence, many Hindu nationalist women are now at least skilled at organizing demonstrations, campaigning for elections, and using arms and ammunition (Basu, “Women’s” 105; Kovacs 381). Another indication of their extensive reach amongst sections of Hindus comes from the fact that the Samiti has a million members who operate out of *shakhas* (“branches”) in at least sixteen Indian states and many countries abroad (Bacchetta, “All” 135).

These Durgas, then, unlike the Durga of the “Devi Mahatmya” or the Durga imagined by Guru Gobind Singh, fight for a misplaced sense of justice. Far from saving the world, they misappropriate a powerful myth and threaten to destroy any semblance of India’s secular, democratic fabric. And it is ultimately in the service of this ideology that Neelkanth represents Balwinder Kaur as Durga. While his text highlights the power of Durga to protect and defend the women of Jampanna Gate, the agency he accords to Balwinder becomes questionable in light of his Hindutva convictions, which, as I have

²²² There is a qualitative difference in the way the men’s organizations and the women’s organizations appropriate Durga. In line with the shift in *bhakti* that occurs in Bankim’s founding text of Hindu nationalism, the all-male RSS’s activities encourage the view that the militant qualities of Bharat Mata as Durga have now transferred to the sons, “effectively substituting feminine strength with male virility” (Kovacs 375); the responsibility of the mother herself is now secondary and indirect and involves raising and rousing her sons to help her (376). On the other hand, the Samiti refers to Bharat Mata as Durga Devi and holds her responsible for the creation of all the divinities as well as the Hindu nation (376). The goddess has agency in their narrative (376). But, while they recognize her fierceness, they also promote other desirable feminine traits of Durga, such as motherhood and its attendant qualities of affection, auspiciousness, nourishment, selflessness, and forgiveness (376). In other words, while the Sangh “assigns mainly passive qualities to Hindu femininity and womanhood . . . the Samiti tends to represent them more widely in terms ranging from domesticated to fierce to out-of-control” (Bacchetta, “All” 136). The Samiti’s inspiring goddesses are the Sangh’s (and Bankim’s) Bharatmata, who contains Durga as one of her *avatars*, and the Samiti’s own Ashtabhuja, who also incorporates a Durga-like *avatar* (137). Thus, all the goddesses, singular or composite, which are significant for the Samiti, incorporate the demon-slaying Durga.

shown, are represented in his Preface. In light of this problematic representation of Durga in Hindutva texts, ideology, and practice, we must take into account the crucial questions Rajan asks about women's agency and the way it is understood, interpreted, and deployed, often uncritically, in questionable or unconsidered ways and towards debatable or even suspicious ends. She writes that agency, the "autonomous action by the individual or collective subject," tends to be understood as an "inherently radical force or attribute of women and other subordinated groups" ("Is" 37). This is why the recovery of women's agency has been "uncritically pursued as a politically correct objective" in studies of society, culture, and history (37). But just like their empowerment, women's agency can "neither be viewed as an abstraction, nor celebrated as an unqualified good. Agency is never to be found in some pure state of volition or action, but is complexly imbricated in the contradictory structures of patriarchy"²²³ (37). And as I have argued, the agency of women as Durga that Hindutva constructs is not in the interests of women because, first, it glosses over and ignores any demands that Hindu women may have for reforming patriarchal structures within Hindu communities and, second, it actively encourages and even commits outrageous acts of violence against Muslim women.

In addition to this, not only is the representation of Balwinder as Durga and the subtle attempt to co-opt Sikhs indicators of gendered Hindu nationalist discourses at work in Neelkanth's writing, but the story also traffics in one of the most controversial Hindu and Hindutva images: namely the cow, who in "Durga" is significantly called Gauri, who

²²³ Furthermore, and this explains why Hindu nationalist women always easily dismiss all feminist demands and objections, the celebration of a "feminism" that is indigenous and always available in "our own tradition" becomes a pretext to reject outright crucial feminist demands and debates, which are always derided as "western" and, therefore, irrelevant and unimportant. And while the proponents of Hindutva reject western feminism, they aggrandise "the scope and politics of that [indigenous 'feminist'] tradition" and, in the process, co-opt women's agency for their own purposes (37).

is just as significantly killed by the Razakars. The brutal act of killing an animal and hanging its dead head from a tree is, we can imagine, in itself a terrible sight and testifies to how bloodthirsty the Razakars in Neelkanth's "Durga" are. However, the Razakars' killing of Moti, an old dog who is also a regular visitor to the locality, does not resonate in the text in the same way as the death of Gauri. Given that many Hindus believe today that the cow is sacred, it would appear that Gauri's death has greater meaning than Moti's death. Such is the weight of this common perception that the cow is sacred in Hinduism and that its sanctity must not be undermined that when historian D.N. Jha wrote his book *The Myth of the Holy Cow* (2001), his original publisher suddenly backed out at the final stages of printing the book. In Jha's words, the publisher had suddenly found too much "*sang-de-bœuf*" ("beef blood") in it (xii). Soon after this incident, Jha began to receive telephone threats from unidentified callers telling him not to go ahead with the publication of the book. In spite of this, it was published in India by a new Delhi-based publishing house called Matrix Books in August 2001. But then, "some right-wing politicians and groups of Hindu and Jaina fanatics, without reading a single page, termed it 'blasphemous,' demanded my arrest and succeeded in obtaining a court order restraining the circulation of the book" (xii). The Hyderabad Civil Court banned the book (book jacket). It was subsequently published internationally by left activist and political campaigner Tariq Ali of Verso. In an implicit reference to the banning of Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* (1988) in India and the *fatwa* issued against him in 1989 by Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran, Jha writes, "There are no *fatwas* in the Hindu religion, but a self-appointed custodian of 'Hinduism' sentenced me to death. The atmosphere in India became charged with communalism. Intellectual terrorism became rampant" (xii). The

fact that Hindutva communalists used the Arabic word *fatwa* (“ruling”), which is most commonly employed by Islamists, reinforces my point that both these violent, intolerant ideologies feed off each other.

