I. Memory and Partition Violence

Bhisham Sahni in *Tamas* has been able to convey the violent ambiguities of communal conflict with as much force and conviction. The novel focuses on the sense of despair and dislocation caused by the partition of Pakistan and India in 1947. Sahni vividly recreates the anger and horrors of this period and the trauma of refugees uprooted and victimized by the delineation of arbitrary borders. As the characters in Sahni's novel confront the ruthless inhumanity of Hindu-Muslim violence—murder, rape and mutilation – their only conceivable response is madness, *Tamas*.

Partition violence, as Javed Alam describes, was an act of sudden madness, "A moment of a loss of sanity when they start killing each other. It is this third type of violence which we saw at partition. This should be left behind, should be forgotten so that people may live in peace, socially normal everyday life, politically, as well as individually" (101).

In Gyanendra Pandey's opinion, there are three partitions or, in other words, Indian history of Partition has three different phases or conceptions: first, there was the partition signaled at the Lahore Resolution of 1940 in which some important Muslim leaders had demanded a separate state of their own. This was widely articulated across the subcontinent over the next seven years. Secondly, in the 1947, a section of Sikh, Hindu and congress leadership had demanded the partition of Punjab and Bengal in terms of linguistic and cultural uniformity. And finally, "there was the partition of families and local communities, whereby millions of people were torn from ancestral homes, fields and fortunes, life-long friends and childhood memories, relatives and loved ones, the knowledge of the familiar and the comfort of the known" (*Remembering* 14).

Mushirul Hasan, in this regard, observes that "The partition of the sub-continent

led to one of the largest ever migrations in world history. With an estimated 12.5 million people (about 3 percent of undivided India) being displaced or uprooted" ("Human Cost" 50). He further says that in the Punjab alone 12 million of Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims were involved in murder, 9 million people started for migration overnight, and until 1950, 4000 Muslims a day boarded the train to Pakistan. Many died on the roads, several got lost, and perhaps more went mad. Altogether 75,000 women were rape and abducted. There was human misery on a colossal scale all around and millions were left bereaved, destitute, homeless, hungry, and thirsty. Worst of all, millions of the survivor-victims were desperately anxious and almost hopeless about future (Hasan 50). The records of abduction, conversion, forced migration, purification, naked women's parade, mass raping and killings and the local records of *Gharuan,* where hundreds of people became the victims of communal violence, and innumerable others like the "rumours?" of train raids, mass-massacres, can also provide very good source for re-writing the history of partition. It is Pandey's argument that these should not be allowed to be drowned in the din of a statist historiography ("Voices" 226).

Besides the recorded or unrecorded memories, literary writings of Muslim, Sikh and Hindu writers like S.H. Manto, Bhisma Sahani, Bapsi Sidhwa, Chaman Nahal, Intijar Hussain, Khuswant Singh, Amitav Ghosh, K.A Abbas, can also provide us better insight into the historical event. These writers from both sides of the Radcliffe line have been inspired to capture and record one of the bloodiest events ever witnessed by mankind. They have certainly produced much valuable fictional and non- fictional works capturing the naked dance of violence that the partition-marred independence had unfolded. These writings certainly score over the historian's history insofar as the representation of the violence of 1947 is concerned. These writings give us many

significant details about the partition not at all mentioned in textbook histories. In "Memories of Fragmented Nation," Mushirul Hassan remarks:

> Scores of writers reveal the other face of freedom, the woes of divided families, the agony and trauma of abducted women, the plight of migrants and the harrowing experiences of countless people who boarded the train that took them to the realization of their dream, but of whom not a man, woman, or child survived the journey. (2666)

It is fortunate that such accounts of dislocation and death are conveniently ignored by the historian's history. More truthful history can be expected from other kinds of writings rather than the textbook history.

In his opinion, literature exposes the inadequacy of the numerous narratives of independence and partition and provides a foundation for developing an alternative discourse. He further states that literature not only arouses pathos for the partition victims, but also gives rise to a countervailing protest – a voice for justice that must be the surging of our humanity itself. It is Hasan's assertion that literature does what religious leaders in each community failed to do- that is, to force the communities to affirm broad humanity. This, he says, is conspicuously absent in the nationalist history ("Memories" 2667).

Like Ion Talbot and Mushirul Hassan, David Gilmartin is of the opinion that literature provides better insight into the impact of partition than any history book. According to him, fiction:

> has provided an intense window in the personal experiences of 1947, dramatizing graphically the impact of partition on everyday lives…. But

> fiction has ironically proved a far more powerful vehicle for describing the influence of partition on the common man and woman than for describing the influence of common people on partition… indeed the disconnection between the rarefied decisions leading to partition, and searing consequences on individual lives, remains one of the most powerful tropes that has been carried from partition fiction into the work of historian. (1069)

Fictional writings deal with the incidents of dislocation, migration, madness, rape, abduction, and motifs of trains full of corpses and the touching anecdotes such as a peasant asking Nehru, "Have you ever heard of a peasant who wishes to leave his land?" (qtd. in Pandey, "Memory" 37). They also contain the episode of the parade of naked women from Muslim or Hindu/Sikh community as presented by Chaman Nahal (himself a victim) in *Azadi* or depict the madness and trauma resulting from dislocation, abduction and rape as in Manto's stories which speak most poignantly about the pain and trauma of the victims. One should, however, not be deceived by the foregrounding of the human dimension of the partition violence in literature. Apart from a few exceptions, much of the partition literature suffers from the use of the prose of otherness: the tendency of disparaging the "enemy" nation and its people and somehow or the other presenting his/her own community or nation in better light.

In *Tamas,* Bhisham Sahni recollects the experiences he witnessed as a child in Rawalpindi and those that he grew up with as an adult man. The memories of the people and especially of women, who lived through the partition of India, relating to the history of rape and abduction, murder and looting, to the recovery of abducted persons and resettlement of the uprooted, provide an exceptionally telling example for Sahni. In this

memorizing, Sahni is searching for the moral, ethical values for partition and its aftermath was a time of the erosion of such values.

Plato thought that search for knowledge is tied up with memory, the effort to recall something we collectively knew. Freud took memory even further, positing that repressed memories are the key to shaping up us as individuals and as a society. Avishai Margalit, in The *Ethics of Memory,* takes up the issue of ethics and morality in respect to an idea of communal memory. Acknowledging that historical religions "can make a bid on moral memory of humanity as a whole" (9), he instead poses a question: "Is there an ethics of memory?" (6). Margalit writes:

> The topic of this book is the ethics of memory, with a question mark: Is there an ethics of memory? I consider this topic distinct from the closely related subjects of the psychology and memory, the politics of memory, and even the theology of memory. I believe that it is an important question to ask and not merely a futile administrative exercise in channeling issues to this or to that intellectual department. (60)

Margalit is concerned with the ethics of memory or the duty of remembrance. According to him we have ethical obligations to remember.