Jha argues that many Hindus and Hindutva organizations have attempted to force the supposedly ancient sanctity of the cow into India’s political culture.²²⁴ They insist that the idea and practice of eating beef came to India with the Muslims, “treating it as the identifying mark of the Muslim community” (ix). Jha emphasizes that this holiness of the cow is a myth; while there were later attitudinal divergences over the consumption of beef in religious as well as secular texts, cow’s flesh was “very much a part of the early Indian non-vegetarian food regimen and dietary tradition” (ix). He points out, therefore, that beef eating was not brought to India by Muslims; that abstention from eating beef is not a mark of Hindu identity; and that allegations made by Hindutva organizations that beef-eating is indicative of Muslim presence in India and is conceived as a threat to the Hindu way of life is part of a sustained attempt to “foster the false consciousness of the ‘otherness’ of followers of Islam”²²⁵ (x). Jha points out that the idea of abstention from beef as a specific and defining trait of Hinduism has taken such a grip over many Hindus and Hindutva followers that on one occasion when the RSS tried to claim that Sikhs were Hindus, there was vehement protest by Sikhs, and a Sikh youth leader suggested that a

²²⁴ Even a professed secularist such as Gandhi, for example, wrote in *Harijan* on September 15, 1940 that “[f]rom time immemorial this idea [beef-eating] has been repugnant to us, and we have worshipped the cow and her progeny” (282). Although Gandhi’s political outlook cannot be connected to hardline Hindutva, the fact that the man who led the anti-colonial struggle against the British Raj and became known as the Father of the Nation propagated the myth that the cow is sacred to Hindus/Indians (who are apparently collapsed into one undistinguishable entity) and is, therefore, inviolable, has contributed to fixing the image of the cow as sacred even amongst non-right-wing Hindus. What further foregrounded the desired non-violent conduct of Indians towards the cow in secular nationalist discourses was the platform of *ahimsa* (“non-violence”) from which Gandhian nationalism truly came into its own.

²²⁵ Hindutva speakers such as Rithambara and ideologues like Golwalkar frequently wax eloquent about what they see as the oppositional relationship between everything Hindus believe and everything Muslims believe. The logic is very simple and allows for no internal contradictions or complexities: because everything Hindus practice and believe is correct, whatever Muslims practice or believe is incorrect. Thus, Golwalkar complains: “If we worship cow, he [a Muslim] would like to eat it” (148).

cow should be slaughtered and beef served during the daily *langar* (“community meal”) in a *gurdwara* (21).

Jha’s research consists of Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain religious scriptures; he also corroborates his findings from the sacred texts by referring to secular texts such as creative literature, treatises on law, and medical texts. His research establishes that beef-eating is part of an ancient and enduring flesh-eating tradition prevalent amongst Indians of all castes and that even when eating beef was forbidden for Brahmins, they retained a memory of the ancient practice where Brahmins were fed beef in order to honour them (23). In fact, Jha states that the earliest evidence of general non-vegetarianism and, more specifically, beef-eating, comes from the Vedas.²²⁶ In a pastoral economy in which cattle rearing played a central role, the ancient inhabitants of what is called the Vedic period (roughly 2000 to 1000 BCE) performed animal sacrifices to their gods, a custom that they brought with them when they migrated east from the southern steppes of Eurasia (28). It was in the later Vedic period, with the gradual adoption of settled agriculture amongst the pastoral nomads, as well as the gradual consolidation of the landed priestly class around the second half of the first millennium CE, who were given not only land but also cattle as gifts and who now saw new value in their cattle as harness or draft animals, that cow slaughter began to be discouraged (41, 114). It became important to restrict the killing of cattle if the agrarian way of life was to survive (41). This idea is represented in the *Upanishads* and may have culminated in the notion of *ahimsa* (“non-violence”), which was nourished by Buddhism and Jainism and, later, brought to the fore by Gandhi in the

²²⁶ An important point that Jha makes in the course of his argument about the prevalence of beef-eating in the Vedic period is that when Hindutva followers assert that beef-eating was introduced in the subcontinent “from outside” by Muslims, who are considered foreigners in “their” country, they fail to acknowledge and/or realize that “their Vedic ancestors were also foreigners who ate the flesh of the cow and various other animals” (20). In fact, it is ironic that Hindutva adherents “trace the concept of sacred cow to the very period when it was sacrificed and its flesh was eaten” (18).

twentieth century; *ahimsa* may have challenged the culture of Vedic sacrifice and paved the way ideologically for a more stable, settled agrarian society and state. However, even this undermining of Brahminical sacrifice did not eliminate beef or any other meat from the regular diet of the Buddhist Age, as references from sacred Buddhist texts as well as secular texts such as the *Arthashastra* (circa fourth century BCE) show (Jha 42, 67, 68, 70-71); there is no evidence to suggest that the cow was ever sacred to Buddhists either (71). It is with the second half of the first millennium CE and the gradual replacement of Vedic religion, which was predicated on sacrifice, with Puranic religion, which was not,²²⁷ that the lawgivers begin to forbid cattle slaughter (114).

Jha concludes that secular commentators were familiar with the practice of cattle sacrifice and retained its memory in their texts “until at least the eighteenth century and perhaps later without feelings of guilt” (102). In fact, this memory exists alongside and despite the general disapproval for cattle slaughter in *Kaliyuga* (116). Furthermore, sacrificial killing of cows and buffaloes continued till 1874 at Todgarh in Merwara, Rajasthan, when the local Rawats entered into an agreement that they would abstain from eating beef (120). There are also several places, such as the Athanuramman temple in Salem district in Tamil Nadu, and Sonapur and Baud in Orissa, where buffalo sacrifice in temples and the consumption of buffalo-meat by middle- and lower-caste communities took place till the mid-twentieth century, when this practice was stopped as a result of the Hindu Religious Charities and Endowments Board taking over the administration of several village goddess temples (120). Buffalo sacrifices are still performed in Cenci in

²²⁷ Puranic religion is preoccupied with the concept of *Kaliyuga* (“the Age of Kali”), a particularly trying period of time that recurs at regular intervals in history and in which everything falls into chaos. To prevent the unleashing of total evil in *Kaliyuga*, certain sacrifices have to be made. Puranic religion decrees that one of the ways to restore *dharma* in *Kaliyuga* is to abstain from eating beef or killing cattle (Jha 114).

Tamil Nadu, Bargaon Mahisi in Bihar, the Kamakhya temple in Guwahati in Assam, and the Kali temple in Calcutta. Tribal communities such as the Dire in Hyderabad eat beef openly at feasts (121). Jha concludes that non-violence towards the cow and abstention from beef could not have been an indicator of community identity for Brahmins or the Brahminical social order (102).

However, over the centuries, the cow frequently became a political instrument in the hands of rulers. Thus, Mughal emperors Babar, Akbar, Jahangir, and Aurangzeb are said to have introduced a restricted ban on cow slaughter in order to accommodate Jain or Brahminical sensibilities and sensitivities (18). The Maratha ruler Shivaji is supposed to have made proclamations that Hindus must not tolerate cow slaughter or the oppression of Brahmins; both came to be understood as related and were, therefore, connected to ideas of sacrilege (18). But it was only in the late nineteenth century that the cow became a tool of mass political mobilization with the beginning of the organized cow-protection movement. The movement began with the strictly vegetarian Sikh Kuka (or Namdhari) sect in Punjab around 1870 and gathered momentum when the first Gorakshini Sabha ("Cow-Protection Assembly") was founded in 1882 by Dayananda Saraswati (18-9).

It was around this time that the cow became a symbol of the unity of a large, diverse group of "Hindus," and cow slaughter by Muslims began to be challenged in an organized manner. All these developments provoked a series of communal riots in the 1880s and 1890s. Sudhir Kakar points out that riots that took place in 1886 in Ambala, Ludhiana, Hoshiarpur, and Delhi occurred because of controversies surrounding alleged ritual cattle sacrifices by Muslims (44). There were rumours that Muslims were about to bring large quantities of beef into Ambala on the occasion of Eid. In Ludhiana, riots

began with the report that a Muslim family had slaughtered a cow in their house. In Hoshiarpur, a Muharram procession was interrupted by a bull. The processionists were already involved in arguments with Hindus over the entanglement of their *tazia* in the branches of a *peepal* tree. The Muslims wanted to cut a branch of the sacred tree to free the *tazia*. With the arrival of the bull on the scene, the Muslims began to chase it away with a stick. The Hindus protested, and riots began (44). In 1893, there were riots over the cow-protection issue in Azamgarh, Ghazipur, and Ballia districts and more than a hundred people were killed in different parts of the country. There were also riots in Ayodhya in 1912-1913 and in Shahabad in 1917²²⁸ (Jha 19).

The contribution of Gandhi to the cow-protection debate and, eventually, to the mainstream perception that cows are sacred to Hindus, lay in his connection of *ahimsa* and cow-protection. He said that “Mother cow” is self-sacrificing and expects nothing from us. She is gentle and serves humans selflessly by offering them her milk while she is alive and “her flesh, her bones, her intestines,, [*sic*] her horns and her skin” after her death (*Harijan*, 15 Sep. 1940; 281). These qualities he cites as his reason for worshipping the cow and for discouraging the consumption of beef. He also provides validation for his beliefs by resorting to references to “ancient India,” where “[t]he cow was worshipped as mother” (282). It is Gandhi’s endorsement of cow-protection as an urgent item on the social agenda of Indians, as well as the growing perception amongst Hindus as a result of Gandhi’s politics and the stance of Hindu organizations such as the Arya Samaj and the

²²⁸ For an extensive analysis of the cow-protection movement in what is now Eastern Uttar Pradesh and West Bihar (the Bhojpuri zone) and a detailed discussion of the circumstances surrounding these two sets of Hindu-Muslim clashes in 1893 in Azamgarh, Ghazipur, and Ballia, and in 1917 in Shahabad, see Gyanendra Pandey’s “Rallying Around the Cow: Sectarian Strife in the Bhojpuri Region, c. 1888-1917” (1983).

RSS against cow slaughter, that have resulted in several Indian states passing legislation after independence to prohibit cow slaughter.

However, tensions over the issue persist in a big way. In 1966, communalist political parties led a massive demonstration before Parliament House in New Delhi in favour of a national ban on cow slaughter. The demonstration culminated in riots in which at least eight people died and many were injured (Jha 19). In 1969 in Ahmedabad, a Muslim roadside green-grocer beat a cow which was nibbling at his vegetables. The Hindu cowherd and the green-grocer exchanged blows and the cow, which was not seriously injured, was taken for treatment in an exaggerated manner. Riots began, and lasted for ten days in various parts of Gujarat (Kakar 44-5). In the most recent communal riot that occurred in Hyderabad from April 8-12, 2012, beef was again at the centre of the controversy. It was alleged to have been thrown into the compound of a temple in Kurmaguda, an area with a majority of Muslims (Kumar, "Hyderabad"; "Riots"). Riots continued for four days, and one person was reported to have been killed.