In his book, Margalit explores the ethical significance of memory with special reference to the potential value of even obligation to serve as the agent of historical memory for those who suffered and perished in the Holocaust. Margailit believes that we do have obligations to remember people or events from the past. His book opens with a story about a certain colonel in the Israeli army. As Margalit tells it, the colonel was consumed by public outrage after admitted to forgetting the name of a soldier killed under his command. Margalit says: "I was struck by the moral wrath heaped on this

officer simply for not remembering something and it led me to think about the officer's obligation to remember" (19).

The book takes up the question of duties of memory. Margalit opens his study with the question: "Is there an ethic of memory?" (6), and thereby drives forward his subject of examination by evocating a series of questions like "Are we obligated to remember people and events from the past? If we are, what is the mature of this obligation?" (7). Margalit answers later in the book: "Let us understand the we as the collective or communal we" (48). Finally, Margalit concludes, the "ethics of memory is the ethics of collective memory" (48).

As an astonishingly humane thinker, Margalit argues that human beings have an ethical obligation to remember the past persons and events. He maintains that the source of this obligation to remember comes from the effort of radical evil forces to undermine morality by rewriting the past and controlling collective memory. He argues that it is necessary for community to have collective memories in order to achieve a level of repentance and reconciliation. In the book, Margalit explores the evaluative and ethical dimensions of memory both in the private and in the collective spheres. He writes: "My question, Is there an ethics of memory? Is both about micro-ethics (the ethics of individuals) and about macro-ethics (the ethics of collectives)" (6 -7). The main unifying theme of the book, as the title signals, is the treatment of memory, individual and collective, as something responsive to ethical evaluation.

Margalit explores the way we rely on memory to give meaning and substance to the "thick" or "thin" ethical relationships. "Thick" relations, he argues, are those that we have with family, friends or community – and they are all dependent on shared memories,

but we also have “thin” relations with total strangers, people with whom we have nothing in common except our common humanity. Margalit writes:

> Thick relations are grounded in attributes such as parent, friend, lover, fellow- countryman. Thick relations are anchored in a shared past or moored in shared memory. Thin relations, on the other hand, are backed by the attribute of being human. Thin relations rely also on some aspects of being human, such as being a woman or being sick. Thick relations are in general our relations to the near and dear. Thin relations are in general our relations to the stranger and the remote. (7)

The central idea of Margalit is that when radical evil attacks our shared humanity, we ought as human beings to remember the victims. In the case of monstrous crimes against humanity –such as the Nazi mass murder of Jews or Communist liquidation of the Kulaks – he argues that memory should shape a renewed and universally shared understanding of morality. Exceptional moral witness to such crimes can preserve harrowing memories that will galvanize others to act against social and political evil.

Margalit further states that ethics guides our thick relations, whereas morality guides our thin relations. He writes, “Morality, in my usage ought to guide our behavior towards those to whom we are related just by virtue of no other attribute. These are our thin relations. Ethics, in contrast, guides our thick relations” (37). According to Margalit, ethics tells us how we should regulate our thick relations and morality tells us how we should regulate our thin relations. He further says:

> [T]he primary concern of both ethics and morality is with certain aspects of human relations. Morality is greatly concerned, for example, with respect and humiliation; these are attitudes that manifest themselves

> among those who have thin relations. Ethics, on the other hand, is greatly concerned with loyalty and betrayal, manifested among those who have thick relations (8)

The major concern of Margalit is that "while there is an ethics of memory there is very little morality of memory" (7). According to him, as it encompasses all humanity, morality is long on geography and short on memory whereas ethics is typically short on geography and long on memory. For him, memory is the cement that holds thick relations together, and communities of memory are the obvious habitat for thick relations and thus for ethics. And by playing such a crucial role in cementing thick relations, memory becomes an obvious concern of ethics "which is the enterprise that tells us how we should conduct our thick relations" (8).

The central idea of Margalit is that morality should be concerned with memory as well when the gross crimes against humanity are an attack on the very notion of shared humanity. He writes:

> Though I confine memory predominantly to ethics, there are cases when morality should be concerned with memory as well. These cases consist of gross crimes against humanity, especially when those crimes are an attack on the very notion of shared humanity. Nazi crimes carried out by an ideology that denied our shared humanity are glaring examples of what morality requires us to remember. (9)

Yet, as Margalit sees, humanity is not a community of memory rather of ethical. *A Dictionary of Philosophy* defines 'ethics' as a "body of doctrine concerning what is right and wrong, good and bad, in respect of character and conduct" (137) . It is a particular kind of an idea or moral belief that influences the behavior, attitudes and philosophy of

life of a group of people. It is the study of issue concerning on what is morally right or wrong.

Ethics as a moral philosophy designates two distinct but related kinds of inquiry: substantive ethics and analytical ethics. Substantive ethics deals with the question of what is right and wrong, good and bad, in relation to characters and conducts. Its aim is to formulate standards of correctness for evaluation and decision. On the other hand, analytical ethics is the inquiry into moral concepts and their logic but does not itself aim at providing standards of correctness for evaluation and decision. It is also known as meta -ethics.

The Greek philosopher, Socrates claims that conscience tells man what is right. He says, "S/he who knows what is good will do good" (qtd. in Tarnas 69). According to him, the right insight leads to the right action, and only he who does right can be a virtuous man. Similarly, Immanuel Kant opines that the difference between right and wrong is a matter of reason but not of sentiment. He agrees with the rationalists who said that the ability to distinguish between right and wrong is inherent in human reason. Everybody knows what is right or wrong not because s/he has learned it but because it is born in the mind. According to Kant, everybody has practical reason or intelligence that gives us the capacity to discern what is right or wrong in every case. He further argues: "But if you have with others only to be popular, you are not action out of respect for moral law. You might be acting in accordance with moral law but if it is to be a moral action you must have conquered yourself. Only when we do something purely out of duty it can be called a moral act" (qtd. in Tarnas 335). Thus, Kant's ethics is sometimes called duty or responsibility ethics. He says that it is this good will which determines whether or

not the action is morally right but not the consequences of the action. His ethics is, therefore, also called a 'good-will ethics'.

Emmanuel Levinas makes ethical responsibility for "the Other" the bedrock of his philosophical analyses. Levinas invokes an absolute and primary obligation of responsibility to the human Other, whom he figures hyprerbolically as invoked by the epiphany of the encounter with 'the face of the Other'. This encounter with alterity founds not only ethics, but subjectivity itself. Levinas derives the primacy of his ethics from the experience of the encounter with the other. For Levinas, the irreducible relation or the epiphany of the face-to-face encounter with the another is a privileged phenomenon in which the other person's proximity and distance are both strongly felt. As Levinas argues in *Totality and Infinity,* "the Other precisely reveals himself in his alterity not in a shock negating the I, but as the primordial phenomenon of gentleness" (150). At the same time, the revelation of the face makes a demand, and this demand is before one can express, or know one's freedom, to affirm or deny. One instantly recognizes the transcendence and heteronomy of the Other. Even murder fails as an attempt to take hold of this otherness.