Indeed, the frequent occurrence of riots over cow-protection issues leads Kakar to suggest that, although there are various precipitating incidents where riots are concerned, the two that occur "with such regularity in reports that they may fairly be called archetypes ... [are] ... Muslim violence towards the cow," and the tension and mass emotion surrounding religious processions during Muharram and Ganesh Chaturthi (44). Kakar points out that these incidents are archetypal because irrespective of whether or not they can be proved to have occurred, they are perceived as valid reasons for violence to start (44). Today, Hindu nationalist organizations like the RSS, VHP, Bajrang Dal, and their other affiliates have an anti-slaughter ban as a prominent item on their political

agenda. The open attempt by Hindutva organizations to search for an opportunity to violently target Muslims is seen in a threat made in 2002 by a Bajrang Dal leader that he would enrol three million activists in the anti-cow slaughter movement during the Muslim feast of Bakreid (Jha 20) (which commemorates the proposed sacrifice of Isaq (Isaac) in the Qur'an by sacrificing either a goat, a cow, or in some places, a camel in the name of God). Another vivid example of how Muslims are attacked on the cow issue is seen in the slogan displayed on walls in Ayodhya and Faizabad in October 1990: "it is the compulsory religious duty of Hindus to *kill* those who kill cows" (qtd in Basu et al 70).

Gyanendra Pandey points out that women and cows are both considered sacred property and sacred symbols of Hindus in Hindu nationalist discourses ("Hindus" 260). Yet, Pandey argues, while women's sexuality, which is represented as being primitive, innocent, irrational, and impure, is constructed as a threat to Hindu nationalist discourse, cows are in a better position than women because they are in no way threatening to the Hindu community or to the dominance of men. Pandey points out that in Hindu nationalist discourses, the biggest injury one can do to the cow in order to humiliate Hindus is to kill it (261). And it is not that this injury is not felt deeply by Hindu nationalists and many non-right-wing Hindus who believe the cow is sacred. In fact, Golwalkar writes that the only reason Muslims slaughter cows is to "insult Hindu feelings" (150). But the worst thing that can be done to the Hindu community as well as the Hindu nation by symbolically threatening the masculinity of its men is to rape "its" women. Thus, Neelkanth's "Durga" strategically represents the penultimate injury to the Hindu community through the violent manner in which Gauri is killed. In addition to the slaughter of Gauri, Neelkanth shows the Razakars adding insult to injury by leaving her

severed head dripping with blood hanging on the *peepal* tree; this constitutes an insult to yet another sacred symbol (the *peepal* tree). As if that was not enough, Neelkanth depicts Gauri's head as having been placed on the sacred tree by the Razakars in such a way that her blood drips onto the little, ancient temple under the tree. In light of the opinions voiced by Neelkanth in the Preface, this representation creates the impression that Hindu nationalists actively and often successfully strive to promote: Hindus are under attack; everything that they hold sacred is critically undermined. However, the fact that the women are not raped is meant as a wake-up call to Hindus.

It is as if Neelkanth, by bringing the women so close to being raped and yet saving them at the end, is warning Hindus that they might not be lucky enough to escape the next time the Razakars come calling. The implication of Gauri's brutal slaughter is thus not only an act in itself that would justify further violence against Muslims, but it also adds a sense of vivid finality to the text and its narrative by reminding Hindus of what else (rape) could have happened, but did not. In other words, it makes violence against Muslims an immediate, pre-emptive necessity. Neelkanth's conviction that Hindus must learn from Patel's example in his dealings with Hyderabad in 1948 and conduct themselves accordingly is driven home to Hindus with clarity.

As I have mentioned above, another significant fact about "Durga" is that there is not a single Muslim family or even person who lives within Jampanna Gate.²²⁹ The only Muslim who can be said to be represented, i.e. one who has words and actions attributed to him, is constructed as a stereotypically tyrannical and brutal man. As Moti attempts to

²²⁹ There is one fleeting reference to a Muslim who is not a Razakar. In order to show how lonely Rama, one of the women who lives in Jampanna Gate, had been before she came to this locality, Neelkanth refers to "the elderly Munshi Inayat Khan" (5), who occasionally exchanged a few cordial words with Rama while she used to wait for her father-in-law and husband to return from work. Nothing more is said about Inayat Khan in the rest of the story.

defend the gates, the Razakar Hafiz declares, “he too is a Hindu dog, a *kafir* – like the Hindus, he too must be sent to Hell” (8). He strikes Moti twice, and “[t]he cowdung cake graced ground to the right side of the gates was drenched in thick blood and pieces of meat” (8). There is no positive Muslim character in the text, a depiction which is unlike other Partition texts that often incorporate sympathetic or friendly characters of the Other community. What is more, the fact that Jampanna Gate locality, which has no Muslims or Christians, is conceived as a little Hindustan (India) (4), “one, full, complete family made of smaller families” (5), reinforces its status as the microcosm of the “imagined community” (Anderson 6) that is the Hindu nation. The repeated point that “it was as if all the small families came together to build a big, united family” (Neelkanth 6) also resonates with the RSS’s idea of all Hindus being part of one, large, family in spite of diversity of language, regional, and even communal (as in the case of Sikhs) affiliation. Not surprisingly, the residents of Jampanna Gate belong to various places in India, such as Mathura (Uttar Pradesh), Rajkot (Gujarat), parts of present-day Maharashtra and divided Punjab; the locality is described as a Hindi-speaking haven of sorts for the North Indian residents, who find Telugu language and culture strange and unfamiliar (4). But, while there is great regional and linguistic diversity in the locality, there is no place in Neelkanth’s vision of an idyllic Indian community for alternative Indian cultural traditions that are not exclusively located in Brahminical Hinduism, or even syncretic traditions such as Hyderabadi Hindu-Muslim culture. Everything that does not conform to an exclusivist idea of upper-caste, middle-class Hindu community is an outside phenomenon that has no place in this limited idea of Hindustan, the Hindu nation.

What reaffirms the exclusive Hinduness of this nation is the fact that none of the sacred symbols require any explanation on the part of the narrator. This point is especially relevant since the locality is defined in exclusively Hindu terms. The sacred iconography and symbolism used to describe the residents and their lives are drawn solely from Hindu customs and beliefs. For example, the names of the human and bovine characters, such as “Anandi,” “Gauri,” and “Parvati,” refer to the Hindu goddess Parvati, consort of the god Shiva. There are also names like “Rama,” which refers to the goddess Lakshmi, consort of Vishnu, and “Mohan,” which refers to the god Krishna. Furthermore, a significant amount of time and space has been devoted in the narrative to Gauri, who has been visiting the locality for “who knows how many years” (2). Gauri prefers to sit under a grove of *neem* and *peepal* trees outside the gate, where Anandi often sits with her and affectionately feeds her with leftover *rotis*. Cows and *peepal* trees are worshipped by some Hindus, and *neem* is a medicinal tree that has many uses in daily life for Indians. The sense of domestic bliss in the story is significantly augmented by the welcome presence of Gauri and a herd of cows that also occasionally visits the area. The description of Anandi feeding the cows, offering them water, and affectionately smacking the mischievous calves enhances the idyllic tone of the narrative. There is also no need for the narrator to explain the recent history of cow-service amongst certain sections of Hindus. It is presumed that they will know they are being addressed here. Similarly, there is no need to explain the significance of the dead cow upon the tree, dripping blood on the temple. The readership of Neelkanth’s imagined Hindu nation will read the episode and keenly and jointly feel the profound insult the Razakars’ action constitutes.

Such a representation of Hindu symbols is in line with Benedict Anderson's idea of recognition and empathy between readers of one nation, who have particular narrative ties that connect them in "indefinitely stretchable nets of kinship" (6). Anderson writes that such an ability by the reader to recognize the ethos of the nation in nationalist literature renders extensive commentary unnecessary (27). Thus, the Hindu nation, which is still not realized in truth, is imagined in and through reading because "the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (6). It is significant to point out here that the intended Hindutva readership of Neelkanth's writing is probably located in the Hindi-belt of North India (Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Uttaranchal, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana) and, possibly, some Hindi readers in Gujarat and Maharashtra as well. Because of the relative lack of popularity of Hindi in Andhra Pradesh, where the official languages are Telugu and Urdu (written in the Nastaliq script), it is safe to assume that Neelkanth is not writing for an audience situated in Hyderabad city or other parts of Andhra Pradesh.²³⁰ His choice of Hindi is made unusual by the fact that Hindi is the third or fourth language of the state in terms of popularity (it has no official status in the state); it can be assumed to be connected to the Urdu-Hindi language debates in North India, which have raged in that part of the country since the late nineteenth century and continue to hold sway in debates about the national language. In fact, Alok Rai has gone so far as to suggest in his

²³⁰ The only Hindi readership Neelkanth can really claim in Hyderabad city or other urban centres of Andhra Pradesh, such as Nizamabad or Warangal, are Hindi-speaking Arya Samajis. What drives home the lack of popularity of Hindi in the South, even amongst Hindutva activists, is that, during the Ramjanmabhoomi movement mobilizations in the late eighties and early nineties, large groups of RSS activists had arrived in Delhi from Hyderabad city to attend a VHP rally, but could not understand the speeches because they were all in Hindi. In addition to language problems, they were unsure about how they would contribute to the cause because Hyderabad city had only one Ram temple and that too had been only recently constructed (Basu et al 89-90).

book *Hindi Nationalism* (2001) that Hindutva, or Hindu nationalism, has its roots in the often highly charged mobilization in favour of “pure” Sanskritized Hindi (written in the Devanagari script and stripped of all “Muslim” Farsi and Arabic words) by the upper-caste, Hindu élite of North India. While it is impossible to accept the Hindi-Urdu debates as the ideological trigger for Hindutva, the increasing efforts by Hindutva organizations to promote Hindi in all parts of the country as *the* national language of India make Neelkanth’s choice to write in a highly Sanskritized Hindi very apt.²³¹

The contribution of the peculiar genre ambiguity of “Durga” to this literary imagining in Hindi lies in the fact that it represents the nation in a compact form devoid of internal complications or contradictions. In the space of a few pages, Neelkanth creates a microcosm of the Hindu nation whose blissful sense of community is only threatened by the outsider; this, predictably, is “the Muslim.” The fact that there is no ambivalence within the nation makes for an idyllically conceived community. In addition to the playful, idealized representation of the children playing with the calves and the women gathering around Anandi in the evenings and listening to her sing *bhajans* (“devotional songs”) is also the description of the gentle breeze passing through the trees, crows cawing, and sparrows pecking at grain in front of the little temple. Finally, there is the carefully crafted timeless image of the nation, which is exemplified in Neelkanth’s representation of the little temple outside the gates of the locality. The narrator tells us that the threshold of the temple is blackened and smoothed by the soot of the earthen