Levinas's approach is philosophical that makes personal ethical responsibility to Others the starting point and primary focus for philosophy, rather than a secondary reflection that follows explorations of the nature of existence and the validity of knowledge. "Ethics precedes ontology" is a phrase often used to sum up his stance. For Levinas, the Other is not knowable and cannot be made into an object of the self, as is done by traditional metaphysics. Levinas prefers to think of philosophy as the 'wisdom of love' rather than the love of wisdom. By his lights, ethics becomes an entity independent of subjectivity to the point where ethical responsibility is integral to the subject; hence an

ethics of responsibility precedes any objective searching after truth. Instead of the thinking "I" epitomized in "I think, therefore I am" –the phrase with which Rene Descartes launched much of modern philosophy – Levinas began with an ethical "I". For him, even the self is possible only with its recognition of "the Other", a recognition that carries responsibility towards what is irreducibly different. Knowledge, for Levinas, must be preceded by an ethical relationship. It is a line of thought similar to Martin Buber's idea of "I and thou", but with the emphasis on a relationship of respect and responsibility for the other person rather than a relationship of mutuality and dialogue.

In *Totality and Infinity,* Levinas argues that our responsibility for the other is already footed within our subjective constitution. It should be noted that the first line of the preface of this book is "everyone will readily agree that it is of the highest importance to know whether we are not duped by morality" (21). This can be seen more clearly in his later account of recurrence, where Levinas maintained that subjectivity was formed in and through our subjected-ness to the Other. According to him, the subject, impossible as a freedom for itself, is reformed by responsibility for another. The meaning, according to Levinas, of the first person singular is responsibility.

In his another work, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence,* Levinas argues that the word "I" means "here I am", answering for everything and everyone. In this matter, subjectivity is a 'hostage' of the Other. As Levinas writes:

> It is, however, not an alienation, because the other in the same is my substitution for the other through responsibility, for which, I am summoned as someone irreplaceable. I exist through the other and for the other, but without this being an alienation: I am inspired. This inspiration is the psyche. The psyche can signify this alterity in the same without

> alienation in the form of incarnation, as being in one’s skin, having-the-other-in one’s-skin. (114)

In the latter book, Levinas describes an intensified ethics, now presented as a subjectivity become hostage to the other. Levinas explores the movement from the interpersonal level to that of wider society on the basis of justice. This way of apprehending subjectivity enables Levinas to formulate a notion of human community that is united by neither primordial individual freedom, nor by universalism, but by the interminable quest for social justice.

A traumatic historical event usually finds the artistic/literary response twice. Once, during the event or immediately following it and again after a lapse of time, when the event has found its corner in the collective memory of the generation that witnessed it. The initial response tends to be emotionally intense and personal in character, even melodramatic. On the other hand, when the event is reflected upon with emotional detachment and objectivity, a clearer pattern of the various forces that shaped it is likely to emerge. *Tamas* is the reflective response to the partition of India – one of the most tragic events in the recent history of the Indian sub-continent. Sahni witnessed the turbulence of the period as an adult. That was a period of intense turmoil – people sacrificing their lives for the freedom of the country, people dying fighting. The unprecedented communal violence provoked by the callous manipulation of religious sentiments of different communities by the elements who chose to use religion as a weapon to achieve political objectives heightened his sensitivity towards human suffering and also strengthened his commitment to secularism. *Tamas* had to wait twenty-three years after partition to be born. Perhaps, because the initial response was shock and numbness, as a writer, Sahni is rarely given to a sentimental and dramatic response to immediate events. His creativity is characterized by deep reflection upon and understanding of the complexities and nuances of reality.

II. Memory and History: Thin Representation of Partition in *Tamas*

A work of fiction with an immediate historical event as a backdrop invariably invites questions like how far does the work reflect true history on moral grounds. In the case of *Tamas*, the question becomes all the more delicate because it involves three different religious communities who were either the victims, or the aggressors, in different parts of the country, during partition. *Tamas* is episodic in structure, which, from the point of view of literary craftsmanship may not exactly be considered flawless. Yet, as a piece of literature it reveals the vision of one detached yet passionate, quietly reflective yet emotionally intense.

Tamas is an anatomy of the tragical period. It depicts how communal violence was generated by fundamentalists and extremists in both communities, and how innocent persons were duped into serving the ulterior purposes of fundamentalists and communalists of both slides; how an innocent boy is seduced to violence resulting in his attacking both communities; how extremist elements in both communities infuse tension and hatred for their own ends at the cost of intercommunal harmony, how realization ultimately dawns as to the futility of it all, and finally how inherent goodness in human nature triumphs and both communities learn to live in amity. *Tamas* is in equal measure "against fundamentalists and extremists of both communities, and not in favour of hatred towards any one particular community. Both communities are treated equally for blame as they are for praise" (Nihalini). The message is loud and clear, directed as it is against the sickness of communalism.

As Nihalini further observes, "It is out of the tragic experience of the past that we can fashion our present in a rational and reasonable manner and view our future with wisdom and care. Awareness in proper light is a first step towards that realization. It is

true that in certain circumstances truth has to be avoided" (ii). *Tamas* takes us to a historical past – unpleasant at times, but revealing and instructive. As in all his major works, he provides an insight into the contradictions of human nature, the complexities of fanatic mind, the subversive nature of communal politics, the terror of religious fundamentalism, the undercurrents of faith and hope in the midst f the most violent of tragedies. Simplicity of expression, its honesty of observation, and the deep compassion of Sahni's secular vision are some of the major qualities of the novel. As such *Tamas* is more than a work of literature. It is a grim reminder of the immense tragedy, the results whenever the religious sentiments of communities are manipulated to achieve political objectives. It is a prophetic warning against the use of religion as weapon to gain and perpetuate political power.

Tamas portrays the terror-stricken Hindu exodus from Muslim majority areas, though the overall theme remains the human-story behind the entire carnage. The novel relives the four days of violence through the eyes of different characters in the book and the horrifying experiences of people. Sahni portrays different points of view, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and the British, through his character as they become involved in the events of the novel. However in depicting the genocidal violence Sahni encapsulates his sympathy for the underdogs and his belief in the essential goodness of humanity.

The novel begins with a episode in which Nathu, a skinner of hides by trade, attempts for the first time to kill a pig, a scene in which the irreducible materiality of the pig's existence is foregrounded, making the actual business of killing even more repulsive (*Tamas* 1). The animal is represented as possessing a visceral reality, defeating time and again his amateurish efforts to slaughter it. The scene takes on a symbolic dimension, as if enacting a nightmarish struggle with demons from the past. Nathu senses

the disturbed atmosphere of the city but is not quite able to make sense of the scheme being set into motion by agent provocateurs like Murad Ali, who commissions him to slaughter the pig. Nathu is drawn unwittingly into the conspiracy, even as the pig is thrown at the steps of a mosque in order to incite communal violence remain unintelligible to him, though he observes the sinister presence of Murad Ali at different juncture; Nathu is killed in the collective violence that follows (35).

Sahni brings in a new perspective in his portrait of the relationship between Liza and Richard, the deputy commissioner of the area. This sketch of a bored colonial officer's wife and the sympathetic account of the deterioration of her marriage in an alien land functions as a counter point to the violence on the streets (54). Liza wonders whether there is any danger to her husband. She is reassured by his reply that the ruler is safe if the subjects fight among themselves (54). Liza and Richard are portrayed as types, although this is undercut to an extent through the compassion evoked for her situation of isolation (Guha 41). Later, Sahni is at his best while portraying the atmosphere of fear and growing anxiety amongst groups such as the Sanatan Dharm Sabha, which organise to combat the perceived threat, leading to the formation of a Volunteer Corps (*Tamas* 76). Perhaps the most powerful sequences of the novel appear in the section portraying the indoctrination of Right-wing Hindu ideology in the Youth Wing. Ranvir, son of a Vanaprasthior head priest of the *sabha,* is taught by his mentor Devvrat that the art of bomb making could be discovered in the *Vedas;* he is indoctrinated with hatred of the *mlechchas* or non –Hindus. Ranvir is then instructed to kill a hen without flinching as a rite of initiation (83). Later Inder, another young recruit, stabs an unsuspecting Muslim incense-seller as a way of proving his arrival in the group in a grim travesty of initiation rituals. The incense- seller fails to realise what is in store for him, the designated target of

communal hatred. Here, the hypermasculinity underpinning such joint actions of the militant Hindu group is disclosed without recourse to didactic commentary, an improvisation doubtless indebted to observation of the recrudescence of such groups in the 1960s and 70s. The economy of stereotypes that results in the construction of the 'other' is represented with savage irony and attention to detail.

Sahni highlights the capacity of ordinary folk to resist the spread of communal feeling as well. Rajo defends the fleeing Sikh Harnam Singh and his wife when they take refuge in her home. The petty looting and greed ramphant at this time is described here and it is the Muslim woman Rajo who proves to be strong enough to resist the propensity for revenge and retaliation exhibited by those around her (253). Later, community-based notions of purity and honour lead Sikh woman to sacrifice themselves by throwing themselves down a well, rather than face the prospect of capture and violation by the enemy, as in the incident at Thoa Khalsa (Talbot 104). However, this collective suicide is depicted as irrational, given that the fear of a Muslim attack is exaggerated and that this 'self-sacrifice' turns out to be unnecessary.

Towards the end of the novel, after the large-scale communal conflagration, some attempt is made to attend to the plight of refugees. Recriminations begin amongst leaders at the local level. During this meeting, Gandhi's views on the policy of divide and rule are put forward to explain the reasons for the communal rioting that had devastated the township. This serves only to underline the inadequacy of the explanation; Manohar Lal, an activist, accuses such people of being Gandhi's parrots, mindlessly repeating what he stated in Wardha (*Tamas* 307). The British administration is not let off the hook either. This becomes clear in the portrait of the relationship between Richard and his wife Liza, as well as through the depiction of the unfeeling quality of Richard's response to deaths

in the area under the charge. Richard speaks of the need for detachment as an official; he remains incapable of empathy with those who are suffering despite retaining a pseudo-scholarly interest in India's past, ironically as an amateur collector of Buddhist icons and relics (312).

In 1998, during a talk given to Khudai Khidmatgars, followers of Badshah Khan, Gandhi recalled the repentence of Mir Alam Khan, the Pathan who had attacked him in South Africa:

> This could not have happened if I had retaliated. My action can be fitly described as a process of conversion. Unless you have felt within you this urge to convert your enemy by your love, you had better retrace your steps; this business of non-violence is not for you…. Renunciation of violence must not mean apathy or helplessness in the face of wrongdoing. If our non-violence is genue and rooted in love, it ought to provide a more effective remedy against wrongdoing than the use of brute force. (Iyer)

The novel ends with an attempt to form a peace committee, as the leaders of various denominations again tour the riot-hit city seeking to propagate the message of peace. In a chilling twist, we find the sinister figure of Murad Ali leading the slogan shouting, even as the temporary cessation of violence allows the city to gradually limp back to normalcy (*Tamas* 351). The very obverse of Gandhian ideals has thus come to be realized, with the politics of hatred appropriating even the rhetoric of the pacifists.

The action of Sahni's novel, we may presume, takes place during the Rawalpindi violence of March 1947 that preceded the horrific massacres between August 1947 and January 1948. As Anders Hansen shows, the violence of this phase was of a qualitatively different kind; an unprecedented number of casualties took place in March (Hansen 108).

The Sikhs especially suffered heavy losses and the feeling of being unprepared beset them, combined with a desire for retaliation. Hansen quotes later official figures to the effect that 3000 were killed and 1200 seriously injured, indicating the genocidal intent of the perpetrators (Hansen 118).

Towards the end, the 'Statistics Babu', the government-appointed relief officer, catalogues the losses of the refugees, both human and in terms of property after communal rioting: "I want figures, only figures, nothing but figures. Why don't you understand? You start narrating an endless tale of woe and suffering. I am not here to listen to the whole "Ramayana". Give me figures- how many dead, how many wounded, how much loss of property and goods. That is all" (*Tamas* 316). There is a disjunction between his role as impersonal representative of the administrative machinery, noting information gleaned from victims in given categories in the appropriate forms and as the unwilling listener confronted by personal tragedies. The Babu also encounters the occasional inability to grieve that characterises the behavior of victims. The procedures of relief and rehabilitation and the logic of getting on with life seem to preoccupy the attention of the survivors at times in such a way as to preclude mourning. Such insensitivity may be a by-product of bureaucratic indifference towards individual grief and suffering, for which there seems to be no language available in the aftermath of collective violence (322). It is as if mourning remains an unfinished task for such survivors. In the Babu's response we also get a sense of the inability to listen to testimony that often characterized the official response to traumatized survivors (Laub 58). Indeed, modern technologies of government in which Statistics played a crucial role were extensively deployed during this phase, especially in relation to the repatriation of abducted women, as Pandey demonstrates (Pandey, *Remembering* 167-68).