²³¹ The nation-wide Hindutva emphasis on Hindi can be seen in the fact that even in Tamil Nadu, where the agitations against “Hindi imperialism” (proposed constitutional amendments to make Hindi the sole official language of India) have historically been the fiercest and most violent, children were being taught by the VHP to say “namaste” instead of the Tamil greeting “vanakkam” in the early 1990s. They were told that “namaste” is the “appropriate Hindu greeting” (Geetha and Jayanthi 251). For more on the connection between Hindutva and Hindi education in the 1990s, which is when the expansionist phase of Hindutva seriously began, see (besides Rai’s *Hindi Nationalism*) Krishna Kumar’s “Hindu Revivalism and Education in North-Central India” (1990).

lamp that is regularly lit before it (1). Such reference to the aging of the threshold by soot indicates not only that the temple is visited regularly by devotees, but also that there is a certain ancientness about it. The impression of timeless harmony and domestic bliss is furthered by the qualifications extended to Moti's and Gauri's constant presence in Jampanna Gate. We are told repeatedly that both have been visiting the locality for "who knows how many years" (1).

Anderson points out that while nation-states may be "'new' and 'historical,' the nations to which they give political expression always loom out of an immemorial past, and still more important, glide into a limitless future" (11-2). This time of the nation, which collapses together the past, present, and future of the nation without differentiation, is called "homogeneous, empty time" (26). This conception also corresponds to the sense of the timeless Hindu nation in the discourse of Golwalkar, who writes that "we were one nation, with one motherland ... from the Setu to the Himalayas – [this] has been our clear concept all down these ages" (81). When he writes that "[i]t was this picture of our motherland ... that was constantly kept radiant in people's minds for so many thousands of years" (81), he creates an imagined community held together by a collective memory that he asserts has survived intact since, literally, time immemorial. Anderson also writes that since there is no clearly known Originator of a nation that can write its history "'down time', through a long procreative chain of begettings," the only alternative that remains is to fashion the nation "up time" (205). This is what Golwalkar explicitly does and what Neelkanth implicitly seeks to achieve.

Moreover, the essence of the Hindu nation is gendered in this representation. In his influential theory of cultural nationalism, Partha Chatterjee makes the argument that

anti-colonial nationalism was constructed on the fundamental belief that the world of social institutions could be divided into two: the material sphere, and the spiritual sphere (*Nation* 6). The material sphere is the domain of the “outside,” where the superiority of “the West” in the realms of economics, science, technology, and statecraft had to be acknowledged (6). This was also the domain of men (120), and it was acknowledged as insignificant in the larger scheme of things because it was “outside us – a mere external that influences us, conditions us, and forces us to adjust to it” (120). The spiritual realm is what represents the true self; it is the “inner” domain and bears the essential hallmark of cultural identity; this is where the indigenous culture has never been surpassed (6). In fact, in this realm, “the East” has always been superior to “the West” (120) and has never been colonized by it²³² (121).

Thus, nationalism came to object to every attempt made by the colonial state to institute social reforms that focused on women or on the Hindu family and claimed that traditions that were associated with Hindu women or that constituted the status quo of the Hindu family were marks of the essential culture of Hindus/Indians and could not be altered²³³ (116). This meant that the spiritual or private domain had to remain unchanged because it was the repository of Hindu/Indian culture. The preservation of this realm was seen to be centrally dependent on the conduct of women (120), who were expected to emphasize their “feminine” attributes, which were thought to be reflected in their “modest” dress, eating habits, social demeanour, and religiosity (*Nation* 130;

²³² While Chatterjee’s theory has been criticized by scholars, notably Ayesha Jalal, for its simplistic reinforcing of binaries and vast generalizations about India based exclusively on the study of nationalism in Bengal, it is nevertheless useful for my analysis because it illuminates how proponents of the Hindu nation imaginatively construct their gendered concept of nation based on just such an inner/outer, material/spiritual divide.

²³³ This does not mean that the colonial state was eager to work in the interests of women. In fact, the attempts to bring about much-needed changes, such as the abolition of *sati*, were an opportunity for the colonial state to morally legitimate its presence in India. As Spivak has pointed out, “white men were saving brown women from brown men” (“Can” 297) and, in the process, seeking to justify Britain’s colonization of India.

“Nationalist” 158). Hindu women were supposed to dress in Indian clothes; they must not smoke, drink, or even eat the way men, who had to adopt western habits, did; they must continue to observe religious rituals that men now found difficult to carry out with their preoccupations with the material world; and they must maintain “the cohesiveness of family life and solidarity with the kin to which men could not now devote much attention” (*Nation* 130). In this way, the behaviour of women had to be maintained as markedly different from that of men. The upholding of such norms by women would ensure the sanctity and integrity of the home, the site where the spiritual life of the nation thrives (“Nationalist” 159).

Chatterjee’s theorization comes into play in the RSS’s views that religion is timeless and unchanging and that women are custodians of this eternal religion (Sarkar, “Heroic” 209). Sarkar has pointed out that the RSS draws much inspiration from late nineteenth century Hindu revivalist-nationalists, who narrativized the Hindu woman’s body as “hemmed in with scriptural ritual, [and which] was imagined as a pure space that escaped the transformative effects of colonization, whereas the Hindu man, seduced by the operations of western power and knowledge, had surrendered himself and had lost his autonomy” (186). It was the woman’s body which remained “the site of an existent freedom as well as the future nation” (186). And it is this carefully constructed essence of the Hindu nation, embodied in Hindu women and the “cohesiveness of family life and solidarity” (Chatterjee, *Nation* 130) that we observe in the representation of their homemaking, their motherhood, and their worship in “Durga,” all of which is rudely interrupted when the Razakars attack Jampanna Gate. Furthermore, this nationalist construction of women’s bodies and their desired “modest” conduct came to the fore

during the impassioned debates in the Indian Constituent Assembly immediately after Partition (Menon and Bhasin 107-8, 115). As I have already mentioned in an earlier chapter, the nation's honour as well as territorial integrity were seen to be dependent on the unconditional recovery of women abducted and raped during Partition (Menon and Bhasin 115; Butalia 151-2). Thus, national honour came to be conflated with the bodies of women. It is this (Hindu) national honour and, consequently, the "limitless future" (Anderson 11-2) of the Hindu nation that is threatened by the Razakars in "Durga." Indeed, in the rhetoric of the Sangh Parivar, "Mother India is projected as being in danger of being raped and dismembered. The rapist is ... [the Razakar] and the rape of women and of the nation are collapsed into one" (Dietrich 45).