Sahni's novel thus presents witness-figures embedded in specific community locations at this historical movement, not quite able to piece the puzzle together. This might only be possible from a later vantage point, when the witnessing of another movement of communal violence leads the imagination back through time. It is, however, through its evocation of uncanny aftereffects of collective violence that the novel provides testimony to not only the macabre occurrences during the massacres at the time, but also its afterlife. The spreading and infiltration of such 'normalised' violence into various spheres of civil society, besides political society, is one such aspect of this afterlife, sensitively depicted in this major Hindi novel.

Moral Approach in *Tamas*

Set in a small-town frontier province in 1947, just before partition, *Tamas* tells the story of a sweeper named Nathu who is bribed and deceived by a local Muslim politician to kill a pig, ostensibly for a veterinarian. The following morning, the carcass is discovered on the steps of the mosque and the town, already tension-ridden, errupts. Enraged Muslims massacre scores of Hindus and Sikhs, who, in turn, kill every Muslim they can find. Finally, the area's British administrators call out the army to prevent further violence. The killings stop but nothing can erase the awful memories from the minds of the survivors, nor do the various communities ever trust one another again.

Nathu, a Hindu boy, is persuaded by Murad Ali for some hidden reasons; to kill a pig and throw the carcass on the mosque. As Sahni narrates:

> The Veterinary Surgeon needs a pig for his experiments; Murad Ali had said, as Nathu stood washing his hands and feet at the municipal water tap after cleaning a hide […]. 'It is no much of a job for you. I couldn't say no to the Vet Sahib, could I?' There are any numbers of pigs roaming about

> on the otherside of the ceremation ground. Just catch one of them. The Vet Sahib will himself do the explaining to the piggery people.' And before Nathu could so much as open his mouth Murad Ali had turned round to leave. (3)

As Nathu does not know what he has done by killing the pig. Sahni reveals the immoral actions and vested interests of the local leaders. Moreover, through a remarkable conversation between the two peons Sahni not only voices the dismay of the common people but also critiques the insensible frenzy that tore the communal harmony of the community apart. Sahni writes, "close to the college gate, two college peons sat on bench talking to one another. One said to the other: 'we poor people are such ignorant fools; we go breaking one another's head. These well-to-do people are so wise and sensible" (343).

The leaders have always vested interest to remain in the power. Common people are just figured out after they sacrifice their lives. For instance, one of the officers only wants numerical figure of the people: "I want figures, only figures, nothing but figures. Why don't you understand? You start narrating an endless tale of woe and suffering. I am not here to listen to the whole "Ramayana". Give me figures-how many dead, how many wounded, how much loss of property and goods. That is all" (316). Through the officer Sahni shows how during the partition common and innocent people were reduced to numbers and how human values and ideals were in crisis. Even the dead were not given any funeral rites. The Health Officer in the novel says, "That's the only way, sir, throw the bodies into pits and bury them. There can't be funeral for each deceased" (303).

Nathu commited the act under the pressure of politicians. He is silenced by the leader like Murad Ali. Though he tries to convince him, "but I have never killed a pig, Master" (3). Murad Ali refuses to acknowledge him. In an interview with Alok Bhalla,

Sahni, while commenting on the politicians, says, "… It depends on the ruler. If Aurangzeb wanted to create tension he succeeded in creating them […]. In feudal times, it had a lot to do with the ruler. In our times, the authorities, the British government, wanted to create tensions and succeeded" ("*Tamas* and the Landscape" 115). Nathu Chamar is obliged to kill the pig. After killing the pig, he goes through guilt, anger and frustration. "What a nasty trap I am caught in' moaned Nathu as he come and stood by the low wall of the courtyard" (8).

Tamas is an anatomy of that tragical period. It depicts how communal violence was generated by fundamentalists and extremists in both communities, and how innocent persons were duped into serving the ulterior purposes of fundamentalists and communalists of both sides; how an innocent boy is seduced to violence, and not in favor of hatred towards any one particular community. Both communities are treated equally for blame as they are for praise. The message is loud and clear, directed as it is against, the sickness of communalism. In Sahni's divided world however there are people like Mahetaji and Master Ram Das who:

> picked a tasla each and went to work in the yard. Shankar and Kashmiri Lal, armed with shovels headed form the drain, while Sher Khan, Das Raj and Bakshiji began sweeping the courtyard with broom. A tango-driver came out of his house, and squatting on the ground, watched the goings-on. As his eyes fell on Bakshiji,sweeping the ground, he went over to him and tried to stop him. (58)

Sahni presents the yard as a communitywhere the people are living harmoniously irrespective of their caste andclan, and occupations and professions. Through these characters engaged in some constructive acts Sahni tries to heal the wounds caused by

partition on moral ground.

In an interview with Alok Bhalla, Sahni says:

> I didn't try to analyze the cause of the partition in *Tamas*. I was only interested in describing the incidents I had seen and heard about. I was also trying to record what people thought and felt though and felt at that time. If you, however, want to know my own opinion about what happened and why, I still may not be able to tell you. All I can say is that as a humanist and a writer, I cherish certain values and modes of behavior. I deplore the killings that took place. It was shameful that a large population should have indulged in so much violence. (132-33)

Sahni in *Tamas*, thus describes acts of communal violence and revenge, without taking sides. To him, an act of rape or murder is committed by an individual man, who cannot cloak or disguise his actions behind an ethnic or religious identity.

Tamas is the novel which captures human tragedy during partition period. Many people sacrificed their life without any personal motive or any selfishness; they just took part in the conspiracies of the elites, who in order to make their empire burned out he houses of poor people, made them kill each other. The vivid picture of tragedy can be seen in the novel:

> A bitter fight took place. It went on for two days and two nights. Then the ammunition was exhausted and it became impossible to go on. At the back of the low platform on which the sacred book was placed, seven dead bodies covered with white sheets of cloth lay in a row. Five women sat with the heads of their husband in their laps. Two dead bodies' had no claimants. One of these was a Nihang, who even under the hail of bullets

> stood on duty on the roof, with his moustaches twirled on his chest sticking out. (282)

The atmosphere is all that of fire and resounded with cries and wailing. Women were obliged to jump into the well. "Jasbir Kaur was the first one to jump into the well. She raised no slogan, nor did she call anyone's name, she only uttered Wahe Guru and too the jump" (293). Along with their children women jumped one by one into the well in order to save them from other horror of being victim of seduction and torture. "After walking over a heap of dead bodies at the entrance to the lane, there was not a single woman left in the gurdwara" (293).