In this chapter, I have argued that the representation of Balwinder Kaur as Durga may be an appropriate and empowering figure of women's agency in terms of its Partition context. However, this representation is deeply questionable when we bear in mind two things: the deployment of the image of a blood-thirsty Durga, an *avatar* of the Motherland, in the service of violent Hindutva ideology; and the consistent, constant attempts by Hindutva organizations to co-opt Sikhs into their ideology and practice for purely instrumental, militant purposes. I have also argued that the fabricated narrative of the sacred cow is yet another attempt by Hindutva forces to attack what is already a battered Indian Muslim community. Finally, I have shown that Neelkanth's narrative construction of the Hindu nation is effected through his use of strategically situated Hindu icons and symbols, which feature women and cows most prominently. This Hindu nation is threatened by the outsider, "the Muslim." In elaborating upon these points, I have outlined how narratives of Partition violence from Hyderabad are being used as the

rationale for present-day militant Hindu nationalism by writers such as Neelkanth, who betray one of Hindutva's most persistent and pernicious practices: its relentless persecution of Muslims. It is remarkable how similar Neelkanth's strategy is to that other communal ideologue, Qasim Razvi, who elaborately and passionately retold stories about the rapes of Muslim women in other parts of the subcontinent during Partition to incite Razakar violence against Hindus in Hyderabad in the 1940s.

Epilogue

In June 2011, when I was in Hyderabad city researching this project, the recent agitations by political groups such as the Telangana Joint Action Committee as well as many pro-Telangana students from Osmania University were fresh in the minds of many Hyderabadis. In fact, after a brief lull in the face of the fierce Deccan summer, there were plans to organize a new *bandh* (city-wide protest) on June 25, two days after I was to leave Hyderabad city for Delhi. Struck by the festive atmosphere visible amidst crowds and throngs of people around Osmania University, Hussain Sagar Lake, and even Panjagutta and Banjara Hills, where red (communist) flags and bunting appeared to have taken over the streets and landmarks entirely, I asked my driver, also a Telangana Telugu, what Telangana meant to him. I asked him if he thought it was a good thing that Telangana would be carved out of Andhra Pradesh and made a separate Indian state with Hyderabad city as its capital. He was emphatic that Telangana must come about because not only was it the homeland of Telugus and their language and culture, but it would also give them greater rights and opportunities where education and employment prospects are concerned. He was also passionate about how Telugus deserved Telangana, how they were entitled to it, after all they had suffered under the Nizams and everything that they had been falsely promised by successive state and central governments. Indeed, farmer suicides, which have been triggered by crop failure and indebtedness and compounded by bad or indifferent state policies, have plagued the Telangana region for decades now. No less than a hundred and fifty-seven farmers killed themselves over a period of two months in 2011 (*NDTV*, “Farmer”). Pro-Telangana groups and individuals believe that a

separate Telangana state will make better policies to aid farmers in producing successful crops and increasing their yield.

However, the movement to bring about a separate Telangana state has already seen a lot of violence, and many students across Telangana have killed themselves over the centre's delay in forming the new state. The latest suicide has been that of V. Santosh, a twenty-year old student of Saraswathi College in Tukkaguda, who hung himself on November 7, 2012 on the Osmania University campus and blamed the government in Delhi for the delay in the creation of Telangana state (*BBC News*, "India Telangana"; Menon, "Frustrated"). Violence also marks the approach of the activists of the Telangana Rashtra Samithi ("Telangana National Committee"; TRS), the only political party involved in the Telangana movement that was created solely to deal with the Telangana issue. On October 20, 2012, TRS activists vandalized the office of film director Puri Jagannath, whose latest Telugu film *Cameraman Gangatho Rambabu* ("Rambabu with Cameraman Ganga," 2012) has been accused of being anti-Telangana and, consequently, "hurt[ing] the sentiments of people of the region" (*Hindu*, "Panel Suggests", "Screening"). The aggressive tone of the activists of the TRS is also confirmed by its leaders. For example, on October 30, 2012, Telangana Rashtra Samithi Chief K. Chandrasekhara Rao told reporters in Hyderabad city that "[i]f the centre delivers Telangana state, there will be celebrations, otherwise there will be war" (*Times of India*, "TRS Chief").