Sukrita Paul Kumar in an interview asks, "I would like to go back to *Tamas* now and pick up one incident-the well incident, in which women drowned themselves. Does this relate to any real life situation witnessed by you during partition riots?" (167). Sahni replies:

> Of course, when the riot subsided in the towns and villages of Rawalpindi where more than a hundred villages were involved. […] What I saw was horrendous! It was so full that the bodies had come up to the surface: how that was a painful experience. It has been very difficult to get over it even today. I still hear anguished voices like someone next to me pointing out to a corpse and saying, "That is my wife", "That child entangled between her legs is my son". (167-68)

The events of this period have now become an integral part of South Asian consciousness, not only through literature, but also film and television. Communal violence did not end with Partition; the rioting, the killing and rape which are so much a

part of today's headlines in India and Pakistan. Despite the depressing familiarity of these images of violence, his narratives retain a disturbing sense of immediacy. It could be the raw, uncut quality of his prose or the unrestrained tone of outrage in his voice, but more than anything Bhisham Sahni's fiction remains as powerful as ever, because he was one of the few writers who brought a rational and moral vision to bear on the madness of his time.

Like Manto, Bhisham Sahni believes that human beings alone are responsible for their moral actions, and that the ethicality of any action can be judged only in civil and agnostic spaces where members of all religions have the right to citizenship. But Manto's version of India's social and political reality, defaced by religious and political graffiti, is relentlessly sardonic. For him there is no redemptive gap between a predator and its prey, the victim and the victimizer; everyone lives in the same jungle and is red in tooth and claw. Bhisham Sahni's version of the partition is, however, more complex. He makes a self conscious attempt to develop a two-fold vision in which, even as he bears witness to the culpability of everyone in the evil of those days, he records stories about events and people which are instinct with pity and thoughtfulness. Only then, he thinks, can we make necessary distinctions between acts of moral courage and acts which are reprehensible-- consider words and deeds which we must cherish as part of our heritage and those we should feel ashamed to acknowledge.

Thus, there is a scene in *Tamas*, in which a young Sikh, Iqbal Singh, is chased during a night of rioting by a mob of armed Muslims, made up of his friends and acquaintances and led by a man named Ramazan , through the lanes of his village and across the surrounding fields till he hides in a dark cave. When the pursuers find him, they first stone him, and later assure him that they will let him live provided he converts

to Islam. Iqbal Singh agrees. His name is changed to Iqbal Ahmad, his hair is smeared with dung and urine, and he is gleefully circumcised by a Maulvi. A piece of beef is stuffed into his mouth while the Maulvi recites the *kalma* and the crowd shouts obscenities *(Tamas* 278-81). He is granted the right to live only when he disavows his religious identity and accepts the religious faith of his tormentors. He gains the 'religious' protection of his tormentors only when he gives up his claim to their respect as a citizen and as a human being; he becomes a Muslim, but ceases to be a man.

Apart from bearing witness to horror, the incident has a subtext which needs to be noticed for it points to the kinds of religious politics which can only be actualised through terror. Bhisham Sahni, like many other partition novelists, allegorises names so that they carry religious and social meanings. Thus, the leader of the killers is deliberately named Ramzan. The word *'ramazan'* evokes the holy month of fasting by the Muslims and the continuous recitation of the Koran. The word is derived from the Turkish word, *'ramida'*, meaning 'to be reduced to ashes and embers'. The grand ritualistic idea behind the period of fasting and prayer is that the sins of our mortal life are acknowledged and atoned for so that the soul is ready for enlightenment and grace. Since naming is an aspect of the grammar of a culture, the name 'Ramazan' given to a killer shows how religion became merely another brutal hallucination during the partition threatening to reduce a civilization to ashes.

But, a more significant and a sadder subtext of the novel is the popular perception amongst a large number of Hindus and Sikhs that the great poet, Muhammad Iqbal (1887-1938), was responsible for giving to the partition demand its intellectual sanction and its historical reason. It is assumed that Iqbal gave serious attention to the dangerous idea that the "only way to be a good Muslim is to belong to single *umma* whose

‘symbolic’ and ‘cognisable’ centre lay in Ka’ba” , and that by living with non-Muslims in India, the community had failed to fulfil its dream of its unique notion of freedom, equality and brotherhood. Iqbal, thereby, “legitimized a mode of thinking which implied that since the Muslim vision of the ideal could never be attained in Hindu-dominated India, the only way for the community to achieve its teleological destiny was to establish a separate homeland”, but it is clear that those non-Muslims who were opposed to this singular vision of Islamic purity were stigmatized by the Muslim leadership and those Muslims who had different notions of the moral and political reasons governing the national movement were vilified and threatened with death (Bhalla 120). Iqbal’s formulation that Hindus and Muslims of India belonged not only to distinctive religious but also to different ‘nationalities’ made, as the fate of Iqbal Singh clearly suggests, terror possible. For Bhisham Sahni, the tragedy lies in the fact that the poet who had once sung of India’s civilisational unity did not realize that the belief in one’s own religious purity can never asure protection, to others; it can never honour them, given them rights, equality and peace. Through the forcible conversion of Iqbal Singh to Iqbal Ahmad, Bhisham Sahni suggests that the partition demand was not only without any meaning, logic or purpose, but given the enormity of violence that followed, it was also “a hymn of obscenity” (Bhalla 121).

There is another incident in *Tamas* which suggests that Bhisham Sahni believes that faithfulness, neighbourliness and reason are superior to all the protestations of religious ‘faith’. This is the moving and emotionally powerful impulse behind the story of Iqbal’s parents, Harnam Singh and Banto. When the riots break out, they are first helped by their neighbours, Karim Khan, and then by a Muslim woman, Rajo, both of whom have the courage to violate the notion of Islamic *umma* and live by a different ethic.

Harnam Singh is an ordinary man who runs a teashop. He is the only non-Muslim in the village Dhok Illahi Buksh. He would never have done so if the cultural texture of the village, like that of countless villages prior to the partition, had not assured him that he could safely venture into its civil space without being threatened. His friendship with Karim Khan is based not only on the fact that both have faith in their own gods, but, more importantly, on the good-will of each other as human beings. His teashop survives because it is independent of politics and religion. Like everyone (indeed, his name Harnam, which is on one level a compound of 'har' and 'nam', means precisely that – 'everyman's name'or 'any name'), he looks upon his teashop as his assertion over temporality; as an aspect of the human and cultural artifice which has nothing to do with religion; and as an agnostic space where travelers drop by and friends meet. The teashop may be insignificant, but it is Harnam Singh's small contribution to the common world through which we all have to make our way. That is why Karim Khan is ashamed and humiliated because he cannot give Harnam Singh and his wife any assurance of safety after 1947. Since his name, Karim, is both a cognate of 'God' and also means 'compassion' or 'grace', it is not surprising that he feels that his own religiosity has been demeaned because his fellow Muslims have driven Harnam from his legitimate home. The partition "destroys Harnam's carefully crafted life-world, and with it turns religion into irreligion, legality into hooliganism, and morality into the right of the brute to have power over and defile those of a different faith" (Bhalla 122).