Aware of this violence, I decided to get a second opinion after listening to what my driver had to say. When I spoke to my other friends and colleagues, who included Telangana Telugus, Andhra (coastal as well as interior) Telugus, Hyderabad Muslims,

Punjabis, Sikh migrants, and Oriya migrants what they thought about Telangana, there was considerable ambivalence. While most of them were affiliated to communist or left-liberal political ideologies and welcomed, supported, and even participated in the agitations for a Telangana that would enable the self-determination of Telugus and improve the lot of the small and landless farmers in the region, they were also concerned that Telangana was being imagined as a state exclusively for Telangana Telugus. One friend, who is from coastal Andhra, said that there was a naïve assumption that all non-Telangana people, such as Telugus from other parts of Andhra Pradesh, North Indians, Bangladeshi migrants, and Urdu-speaking Muslims, would leave Hyderabad city as well as other parts of Telangana and that open and empty houses would await Telangana Telugus. His words made me think of Partition, when houses were indeed left empty by departing people and were taken by arriving refugees, the new “rightful” citizens of India or Pakistan. Top police officials have also expressed such concerns, most recently in the context of the Telangana march of September 30, 2012. Their intelligence sources had told them to expect violence directed against the properties of people from Seemandhra (the non-Telangana part of Andhra Pradesh, which consists of Rayalaseema and Andhra) (*News Track India*, “Telangana”). Having read extensively about the high moral ground created by the Telangana Armed Struggle, I was a little crestfallen because the proposal for a new Telangana seemed to me to be like a new Partition, on a smaller scale, but perhaps with similarly divisive consequences.

Perhaps this is why the centre in Delhi is treading with caution. As India’s Home Minister Sushilkumar Shinde has explained on November 2, 2012, the creation of Telangana is likely to have repercussions not only in Andhra Pradesh but also in

neighbouring states. So the Indian government is waiting for the Andhra Pradesh Congress Party, Telugu Desam Party, Majlis-e-Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen, and YSR Congress to make their stand clear on the issue. The BJP, Telangana Rashtra Samithi, and the Communist Party of India have explicitly declared themselves to be in favour of the formation of Telangana. The Communist Party of India (Marxist) is not in favour of the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh, but they have supported marches by the people of Telangana to demand the creation of Telangana (*News Track India*, “Telangana”). In 2011, Asaduddin Owaisi, the current President of the Majlis, made it clear that “separate Telangana or unified Andhra was never our electoral agenda.” He emphasized that the core agenda of the present-day Majlis in Hyderabad city and Andhra Pradesh is to represent the aspirations of minorities and Dalits and backward classes (Iftekhhar, “Majlis”). At the same time, Owaisi has also clarified that the Majlis is not opposed to the demand for a separate Telangana state (*Economic Times*, “Majlis”). It is non-committal over the Telangana demand because it wants Rayala-Telangana (*Deccan Chronicle*, “T Statehood”), a state composed of Telangana and Rayalaseema.

Another reason for the Majlis’ ambivalence emerges when we take into account that Owaisi has questioned the pluralist, secular credentials of the Telangana movement by pointing out that out of a hundred and nineteen legislative assembly seats from Telangana, there are only seven Muslim MLAs. He also asks why no one is raising important questions such as how river waters for irrigation purposes would be divided between the two states. This point becomes especially relevant in light of the fact that there have been many farmer suicides in the Telangana region over the failure of crops on account of water shortages (Iftekhhar, “Majlis”). On the other hand, newspapers such as

the *Deccan Chronicle* have rightly pointed out that the Majlis' reservations towards the idea of a separate Telangana stem also from the fact that its clout amongst Muslims will be undermined by the new state. This is especially so because many Muslims support the move for a separate Telangana. Muslim youth from Telangana are particularly active in the movement because they foresee better education and employment opportunities in the new state ("T Statehood").

It is November 2012 and Telangana state has not yet been formed. But in the latest march in Hyderabad city on September 30 against the central government's failure to announce the creation of Telangana during the period agreed to by it, the air was rife with hope again. Once again, Telangana activists were jubilant that *this* time, the centre (New Delhi) will pay attention to their protests and declare that Telangana will indeed be a separate state. The march was held a day after the annual ritual immersion of the Hindu god Ganesh, and Hyderabad city police initially refused permission for the march for this reason (*News Track India*, "Telangana"; FP Politics, "Telangana"). In the past, communal violence in Hyderabad city has frequently coincided with the festival of Ganesh. Violence was triggered between the police and the protestors when the latter tried to remove barricades and take the march to places that they had been prohibited (in advance) from accessing. The police used water cannons and tear-gas shells in response, and the protestors threw stones at them. Telugu news channels were blocked across Telangana and electricity supply to the towns and villages was cut (*Hindustan Times*, "Pro-Telangana"). Incidents of violence were reported from Osmania University campus, Khairatabad, and the Andhra Pradesh Secretariat (*Indian Express*, "Violence"). The police have claimed that twenty-five police vehicles were damaged, out of which three

were burnt, and two vans belonging to television newschannels were also attacked. They say that reporters were assaulted, trains were pelted with stones, and a railway track near Necklace Road station was damaged. According to the police, nineteen policemen were injured and about four or five protestors were also injured (FP Politics, "Telangana"). A poultry farmer, who took part in the march, later succumbed to the injuries he received during the violence (*Hindu*, "Poultry").

As far as partitions go, if Telangana is created, this would be the third such political shift for this region in the past sixty-four years. In 1948, Hyderabad state was absorbed into India amidst great violence; in 1956, the erstwhile princely state was finally divided into three, with one piece each going to the linguistically determined states of Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Andhra Pradesh. And now, on a date that is still vague, Telangana will be carved out of Andhra Pradesh. The simultaneous mood of excitement and apprehension towards the (always imminent and, so far, constantly deferrable) creation of Telangana was palpable last year as well as this year. Perhaps the new state will see further land reforms for the impoverished, landless farmers of Telangana. And perhaps there will not be communal violence and, instead, Telugu-speaking Hindus and Muslims will find common ground in the new state. It remains to be seen how the remnants of Hyderabad's mixed, syncretic, cosmopolitan culture, which have thus far (barely/somehow) survived despotic rulers, military governments, and communal mobilizations, will face this new development.

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