Harman Singh and his wife knock on Rajo's door seeking refuge and mercy. At first she refuses because she is afraid of her husband and son, both of whom have involved with the looting of Hindu and Sikh homes and have even killed some people. Her daughter-in-law also urges her not to give them shelter because they are *kafirs*.

Confronted, however, by two old and helpless people, she finds herself facing the only elemental question that really matters: What is the human worth of the politics of religious identities being played out around her if she cannot give sanctuary? She realizes that her sense of self-worth, which has been formed by her life with other human beings, can survive only if she fulfils her responsibility towards the old couple, no matter who they are and what their religious faith is. After some hesitation, she decisively says: "Wait. Don't go. Stay. Put the latch back…Shall I push out a person who has come seeking shelter? Everyone has to go into God's presence one day" (*Tamas* 257-58). Rajo risks surrendering herself to the tug of sympathy, and so, at least for a fleeting instant, abides by the covenant she has made with God. Thus, Rajo takes a risky initiative and offers shelter to an old Hindu couple while her own son communally motivated son wants to kill them. Rajo's decision and its effective execution as Sukrita Paul kumar writes, "can be seen as a gesture of courage, salvaging of human values, and in this context, the value of harmonious interconnectedness in particular"(104). The recording and examination of such incidents stress on some cherished human values upheld essentially by women even if women were the immediate victims of the communal riots.

Instead of asserting the superiority or separateness of her Islamic identity, she understands that her greater duty lies in protecting the helpless old couple who have asked for shelter. Later, when she returns the ornaments her husband and son, Ramazan, have looted from Harman Singh, she acknowledges that there are other human entitlements which are far greater than communal affiliations. One should, however, point out that she does not chastise her husband, son and daughter-in-law for their enthusiastic participation in the looting and the slaughter. Bhisham Sahni rarely ever allows one to forget that the grim irony that, during the partition years, religiosity always

skirted the edges of atrocious.

This momentary encounter between Harnam Singh, Banto and Rajo in a village courtyard is, for Bhisham Sahni, "both a small secular parable about those essential elements of justice, tolerance or compassion which are more important in the making of our human existence than religious pride" (Bhalla 123). Hannah Arendt, in her study of the politics of violence, says that an affirmation of the right of the other to survive is a "miracle" enough in dark times when we often fail to "trust" that which is "human in all people" (Arendt 23). At the end of the novel, however, the experience of the partition destroy good and prayerful people like Harnam Singh and Banto. From being a crucial, part of a cohesive community, they are pushed to the margins of the irrelevance. At the end, the novel does not promise them any possibility of redemptive action. All they can do for the rest of their lives is to plead inconsolably for help and mumble incoherently about the home they have lost. As in most partition fiction, neither of them can pray again; unless, with Iris Murdoch, one is willing to ask if "incoherent desperation can be prayer too" (Murdoch 419).

The novel however, is more complex for it understands that the body's purgatory cannot be so easily transformed into religious ecstasy; the sorrow remains, and the pain lingers long after some sense of safety has been attained, and years after the boundaries of law and social life have been drawn. Bhisham Sahni, like any good novelist, understands almost intuitively: "Easy is the way down into the Underworld: by nightand by day dark Hades' doors stand open; but to retrace one's steps and to make a way out to the upper air, that's the task, that's the labour." (qtd. in Bhalla 124). Spliced between the terror of Iqbal Singh and the helplessness of Harman Singh in the novel is the grim story of Jasbir Kaur. She is Harman's daughter. The novel treats her critically because

Bhisham Sahni is sceptical of all narrowly defined religious identities and knows how quickly they become the reasons for recrimination and retaliatory violence.

In the novel the gurdwara, where she has sought refuge, is not a place either of epiphanies or reason or ethicality. The Sikhs who find sanctuary within it are neither religious, nor honest, nor particularly brave. They refuse to negotiate with the Muslims partly out of fear, but partly because they have contempt for them. All of them are convinced that the old paradigmatic history of treachery by the Muslims and the sacrifice of the Sikhs, a story which they have told themselves again and again so as to glorify their origins and their distinctiveness, is about to be enacted once again. The refusal of either side to think clearly and see through the ways in which they have allowed themselves to be deceived by looking at each other thorough myth-tainted traditions results in a situation in which the absurd and the frightful collide to create one of the most horrific scenes in partition fiction.

The Sikhs send a spy into the village to find out when the Muslims are planning to attack them. At one point, the spy being all too human, unties his pyjama and sits down near a drain to relief himself. Just then, he sees an old and blind Muslim (ironically named ‘Noor’ – the word means ‘light’) leaning on a stick stumble towards him. He thinks he is about to be lynched and so, with his pyjama still untied, runs screaming towards the gurdwara. The Sikhs there quickly conclude that the ‘Turks,’ as they insist on calling the Muslims, are about to attack. This slapstick of folly and blindness results in disaster. The partition is revealed as a cruel spectacle of stupidity, corruption, vulgarity and slaughter.

Jasbir Kaur, already in a state of religious ‘trance’, leads a large band of women and girls to the well nearby and persuades them to jump into it and commit suicide. This

horrific incident, which is based upon actual events that occurred at Thok Khalsa in the land which belonged to Sant Gulab Singh in March 1947, is narrated with quiet and ascetic dignity. It is as if the writing at this movement is horror-struck. It offers no consoling phrases about heroic self-sacrifice and the valorization of the deaths as martyrdom. This suicide remains one of the numerous meaningless deaths during the partition; another obscene scandal. The next morning there are only vultures in the sky. And later, the husbands and fathers of these women haunt the well in the hope of recovering the gold jewellery from their decaying bodies. One Sardar actually wants to go back to the well with a hammer and chisel so that he can cut the gold ornaments off his wife's swollen corpse (*Tamas* 323).

In the novel, Jasbir is not a martyr, but a god-infatuated woman who does not know that religious pride almost always results in paranoiac fear, perpetual grievance, and a demand for vengeance for the physical and psychological wounding by the Other.

In *Tamas* Bhisham Sahni "narrativizes the history of partition not as a history of communalism but as a problem that tore the moral and religious fabric of the country beyond repair. Sahni juxtaposes ordinary people from different religious groups with political leaders schemed against the people for their own party interest" (Bhatia 147). Sahni messages that had the people understood the schemes of the rulers, both British and Indian elite, they would have never encouraged or participate in the communal violence that ensued. We also find in *Tamas*, the interrogation of nationalism, not as a unified phenomenon but in terms of other groups such as the dalits, peasants and womens.

Thus, Sahni's writing encapsulates his empathy for the underdogs and his belief in the essential goodness of humanity. His representation of the partition violence pinches the intellect rather than appeal to the emotion. It is highly realistic and achieves

remarkable objectivity, for it neither shows any biasedness for contending nationalisms of the traumatic times, nor his own socialism, nor specific cultural visibility, nor any geographical, political or religious markers. It does not either present detailed characterisation or grant the narrator much of the authorial voice. It is remarkably neutral with its employment of the victim's point of view and is free from the ideological othering despite his commitment to Marxism. What one observes in his partition prose, thus, is a saga of human tragedy, the other face of Indian independence through the view points of the miserable lots.

III. *Tamas* as Moral Narrative

Partition seems to be one of the most enduring legacies of the British empire. Former colonies were divided along religious and ethnic lines, as if the colonial administrators took the wisdom of Soloman at face value, cutting the disputed infant in half before its mother had a chance to intervene. The problem is that the cartographer's pencil became a two-edged sword and there is no line on a map that can cleanly demarcate a population, particularly when that population is already riven with hatred and distrust.

Sahni, in *Tamas*, thus, describes acts of communal violence and revenge through the perspective of the victims. Even though he himself was a Hindu, forced to leave Pakistan as an exile, he does not ascribe blame to one community or the other. His descriptions of violence may be graphic and disturbing, but Sahni does not perpetuate the cycle of revenge and recrimination through general accusations. To him, an act of rape or murder is committed by an individual man, who cannot cloak or disguise his actions behind an ethnic or religious identity. Sahni was also inclined to Marxism and shared many of these sensibilities. It is true that Sahni saw Partition as a negative and regressive event. However, to describe his portrayal of violence and horrors of this period as a failure of moral and literary vision is to deny the fundamental truth and strength of his work. There were certainly other writers who wrote about rioting and rape in an ethical sense, but for Sahni these images were essential to his portrayal of Partition as a brutal, inhuman act of madness.

In *Tamas* Bhisham Sahni "narrativizes the history of partition not as a history of communalism but as a problem that tore the moral and religious fabric of the country beyond repair. Sahni juxtaposes ordinary people from different religious groups with

political leaders schemed against the people for their own party interest" (Bhatia 147). Sahni messages that had the people understood the schemes of the rulers, both British and Indian elite, they would have never encouraged or participate in the communal violence that ensued. We also find in *Tamas*, the interrogation of nationalism, not as a unified phenomenon but in terms of other groups such as the dalits, peasants and womens.

Thus, Sahni's writing encapsulates his sympathy for the underdogs and his belief in the essential goodness of humanity. His representation of the partition violence pinches the intellect rather than appeal to the emotion. It is highly realistic and achieves remarkable objectivity, for it neither shows any biasedness for contending nationalisms of the traumatic times, nor his own socialism, nor specific cultural visibility, nor any geographical, political or religious markers. It does not either present detailed characterisation or grant the narrator much of the authorial voice. It is remarkably neutral with its employment of the victim's point of view and is free from the ideological othering despite his commitment to Marxism. What one observes in his partition prose, thus, is a saga of human tragedy, the other face of Indian independence through the view points of the miserable lots.

The events of this period have now become an integral part of South Asian consciousness, not only through literature, but also film and television. Communal violence did not end with Partition; the rioting, the killing and rape which are so much a part of today's headlines in India and Pakistan. Despite the depressing familiarity of these images of violence, his narratives retain a disturbing sense of immediacy. It could be the raw, uncut quality of his prose or the unrestrained tone of outrage in his voice, but more than anything Bhisham Sahni's fiction remains as powerful as ever, because he was one of the few writers who brought a rational and moral vision to bear on the madness of his time.

Works Cited

Alam, Javed, and Suresh Sharma. "Remembering Partition." *Seminar* 461 (1998): 98-103.

Arendt, Hannah. *Esays in Understanding: 1930-1954*. New York: Harcourt, 1994.

Bhalla, Alok. "Moral Action in Times of Duragraha: The Representation of Sikhs in Partition Fiction." Social Scientist 34.5.6 (May-June 2006):104-31.

- - -. " *Tamas* and the Landscape of Memories: In Conversation with Bhisham Sahni." *Partition Dialogues.* Ed. Alok Bhalla. Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, 1996: 111-34.

Bhatia, Nandi. "Twentieth Century Hindi Literature." *Handbook of 20th C. Literature of India*. Ed. Nalini Natarajan. USA: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1996.

Gilmartin, David. "Partition, Pakistan and South Asian History: In Search of a Narrative." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 57.4 (November 1998): 1068-95.

Guha, Ranajit. "Not at Home in Empire." *Postcolonial Passages*. Ed. Saurabh Dube. New Delhi: OUP, 2004. Npag.

Hansen, Anders B. *Partition and Genocide: Manifestation of Violence in Punjab, 1937-47*. New Delhi: India Research Press, 2002.

Hasan, Mushirul. "Partition: The Human Cost." *History Today* 47.9 (September 1997): 47-53.

- - -. "Memories of a Fragmented Nation: Rewriting the Histories of India's Partition." *Economic and Political Weekly* 33.41 (Oct. 16, 1998): 2662-68.

Iyer, Ragavan, ed. *The Essential Writing of Mahatma Gandhi*. New Delhi: OUP, 1991.

Kumar, Sukrita Paul. *Narrating Partition*: *Texts, Interpretations, Ideas*. New Delhi: Indialog Publications, 2004.

Laub, Dori. "Bearing Witness or the Vicissitudes of Listening." *Testimony: Crisis of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History*. Eds Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub. New York and London: Routledge, 1992. Npag.

Levinas, Emmanuel. *Ethics and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority.* Pittsburgh: Duquesne UP, 1961.

- - - . *Otherwise Than Being or Beyond Essence.* Pittsburgh: Duquesne UP, 1974.

Margalit, Avishai. *The Ethics of Memory.* Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2004.

Murdoch, Iris. *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*. London: Penguin, 1997'

Nihalini, Govinda. Introduction. *Tamas* by Bhisham Sahni. New Delhi: Penguin, 1988. i-iv.

Pandey, Gyanendra. *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism and History in India*. Cambridge: CUP, 2001.

- - -. "Voices from the Edge: the Struggle to Write Subaltern Histories." *Ethnos* 60.3. 4 (1995): 223-42.

- - -. *Memory, History and the question of Violence: Reflections on the Reconstruction of Partition.* Calcutta: K. P. Bagchi, 1999.

Sahni, Bhisham. *Tamas*. New Delhi: Penguin, 2001.

Talbot, Ian A. *Freedom's Cry: The Popular Dimension in the Pakistan Movement and Partition Experience in North-West India*. Karachi: OUP, 1996.

Tarnas, Richard. *The Passion of the Western Mind*. USA: Crown, 1991.